



CENTRAL DIRECTION  
Urban Planning and Management – UNESCO Site  
U.P.I. “URBACT Projects and Networks on Integrated Urban Policies “

## Good Practice Summary

### “Lost & Found: civic uses and new policy tools for the community”

#### ***The problem and proposed solutions***

In this context of widespread economic crisis, insecurity and difficulties to ensure essential public services, cities are facing new challenges related to the growing social inequalities that require equally innovative answers: in this sense the City Council of Naples offers an administrative mechanism for overcoming the traditional top-down policies with an approach that brings citizens at the centre of the decision-making process, strengthening participation in political institutions committed to the care of the commons.

This process makes the spontaneous bottom-up initiatives recognizable and institutionalized, ensuring the autonomy of both parties involved, on the one hand the citizens engaged in the reuse of common goods and on the other hand the institutions

The first good to be recognized as a common trough this mechanism, and here proposed to become an *URBACT Good Practice*, was the Ex-Asilo Filangeri, a building that in 1572 was already an arts and crafts factory, belonging to the convent of San Gregorio Armeno, later transformed into a boarding school for young orphans and poor children.

#### ***Timeframe, dates, important milestones***

With the resolution n.400 ratified in 2012, the City Council of Naples, acknowledging the importance of culture as a common good, identified this space as a “place with a complex use in the cultural field and whose spaces are used to experiment processes of participative democracy”. At that time, in fact, the place had been *occupied* by a group of art and culture professionals in protest against the restoration and new abandonment of these premises..

With the following decision n.893, ratified in 2015, the City of Naples has then *recognized* the ***Urban Civic Use Regulation*** of the place that has been produced in an autonomous way by the

community that benefits from the good and puts the self-management of the structure as one of the main principles of its administration.

After the case of Ex-Asilo, with the resolution n.446 ratified in 2016, other seven public properties were recognized by the City Council of Naples as “relevant civic spaces to be ascribed to the category of common goods”.

### ***The link to the specific strategy***

The management model adopted is highly innovative and has given fresh impulse to the ongoing European debate focused on the common good’s urban, ethical, legal, environmental framework for the primary public interest. Many European cities, citizens, organizations have in fact been debating on how to introduce appropriate public policies and EU regulations which can then be implemented in the individual Member States: a concrete example is the 'European assembly of Commons’ which was held last November with the goal of building a platform for the Commons in the EU, and attended by activists, researchers, makers and people willing to share their experiences and to explore ways to upscale the debate beyond the local.

### ***The main outputs for achieving objective, innovative elements***

By acknowledging the *Urban Civic Use Regulation*, the Public Administration assumes the burden of ensuring the usability of the ex-Asilo Filangieri - meant as "**civic development environment**" to the totality of the inhabitants who benefit from it, for the production and enjoyment of cultural and artistic events. The right produce and make use of the place is free and guaranteed to all, in accordance with the constitutional rights and values, but with a participatory model that is founded on three main open organisms, the "Management assembly", the "Steering assembly" and the “Board of Trustees”.

The Administration, identifying the high social and cultural value as well as the yearly positive economic externalities generated by the civic and collective use of the Ex-Asilo, which involves not only the users of the space but the whole neighbourhood and city, contributes to the operating expenses and to what is necessary to ensure an adequate accessibility of the property and to ensure general safety conditions: extraordinary maintenance, cleaning, electricity consumption and surveillance. Donations, voluntary contributions, self-financement or other forms of social pricing are permitted for the initiatives carried out.

### ***Results achieved, monitoring***

Thanks to the good practice's governance model, more than 250 projects came to life, breaking down the production costs by using free and shared spaces, resources, knowledge and skills. All this has generated, for the arts and culture workers involved, immeasurable forms of indirect income, not to mention the free trainings offered and the many young students who have studied at practically no cost. This model, besides ensuring transparency, has established a strong bond with the inhabitants of the city and has narrowed the gap between artists, academics and citizens. Main numbers, monitored with the direct collaboration of the inhabitants since march 2012, show a strong participation of the community, both in terms of active members in the management process than with regard to the end-users of the artistic productions:

- 18000 people took part in the direct management of the Ex-Asilo through tables and public management assemblies;
- 150 public management assemblies for the self-government;
- 830-days of public working groups (so called thematic tables);
- 2000 producing persons, including artists, scholars, researchers, academics, etc. used the Ex-Asilo spaces and means and / or organized activities;
- -200.000 users took part in the activities;
- 5800 activities (music, theatre, dance rehearsals and performance, seminars, art exhibitions, installations, book presentations, poetry readings, etc
- 250 art projects;
- 1,500 days of training in over 200 laboratories, workshops and training sessions.

### ***Potential for re-use and improvement***

The mechanism proposed by the City of Naples is certainly characterized by a high degree of adaptability to other European urban contexts as it is based on largely shared ethical, legal and social values, already widespread in other countries and especially in France, Spain and Portugal.

Furthermore, in contrast to the models proposed by other Italian and European cities where the municipality is in charge of setting up of the rules for the management of commons, the tool implemented in Naples has been built by recognizing the citizens' self-organizational models, through a continuous exchange between the community and the Municipality.

This means that the process could be easily adopted and upgraded in other cities with similar needs and contexts: the existence of a great number of public spaces and buildings that are underused, the existence of a strong community of citizens that needs common space to improve of their life quality.

On the other hand, a profitable exchanges with other European cities could also help us to improve the system of shared responsibility in monitoring activities and in managing the security of the sites.