The Urbact Partecipando Network comprises 22 European cities in 7 different countries, with coordination ensured by the municipality of Rome. This network has made it possible for these cities to reflect upon, capitalize on and circulate their local experiences of direct inhabitant participation in urban changes. The elected officials, technical experts and inhabitants of the different cities in the network have spent close to three years discussing and comparing their respective experiences, under the supposition that a look at what is done elsewhere is the best way to mature and enrich one’s own knowledge base and practices.

This Handbook is the direct product of the research and seminars/workshops conducted by the Urbact Partecipando Network, the open discussion of both points in common and differences, as well as an analysis of the achievements and the most problematic aspects in each concrete case within the different cities.

The aim of this Handbook is to stimulate the development of local level participatory processes in order to ensure the most effective, efficient and sustainable results in urban change. It is addressed to the promoters of participatory processes: city administrators, municipal employees, technical experts and inhabitants who take an interest in this matter and plan to launch such a process.

Dealt with in the Handbook are themes and subjects regarding participation, with a systematic presentation of its essential principles and the problems encountered in their application. It offers guidelines and suggestions which may prove very useful in both experimenting participatory practices and avoiding possible errors.
The production of this Handbook would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of all those local actors who have contributed to the successful implementation of the project. In particular the inhabitants, groups and associations of the following neighbourhoods:
Laurentino, Primavalle, Corviale, Garbatella, Tor Bella Monaca, Pigneto, XI Municipality (Roma); Chartrons-Nord, Saint Michel (Bordeaux); Maritime-Molenbeek (Bruxelles); San Vito Alto (Cosenza); Fontaine, Pont-de-Clair, Mistral, Echirolles (Grenoble); Quartieri Spagnoli, Rione Sanità, Scampia, Isola di Nisida (Napoli); New Deal for Communities area (Newcastle); Barrios de Urban y S. Pedro (Pamplona); Altobello, Giudecca, Marghera (Venezia).

**Urbact Project Partecipando Network**

**Lead Partner**

Comune di Roma
Assessurato per le Periferie, lo Sviluppo Locale, il Lavoro
Dipartimento XIX Politiche di Sviluppo e Recupero delle Periferie

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**Steering Committee**

Ville de Bordeaux, Carole Jorda-Dedieu, Olivier Mauret
Région Bruxelles-Capitale, Luc Maufroy
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Comune di Napoli, Enrico Martinelli, Gaetano Mollura
Newcastle City Council & Newcastle Partnership, Katherine Verlander, Neil Smith

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Comune di Reggio Calabria, Serena Angioli, Grazia Giannaccari

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Enrica Morlicchio, Sandrine Rui, Yves Syntomer

**European handbook for participation**

The handbook is the result of the work developed by the City of Rome and the Steering Committee member cities, in particular:

Comune di Roma, Mirella Di Giovine
Ville de Bordeaux, Olivier Mauret

Région Bruxelles-Capitale, Luc Maufroy

Comune di Cosenza, Leo Acr

Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise, Thierry Monel

Comune di Napoli, Gaetano Mollura

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Comune di Reggio Calabria, Serena Angioli

The general edition of the book was followed by:

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Micol Ayuso, Giada Saint Amour di Chanaz

Lapei (Università di Firenze), Annalisa Pecoriello, Francesca Rispoli

The experiences of the cities named “lessons from the experiences” and quoted in the different chapters were prepared by:

Micol Ayuso, Giada Saint Amour di Chanaz
Annalisa Pecoriello, Francesca Rispoli

The following texts were written by thematic experts from the Urbact Partecipando Network. Hence, still representing the result of a common effort, each chapter is to be ascribed to the following authors:

The Urbact Partecipando Network, Mirella Di Giovine

Participation and democracy, Giovanni Laino

Participation, why and for whom?, Sandrine Rui

Participation, when?, Giovanni Laino

Participation, how?, Giovanni Allegretti (paragraphs 1, 2), Bernard Francq (paragraphs 3, 4)

Participation challenges, Bernard Francq, Giancarlo Paba, Annalisa Pecoriello, Francesca Rispoli

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From european urban experiences towards earth democracy for sustainable cities and sustainable societies

The Urbact programme

The purpose of this Handbook and how to use it

The cities which steered the network

The Partecipando network
   The cities and towns of the Urbact Partecipando network
   The involvement of citizens
   The approach
   Local inquiries
   The thematic workshops
   Guidelines from the thematic workshops
   The european Handbook for participation
   The participation Charter
   The capitalization of the network

Participation and democracy
   An open building site
   Local governance in the Urbact Partecipando network
   Democracy and participation models
   Democratization of representation
   Associative democracy

Participation why? For whom?
   What is the purpose of enhancing participation?
   Participation, why?
   For whom is participation meant?
   Conclusion

Participation when?
   Influence of the context and the opening of decision-making processes
   Opening of the decision-making processes and contingent approaches
   Participation when, as soon as possible?
   At which stage of the process is participation adviseable?
   Conclusion
Globalisation is being driven by the assumption that the countryside can be emptied of people, especially farmers, and all of society will live in mega cities, in which humans are estranged from each other and themselves. Cities designed inhumanly and non-ecologically are becoming parasitic on the countryside and the planet. They are also becoming hot beds of fear, insecurity and violence.

Sustainable cities need to reimbed themselves in ecological and cultural systems. And such reimbedding cannot take place without people’s participation in designing, planning and managing the resources that support urban life. Such democratic systems will help reduce the ecological footprint of cities while enriching the lives of citizens. This deepening of democracy while participating in the creation of sustainable systems is Earth Democracy.

Earth Democracy enables us to envision and create living democracies. Living democracy enables democratic participation in all matters of life and death - the food we eat or do not have access to; the water we drink or are denied due to privatization or pollution; the air we breathe or are poisoned by. Living democracies are based on the intrinsic worth of all species, all peoples, all cultures; a just and equal sharing of this earth’s vital resources; and sharing the decisions about the use of earth’s resources.

Earth Democracy protects the ecological processes that maintain life and the fundamental human rights that are basis of the right to life, including the right to water, the right to food, the right to health, the right to education, and the right to jobs and livelihoods. Earth Democracy is base on the recognition of and respect for the life of all species and all people.

In order to promote a sustainable urban development, it is essential to monitor urban regeneration processes by participatory processes where the inhabitants may value and decide together with technicians, administrators and elected representatives the development of the areas they live in. Many participatory processes are implemented, in different ways and at different levels within the cities belonging to the Urbact Partecipando Network. This Handbook presents their experiences, thoughts and commitment into a participatory democracy able to improve their future.

Dr. Vandana Shiva
URBACT was created in 2003 especially to share and circulate the experiences of the cities belonging to the URBAN programme. Very soon, several cities asked to participate in the thematic networks and working groups setup by URBACT.

Thanks to the European Union and Member States, the cities were offered a productive working environment: a Lead city, working programme, a 50% co-financed budget, the support of experts appointed by the cities themselves.

Two-hundred cities are currently involved, including several cities among the 10 EU Member State newcomers: capitals and medium-size towns, working together and sharing their experience and recommendations.

The PARTECIPANDO network is one of the oldest, and among those with the highest number of partners. Within the integrated urban development of URBAN policies, the active participation of citizens in matters of their concern is deemed to be one of the key elements of success. However, nobody had ever imagined the citizen participation issue would turn out to be as fundamental in the URBACT activities, though this actually appears to be the case.

The PARTECIPANDO partner cities, with Rome, the network lead city, in the forefront, decided to address the issue in a concrete and unpretentious manner. The cultural, institutional and political diversity of the cities added value to the enterprise and did not constitute a drawback.

Read about these cities, contact them, talk to them; they would like you to benefit from their latest experience and reflections.

Jean-Loup Drubigny,
Director of the URBACT Secretariat
The Urbact Partecipando Network comprises 22 European cities in 7 different countries, with coordination ensured by the municipality of Rome. This network has made it possible for these cities to reflect upon, capitalize on and circulate their local experiences of direct inhabitant participation in urban changes. The elected officials, technical experts and inhabitants of the different cities in the network have spent close to three years discussing and comparing their respective experiences, under the supposition that a look at what is done elsewhere is the best way to mature and enrich one’s own knowledge base and practices. This Handbook is the direct product of the research and seminars/workshops conducted by the Urbact Partecipando Network, the open discussion of both points in common and differences, as well as an analysis of the achievements and the most problematic aspects in each concrete case within the different cities. The aim of this Handbook is to stimulate the development of local level participatory processes in order to ensure the most effective, efficient and sustainable results in urban change. It is addressed to the promoters of participatory processes: city administrators, municipal employees, technical experts and inhabitants who take an interest in this matter and plan to launch such a process.

Dealt with in the Handbook are themes and subjects regarding participation, with a systematic presentation of its essential principles and the problems encountered in their application. It offers guidelines and suggestions which may prove very useful in both experimenting participatory practices and avoiding possible errors. The text itself is divided into 5 chapters that explore:

1. The relationship between democracy and participation
2. The ‘why’ and the ‘for whom’
3. The ‘when’
4. The ‘how’
5. Challenges

An essential element of this Handbook is to be found in the illustration of concrete experiences in the various cities and the ensuing lessons learned, with brief references to case studies and where they took place. Insofar as the lessons learned gave rise to the guidelines developed in each chapter, complementary to their attentive reading could be the individual ‘city sheets’ providing information in the context in each city and an overview of participation policies thus far enacted. The Handbook likewise contains the comments and viewpoints of inhabitants, technical personnel and elected officials, thereby illustrating the complexity of processes linked to the diversity of the players of stakeholders involved.

We decided not to provide a detailed presentation of possible tools and methods, or not to follow them in the application of a procedure, and this choice is based on two considerations: first of all, extensive is the literature in this regard; secondly, general thinking within the network strongly suggests that no single ‘recipe’ may be applied across the board, and that several organizational models, methodologies and forms of communication may be combined on a case by case basis according to objectives, timeframes and the specificity of a local context. In the wake of this project it has become abundantly clear to the partner cities that participation is not just a way to piece together collective choices that heighten social cohesion in a concrete manner. It is likewise a mutual learning opportunity for the local community, which enables it to construct civic networks, enhance its identity in the sense of sustainable local development, as well as to transform and renew public policies and administrative practices.

Throughout the project it has become evident to partner cities that besides being a means to build concrete collective choices that improve social cohesion, participation is a mutual learning process, local communities grow and build civic networks, identity and self-sustainable local development, as well as to transform and renew public policies and local administration practices. The partner cities are responding to the European challenge to foster and promote the participatory processes whereby inhabitants are directly involved in urban transformation endeavors and projects. This is why they have drawn up a European Charter of Participation presented in the last part of the Handbook. The Charter describes the ‘acquis’ of the network and the commitments assumed by the cities for the promotion of democratic participation in urban management on the European level.
The network was steered by nine cities: Roma (lead partner), Mairie de Bordeaux, Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise, Comune di Cosenza, Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, Ayuntamiento de Pamplona, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Comune di Napoli, Comune di Reggio Calabria. The cities of Foggia, Paris, Venezia, Inverclyde, Catania, Belfast, Stavroupoli, Evosmos, Duzce, Cannes, Polichni, Maribor were part of the network as well, actively participating in different works and exchanging their experiences. Even though they were not part of the Steering Committee, these cities contributed to the success of the activities and the effectiveness of the analysis produced by the network, by virtue of the different experiences and points of view they brought in at each step.

The cities which steered the network

Comune di Roma (Italia)
Mairie De Bordeaux (France)
Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise (France)
Comune di Cosenza (Italia)
Région de Bruxelles - Capitale (Belgium)
Ayuntamiento de Pamplona (España)
Newcastle Upon Tyne (United Kingdom)
Comune di Napoli (Italia)
Comune di Reggio Calabria (Italia)
**Comune di Roma**

### Some figures:
- Population: 2,823,201
- Population density (residents per km²): 2,180
- Surface area: 128,530 ha
- Unemployment rate: 19 %
- Unemployment rate - female: 22 %
- Agricultural land: 51,729.2 ha
- An extremely rich ecological network and protected areas
- Important patrimony of archaeological sites and historical buildings patrimony

### In the suburbs:
- Population: 2,766,391
- Surface area: 80.84%
- Area built up without building permits: 6000 ha
- Inhabitants in those areas: 400,000

Roma is the capital of Italy and is located in the region of Lazio. The city has a population of over 2.6 million. The economy of Roma has traditionally been based on the service sector, the largest sector being public administration. The construction sector has been a key feature of the city's industrial activity. However, a more diverse economic base now characterises the city including areas such as software design, electronics, and the aerospace industry. TV and cinema production still feature strongly in Rome’s economy. The city also relies heavily on tourism for its growth.

By decree, the province of Roma is involved in urban management and spatial planning issues, whilst the municipality of Rome plays an important role in providing a wide range of public services.

The city of Rome is part of a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) of over 3.8 million inhabitants covering an area of 5,352 km².

### Local participatory practices and integrated policies
- Participatory Suburb Forum
- Neighbourhood Contracts
- Territorial Laboratories
- Participation City Rules
- Suburbs’ Map
- Urban participated regeneration projects
- The Other Economy Platform

The City of Rome believes that a participatory approach enhances the achievement of coherent objectives that respond to the different local needs, by a shared acknowledgement of problems and understanding of dynamics, building solutions together with the committees, associations, cooperatives and single citizens who are actively committed in the development of their territory.

The choice to define strategies and plan regeneration activities with a participatory approach is based on the awareness that regeneration programmes may not exist without integrated policies and the direct involvement of the beneficiaries. This is the concept of participation where the involvement of all social players is essential, in a fully inclusive process that isn’t limited to social or economic groups and/or organized groups and associations. Such a process must open up beyond information and consultation, should be continuous and structured rather than occasional, and be funded pursuant to the principle that “the real city is the city of the inhabitants”.

### The cities which steered the network

- Some figures:
  - Population: 2,823,201
  - Population density (residents per km²): 2,180
  - Surface area: 128,530 ha
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- Local participatory practices and integrated policies
  - Participatory Suburb Forum
  - Neighbourhood Contracts
  - Territorial Laboratories
  - Participation City Rules
  - Suburbs’ Map
  - Urban participated regeneration projects
  - The Other Economy Platform
The city of Bordeaux (central city of the Communauté Urbaine de Bordeaux, which has a total amount of 660,000 inhabitants) is located in the province of La Gironde, capital of the Aquitaine region. World-wide famous for its’ harbour and wine trade, Bordeaux has developed as well “excellence and research poles” in the fields of aeronautics, chemical and pharmaceutical products, information and communication techniques, metallurgy, electronics, glass manufacturing, rubber and plastics. Printing and new publishing technologies are also important industrial employers.

The life of the city is organized around the Municipal Council headed by the Mayor, who represents both the municipality and the State. The city administration is responsible about the following fields: urban planning, public areas, economic development, culture, education (primary schools), social policies and health, sports and youth, urban transport and parking...

**Some figures:**
- Population: 230,000 inhabitants
- Population density (residents per km²): 4,363
- Surface area: 4,455 ha
- Unemployment rate: 14%
- Unemployment rate - female: 16%

**Local participatory practices and integrated policies**
- Neighbourhood Councils
- Thematic Councils: City and Handicap Council, Foreign Communities’ Council, Youth Council, Arts and Cultures’ Council, Sports’ Council, Associations’ Council, Local Prevention and Security Council
- Consultation meeting on the urban planning projects and Quick Consultation Force
- Workshops with political representatives, technicians, residents for a joint production of projects, and Urban Planning Workshops
- Citizen Dialogue Group
- Neighbourhood mixed-management company Bocalan
- Monitoring Group on Citizen Participation

Ever since 1995 the city of Bordeaux has been investing considerably in inhabitants’ participation in many sectors of public policies. Urban planning and management, security, health, social action are fields where decision processes foresee previous information and/or consultation procedures, opened to players who didn’t use to have any status or title, or quality for such involvement in urban governance. The socially weakest groups, youth and foreigners are a specific target from this point of view, with 3 relatively new measures: the citizens’ dialogue group, the Youth Council, the Foreign Communities’ Council. Moreover, consultation meetings, the monitoring group on participation, the neighbourhood councils and the local health council complete on an ‘ad hoc’ or permanent basis the creation of a local institutional public space where the sense and the implementation of local governance in all of its’ dimensions, are opened to debate. All these experiences are doubtlessly an ideal field of observation, deeply embedded into a local and participated approach.
The Agglomération Grenobloise belongs to the Rhône Alpes region. Rhône-Alpes is as large as Switzerland, Belgium or Denmark, and stands among the first European big economic regions. Second French regions by its’ extension and population, it appears as a model on scale 1 to 10 of the country (5,645,407 inhabitants). It is the 13th European region in terms production. The economy of Grenoble is characterised by various industrial sectors including wholesale trade, services to industries and the construction sectors. Information technologies, the biomedical sector and the energy sector are also considered important drivers of the city’s growth (development of nano-technologies...). Another key feature of Grenoble’s economy is that a significant proportion of the city’s firms consist of small to medium sized companies. The territory matches therefore classical economy and innovative research economy.

The Agglomeration Grenobloise, usually called La Metro, is part of a larger urban zone (LUZ) of 520,000 inhabitants. La Metro associates 26 municipalities sharing the same objective: to improve the everyday life of their inhabitants, pooling their efforts to stimulate, invest, plan and implement large projects. Transport, environment, economic development and urban solidarity are the main missions of La Metro. The mayors of the municipalities elect a President who heads the public organisation with its deliberative body, the community council.

**Local participatory practices and integrated policies**

- Development Council of the Agglomération
- Support programme for inhabitants’ participation players (funding, training)
- Observatory of participatory practices
- Research on the Drac river banks’ planning
- Fontaine inhabitants’ committee
- Participatory budget and budget lines of Pont de Claix
- Inhabitants’ participatory funds
- Thursdays of the Agglomération Project
- Consultation on the mobility system
- Science and democracy, associating citizens to the technological challenges
- Grenoble Consultation Councils
- The Commitments’ Observatory

Cradle of the French Revolution of 1789 and starting point of many social innovations, the City of Grenoble and the municipalities of La Métro have been testing participatory practices in the popular neighbourhoods and beyond for close to 30 years. Since a few years now, the participatory rules tend to spread out as well at the “Agglomérations” level. The group of city administrations issued from the same urban area that are associated into the Agglomération Grenobloise contributed to the diffusion of participatory culture and supported the implementation and the enhancement of different participatory democracy models. The ‘agglomeration’ may promote directly participatory processes or be an intermediary, supporting participatory processes at a city or district level. This second aspect is the greatest challenge targeted by the Agglomération Grenobloise.
Comune di Cosenza

Some figures:
- Population: 73,000 inhabitants, doubling during the day
- Surface area: 37,240 km²
- Unemployment rate - Youth: 30 to 45%
- Increasingly ageing and non self-sufficient population
- Immigration and emigration at the time
- Many Rom communities
- Regeneration of the urban centre, problems in the suburbs

Local participatory practices and integrated policies
- Pic - Urban
- Neighbourhood Contract
- Participation in cities’ networks
- The Integrated Strategic Project, the Territorial Integrated Project, the Urban Development Programme (POR), the PRU

The City of Cosenza has several City Counsellors who are empowered to develop participatory processes with social players, negotiated planning, partnership promotion, relationships with the district administrations, information and communication with the citizens; some external consultants are in charge of the development of several participatory processes and, recently, an Agenda 21 Office was opened as well for the implementation of sustainable development participated processes and shared decision making.
Région de Bruxelles - Capitale

Some figures:
- Population: 1,018,029 inhabitants
- 27% of foreigners (55% from EU 15 Member States).
- Population density (residents per km²): 6,240
- Surface: 16.140 ha
- Unemployment rate: 15.9%
- Unemployment rate - under 25 years old: 34%

The Bruxelles-Capitale Région is one of the three regions in the Belgium Federal State. As a federated entity it has its own elected Parliament and Government. It is in charge of a wide range of exclusive areas of competence, like urban planning, housing and urban renewal, environment, economy and employment, public works, transportation system, monitoring of local authorities, management of waste... It includes two language communities (Flemish and French): schools, culture and social affairs are managed by the language community institutions.

The territory is divided into 19 city administrations, each having an elected Council, executive power (Collège des Bourgmestre et Echevins) and autonomous management. Brussels is the administrative capital of Belgium and of both Communities, French and Flemish. Brussels is part of a LUZ (Larger Urban Zone) with +/-1,6 million inhabitants and 54 city administrations (1.104 km²).

The regional territory, with less than 10% of the Belgian population, produces 19% of the Belgian GIP: this apparently favourable situation is balanced by an income in Brussels that only represents 9.5% of the national available income (over the last 10 years, in fact, there has been an important shrink of the average family income among the Brussels Region residents).

The Bruxelles-Capitale Région has been implementing a regeneration policy in neighbourhoods ever since 1994. The main tool of this policy is the neighbourhood contract. Participation, in such a context, is an action framework including three kinds of players: the Région, the City administration and its inhabitants. Every year the regional authority defines which neighbourhoods may have a neighbourhood contract within a perimeter named “Priority development area for Housing and Renewal” (EDLR). This programme strongly relies on the cities’ cooperation, which therefore find themselves in the position of being a mediator between the regional power and the inhabitants. Since 2001, each city has a budget envelop of at least? 10 million for its global regeneration programme on the neighbourhood selected by the Regional Government. This does not include European structural funds’ contributions (Objective 2, Urban) or the private funds.

Participation plays an important role in these measures. In 1993, it was been decided to make it compulsory: the city is compelled to implement a Local Integrated Development Commission (CLDI) with representatives or delegates from the inhabitants of the Neighbourhood Contract area, who give their point of view on the decisions to be made. The regulation of February 3 1994 - Article 9bis § 1 - defines the composition of the CLDI, with delegates - this is the official name - from the inhabitants (at least 8 people), the associations, the school system or the economic players of the neighbourhood where the 4 years programme must be implemented: they “must be chosen within a general neighbourhood assembly organized by the city administration”.

The cities which steered the network
Ayuntamiento de Pamplona

Pamplona is located in the autonomous community of Navarre in Spain. Pamplona’s economy is based on the tourism industry and commerce. A large percentage of the city’s workforce is employed in the public sector. Health and higher education in particular are increasingly competitive sectors. The organization of trade fairs, congresses and large public events are also considered important for the city economy.

The municipal authority of Pamplona runs the city and is elected every four years. Pamplona is part of a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) of 556,000 inhabitants.

Some figures:
- Population: 186,245
- Population density (residents per km²): 7,747
- Surface area: 23.5 Km²
- 16 m² of green space per inhabitant
- Unemployment rate: 8%
- Unemployment rate - female: 14 %
- High family income rate
- Concentrates 70% of industry and services of the region
- Main emerging economic sectors: automotive industry, medicine, aeolian energy
- 7% of immigrants

Local participatory practices and integrated policies
- Municipal funding for associations for social and leisure activities
- Citizens centers network in the boroughs: mixed management
- Pamplona’s Old Quarters Consulting panel
- LA 21 of Pamplona: Information and Consultation to citizens.
- Participation in the planning and management of Pamplona URBAN II Program

Prospects for the participation
Permanent participation platforms via Internet
Systematic consultations related to municipal projects
Extension of URBAN methodology to other socio-economic regeneration projects in the city.
Application of the new Spanish Law regarding the Modernization of Local Administration: creation of a Social Council for the City and permanent participation bodies in the boroughs or districts.
Newcastle Upon Tyne

Some figures:
- Population: 259,531
- Population density (residents per km²): 2,297
- Surface: 113.44 km²
- Unemployment rate: 8%
- Unemployment rate - female: 5%

In the suburbs:
3 main disadvantaged areas of the city:
- outlying residential areas
- generations of unemployment & educational underachievement
- poor health, housing and environment
- high crime rates

Newcastle Upon Tyne is located in the North East region of England. The city has a population of 260,000. Reflecting its status as regional capital, with two universities, the economy of Newcastle is made up of a mix of industries, and also includes financial and business services. Retail and wholesale, public administration, and health services are also important sectors for the city’s growth. The city has recently attracted a number of small firms related to the cultural and media industries, which are contributing to a renaissance in the city.

Newcastle city council has 78 elected councillors, one of whom is the Lord Mayor, covering the 26 wards in the city.

Newcastle upon Tyne is part of a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) that has 795,000 inhabitants.

Local participatory practices and integrated policies

Information
- Community safety themed messages for students, 2003
- Aim = reduce crime against and by students
- Every month, free student newspaper & website gives community safety advice appropriate for time of year
- www.toletsville.co.uk
- Example ‘Beat the Burglar’

Consultation
- Newcastle Plan, the overarching, long-term plan for the city, in 2003
- Consultation aim to be wide and inclusive:
  - General public questionnaires
  - Community Empowerment Network (community groups)
  - Targeted, to involve ‘hard to reach’ groups
  - Theme Partnerships

Interaction
“You Talk, We Listen” conference, 2003

Self-management
BAN Waste campaign
Comune di Napoli

Some figures:
- Population: 1,004,500 (ISTAT 2001)
- Population density (residents per km²): 8,556
- Surface area: 117.27 km²
- Unemployment rate: 18.9% (Province of Naples ISTAT 2004)
- Unemployment rate - female: 26% (Province of Naples ISTAT 2004)
- City migration balance: -3,422

In the suburbs:
- Population 422,000 inhabitants (about 42%)
- Mainly public housing in the northern suburbs
- Mainly illegal buildings in the western Suburbs
- Lack of urban socialization areas
- Lack of collective identity
- Petty crimes and drug dealing

The city of Naples is the third largest city in Italy and is also the main city of southern Italy. It’s the capital of the Campania Region. The port of Naples is the most important port in Italy in terms of goods and passenger traffic. Revenue obtained from tourism and cultural activities is an essential part of the economy’s growth. The recent reduction in the number of industrial jobs has been partially compensated for by growth in other sectors, such as commerce, public administration and the construction sector. The province of Naples (which includes much of the LUZ area) is responsible for health, environment, culture and education policies. Naples is part of a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) of over 3 million inhabitants covering an area of 1,171 km².

Local participatory practices and integrated policies
- Pic - Urban, Spagnoli and Sanità neighbourhood
- “Ali alle vele” Renovation programme in Scampia
- Via Gobetti and Piazza della Socialità, Neighbourhood Contracts
- Integrated policies: youth ‘piazza’, children’s farm, murales along Via Fr.lli Cervi

Urban policies in Naples have mainly been oriented for a long time to improving housing conditions without paying much attention to social exclusion in more deprived neighbourhoods. Delays caused by the municipality were particularly evident, but they were also due to the condition of the city of Naples characterized by profound economic, social and infrastructural problems, and, on the other hand, to the lack of a national policy able to develop a global strategy of action in deprived or neglected areas to support local initiatives and coordinate them. The last two decades have seen a major shift in local urban policies towards more integrated action and a variety of concrete endeavors. The Neapolitan experience appears to be a patchwork of activities and actors that has produced multiple forms of participation in different sectors. In other words, we cannot say Naples has an integrated plan of action to promote social cohesion and citizen participation. However, in spite of these problems, Naples can offer a myriad of remarkable positive experiences as a result of the work of volunteer associations, public agencies and various organisations.
Comune di Reggio Calabria

Some figures:
- Population: 179,509
- Population density (residents per km2): 761
- Surface area: 236.0 km2
- Unemployment rate: 32%
- Unemployment rate - female: 40%

Reggio Calabria is located in the far south of the Italian Peninsula, in Region Calabria. The city is well known for its wonderful landscape, due to its enviable position on the Straits of Messina - cited as Scylla and Charybdis by Homer - and, on the other hand, due to its hinterland climbing up the mountain to 1,300 metres above sea level, accessing the Aspromonte National Park. Among Reggio’s most valuable characteristics, the following are deserve mention:
- Magna Grecia National Museum, where the Bronzes of Riace are kept, together with the traces of the ancient Hellenic civilization that is still represented in the territory by the ethnic group “grecanico”;
- The unique production of Bergamots, well known among the French perfumers who buy all the bergamot essential oil produced;
- Agricultural and oenogastronomic production, which preserves the best traditions of the Mediterranean diet.

The municipal council of Reggio Calabria governs and administers the city. The city is part of a Larger Urban Zone (NUTS) of 570,000 inhabitants, covering an area of 3,183 km2.

In the suburbs:
- Many areas developed without building permits
- Housing concentrated in 3 neighbourhoods: Archi neighbourhood, C.E.P. (west), Sbarre and Modena (east). Following a flood that destroyed Rom hovels, the ROM group has been lodged in the 208 Barrack, in Sbarre.

Local participatory practices and integrated policies
- Telecom Forum - Municipal civic network - Infomayor
- Urban Development Plan (PSU) co-financed by axis 5 within POR Calabria (Regional Operational Plan) 2000/2006, which has been recording a positive involvement of citizens interested in the different activities, such as, for instance, redecoration of Villa Guarita, “Teleassistenza” (remote assistance service supported by online tools) for people considered at risk, renovation of the city steps, Orange square transformation, young people’s involvement in experimental activities aimed at self-employment, etc.
- Municipality in ‘la piazza’ (open-air)
- Territorial Education Activity for minors in the City Northern Area (Urban Reggio Calabria)
- “Pic Urban”
- The social-economic Council of the city of Reggio Calabria that involves associate operators from productive sectors and the services.

Participation, first of all, represents institutional communication, using different interactive tools (Info Point Europa, and the ‘Infosindaco’ Section on the official website of the City) - Participation as a target research activity. In agreement with the committed body (level 3 of NUTS) which is going to renovate the governmental bodies by May, an enlargement of consultation will start through the promotion of a public advisory body composed by society, families, young people and representatives of volunteer associations.
The Partecipando Network

The Partecipando Network, led by the Municipality of Rome and supported by the Urbact Secretariat, is made up of 22 European cities and towns, 9 of which sit on the project Steering Committee. This network of cities and towns aims at disseminating and building on its own experiences gained in terms of citizens’ participation in urban transformations.

Partners provide a multi-faceted mosaic of innovative participatory practices, which have been developed over the last few years, alongside with the traditional tools of governance and planning used by local administrations. These participatory practices, generally promoted by administrations, although sometimes by organized groups alike, put the participation of civil society and individual citizens at the very core of the planning, discussion and management of urban transformation processes.

The partners make up a significant sample of European cities and towns, enabling us to gain a complete understanding of ongoing participatory practices in Europe. The various practices result from different theoretical models and political willingness, and are heavily influenced by the specific local contexts, players, resources and issues, on a case-by-case scenario.

The work done by the network has served as a fruitful occasion to dwell upon, debate and capitalize on the participatory culture, the related technical and widespread skills and competences, and what participation might represent in terms of added value within local development processes for a better quality of life, namely when it comes to meeting the objectives of urban rehabilitation and renewal, and transformation of local areas.

Over the years 2003-2006, Partecipando has carried out local surveys, held thematic workshops and developed a wealth of materials (texts and output), achieving a series of useful results.

The networking

The Partecipando Network is composed of 22 cities and small and medium-sized towns from Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey and Slovenia. Together, they provide a significant and multi-faceted overview of local administrations of different types and with different levels of decentralisation. The common trait of the cities and towns involved is that they have all developed an experience under Urban. By its specificities, each city or town has contributed to the development of a common knowledge about participatory practices in Europe, with their success factors, critical points and trends.

• Comune di Roma, Italy, (Lead partner)
• Mairie de Bordeaux, France (Steering Committee)
• Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise, France (Steering Committee)
• Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, Belgium, (Steering Committee)
• Ayuntamiento de Pamplona, Spain, (Steering Committee)
• Newcastle City Council, United Kingdom, (Steering Committee)
• Comune di Napoli; Italy, (Steering Committee)
• Comune di Reggio Calabria; Italy, (Steering Committee)
• Comune di Foggia; Italy, (Active partner)

The cities of the Urbact Partecipando Network
• Municipality of Stavroupoli, Greece, (Active partner)
• Ville de Paris, France, (Active partner)
• Comune di Venezia, Italy, (Active partner)
• Inverclyde Council, United Kingdom, (Observer)
• Comune di Catania, Italy, (Observer)
• Belfast City Council, United Kingdom, (Observer)
• Municipality of Evosmos, Greece, (Observer)
• City of Duze, Turkey, (Expert status)
• Ville de Cannes, France, (Observer)
• Municipality of Polichni, Greece, (Observer)
• Comune di Cosenza, Italy, (Observer)
• Maribor, Slovenija, (Expert status)

Among the partners of the Urbact Partecipando Network, we also find the European Citizen Network called Hac-er. The Urbact Partecipando network is composed of many cities and towns characterized by specific differences. During the development of network activities and in related exchanges, these differences required a greater effort to be made in order to trace back the administrative and legislative framework of each city or town, and the characteristics of each urban context where each single participatory practice had been developed. This, however, has also provided an extensive and multi-faceted overview of European participatory practices.

The involvement of citizens

Unlike many other European networks of cities and towns, the Urbact partecipando network is marked by the selfsame choice made to take full account of citizens’ view-points, insofar as citizens are the main players in local participatory processes. As a matter of fact, the cities and towns involved in the network have invited not only technical experts and practitioners but also their citizens to participate in their work. From the very beginning citizens have been involved in conducting local surveys. They have been contacted and informed on the project, interviewed on an individual basis or in groups, and have made their contribution to the surveys with their knowledge and perceptions of the participatory processes explored. Later, they have been invited to attend the thematic workshops organized, and had the chance to visit the other cities or towns, the very places of participatory transformations, and to meet with citizens, technical experts and politicians from the other countries.

In some cities or towns (Rome, Grenoble, and Bordeaux), networks have been developed among the citizens involved at different levels in the participatory processes. They have created local support groups and followed the work of the Urbact Partecipando network. These networks have proved useful in fostering and promoting citizens’ participation into the workshops and the project in general.

Citizens have acknowledged the great potential of the Urbact Partecipando network in promoting active contact between project situations and players. The ideas, materials and experiences developed at different urban levels, and sometimes on a large scale, constitute a common wealth of resources to build on.

The approach

Stages and methodology

In order to circulate and capitalize on the experiences of the participating cities and towns, the methodological approach adopted by the Urbact Partecipando Network relies upon the principle that citizens’ participation is a complex process, whereby the results to be achieved are closely related to social factors and the added value of the process itself. Since participatory processes entail the involvement of different players - each with their own skills and competences -, such as local governments, policy-makers and technical experts, citizens’ associations, individual citizens and private investors, the work of our Network has resulted from the interaction among these different actors, namely local administrators, policy-makers, thematic experts and citizens from the participating cities and towns on experiences and projects developed over the last few years after their first Urban experience.

Over the three-year project, the working agenda has consisted in three major stages:
• The first stage focussed on 9 local surveys conducted in as many local areas of the participating cities or towns. The local surveys were intended to gain a better knowledge of the experiences, by a thorough analysis of their strong points and critical points.
• The second stage was focussed on the organisation of 12 thematic workshops held on a regular basis on key issues identified by the network in different partner cities or towns.
• Last but not least, the third stage permitted the organisation of the wealth of knowledge gained into two major products: this European Participation Handbook and the Participation Charter. Both are involvement papers signed by the political representatives of the network.
Structure of the work programme

Methodological scheme

The Subjects of the Local inquiries and Workshops

The network has worked by following an incremental approach consisting of accumulating, analysing in depth and reviewing the knowledge gained. From the very beginning of their work, the participating cities and towns have identified 5 major areas of participation upon which they have developed and structured their analyses, research studies and exchanges.

1. Participation, why and for whom?
   Objectives of participation
   Participation of all the citizens
   Involvement of the weakest groups
   Role and definition of the actor’s framework

2. Communication and training of players and actors
   The role of communication and training in participatory processes Information - training - communication
   Access to knowledge
   Creation of a common language and communication contexts
   Intensity and direction of communication flows between actors
3. Methods and tools for citizens’ participation

- Tools
- Places and time for participation
- Resources
- Participatory budgeting
- Media
- Process managing systems

4. Participation aspects in each stage of project development

- Integrated approach to urban environmental and socio-economic problems for local development
- Participation at different levels: deepness (information, consultation, joint project development and joint management) and scale (from local to regional level)

5. How to assess the results and impact of participation.

- Value the results (products, unexpected impact, resources...)
- Value the impact of participated processes (change in politics, in the relation between citizens and administrators, in the administrative structure and procedures, etc...)

Local Inquiries

During the first working stage, the network launched 9 local surveys conducted by the thematic experts1 of the Urbact Partecipando Network. The local surveys were intended to analyse one or more participatory processes in the territories of 9 participating cities or towns, and highlighted the success factors and critical elements of such processes.

Local surveys were conducted in the following cities and towns: Rome, Paris, Newcastle, Bordeaux, Grenoble, Cosenza, Reggio Calabria, Brussels and Naples. The local surveys analysed in depth the type of process dealt with, according to the following criteria:

- Geographical scale
- Participation level: information/consultation/joint project production/joint management
- Relation between the participatory process and a Public Budget line or Plan
- Management of the relationship between general objectives, specific objectives, actions, results expected and results achieved
- Degree of involvement of the weakest groups
- Administrative structure (point out the degree of cross-sectoral work, of subsidiarity)
- Tools, methods and procedures to involve actors (who, how and where leads participatory processes)
- Management of communication by the Administration
- Integration between the different sector policies
- Relations with other planning tools
- Resources used

The experts entrusted with the local surveys - and appointed by the participating cities or towns - analysed an average of 3 or 4 case studies. They then compiled fact-sheets on the territories surveyed and a number of practices observed during their surveys. The Partecipando Network maintains a database of about 100 fact-sheets, broken down into two distinct groups. One group describes the reference regulatory framework and the major policies promoting the involvement of citizens in urban choices for each country, city/town or metropolitan area. The other group provides a short overview of the various practices developed in each town or city, and this may well offer a snapshot of co-ordinated activities and individual projects making participation a ‘pivotal’ element in the governance of the city or town.

From an organisational and methodological viewpoint, local surveys have highlighted excellent cooperation on the part of local administrations and decentralised bodies; the important presence of multiple and varied social dialogue pathways, which have been organised over time following a constructive and incremental learning approach; a positive response from social partners; a significant presence of sustainability-related issues, as suggested by citizens; wide-ranging publications and videos testifying to the wealth of the processes developed.

1 Giovanni Allegretti et Giancarlo Paba, Roma; Bob Evans et Lyn Dodds, Newcastle; Bernard Francq, Bruxelles; Marion Gret, Paris; Enrica Morlicchio, Napoli; Giovanni Laino, Cosenza, Reggio Calabria; Giancarlo Paba, Roma; Agnès Villechaize-Dupont, Sandrine Rui, Bordeaux; Yves Sintomer, Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise.
Findings of Local Inquiries

The analysis and benchmarking of the findings of the various local surveys highlighted some key aspects in participatory processes, such as:

• The importance and impact of financial resources on participatory processes;
• The effectiveness and usefulness of participation in the improvement of public policies;
• The diversity of participating authorities and the means of implementing participation;
• Delicate pathways to institutionalise participation;
• The need to integrate into these processes those population groups (i.e. women, migrants, etc.) generally excluded and as a social disadvantage.

The experts’ work fully involved policy-makers, local administrators and the citizens who had taken part in the processes analysed. On the basis of the surveys, the network had the opportunity during the thematic workshops to dwell upon concrete cases and experiences developed by the cities and/or towns under the Urban programme.

The Thematic Workshops

The second stage of the project focused on the holding of 10 thematic workshops, which took place in 9 partner cities or towns, in co-operation with the leading city or town. The workshops served as an occasion to foster direct discussion about the participatory practices analysed.

Each workshop was attended by delegations from participating cities and towns, made up of an equal number of local administrators and citizens. It was thus possible to have administrators and citizens from different cities and towns to get to know each other, and explore in depth the different experiences developed.

The thematic workshops were organised in different cities and towns, but following a common methodological approach based upon visits of the places and fora of transformation, theoretical presentations on the subject, presentation of local practices, setting up of working parties, reflections and debates.

Organizational scheme of thematic workshops

- A theoretical presentation
  For each of the five themes defined by the network partners, a scientific introduction was given in order to introduce the previous theoretical studies of the problem, its concrete implications and the key questions to be addressed in the working groups.
- Local visits to participated transformation projects
  (A tour in the transformation target neighborhood with town officials, local inhabitants and foreign participants;
  First hand knowledge of cases analyzed;
  A better understanding of success factors and critical elements;
- Participation of the inhabitants involved in such a process
  Tour booklet used (a document summarizing the project visited during the tour);
  Promotion of local inhabitants’ networks in connection with the Urbact Partecipando network;
  Participation of the inhabitants from each partner city in the Thematic Workshops;
  The debate collects the points of view of the inhabitants themselves;
  When the inhabitants go back home, they are stimulated by the new methods and approaches discovered to improve their territory.
- Working groups
  One theme divided in key questions in each Workshop;
  An effort to: compare best practices, deepen their analysis, define different key questions or guidelines for each theme, enrich the debate.
The Thematic Workshops

RÉGION BRUXELLES - CAPITALE, OCTOBER 21-23 2004

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING OF ACTORS

45 PARTICIPANTS, OF WHOM 32 INHABITANTS AND LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE HOST CITY

TOUR
The host city presented to the partners the case study of “Contrat de Quartier Maritime”, during a visit to the neighbourhood introduced by a description of the participatory process implemented by the Molenbeek Major. The visit to the neighbourhood was guided by the members of the Design group and various inhabitants and local associations representatives.

PRESENTATIONS
• the instrument “Contract de quartier” in Brussels, Scheme of the participatory processes
• the local survey results
• General and theoretical framework
• the “Four cities” programme, in particular its didactic modules, aims and results
• Rome (Neighborhood Contracts, Corviale Laboratory)
• Cosenza (Neighborhood Contract)
• Reggio Calabria (Villa Guarna)

AGGLOMÉRATION GRENOBLOISE, NOVEMBER 4-7 2004

PARTICIPATION ASPECTS IN EACH STAGE OF A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

69 PARTICIPANTS, OF WHOM 49 INHABITANTS AND LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE HOSTING CITY

TOUR
“Mistral” district and APUS premises in Western district:
• Pont de Claix: participatory budget for Pont de Claix and APUS, Echirolles
• Fontaine: Committee of inhabitants of Fontaine and Grenoble’s “Mistral” urban project,

PRESENTATIONS
• Theoretical introduction based on Grenoble and Rome Local surveys
• The creation of a “parent’s school” designed with specific goals in the City of Naples
• The participatory Budget in Garbatella District, Progetto Laboratorio Association, City of Rome
• The Laurentino Neighbourhood Laboratory described by an inhabitant, Alberto Voci

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**ROMA, NOVEMBER 25-28 2004**

**COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING OF ACTORS**

48 PARTICIPANTS, OF WHOM 37 INHABITANTS AND LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE HOSTING CITY

**TOUR**

The tour explored several neighbourhoods in the western Roman suburbs, like Primavalle, Massimina and Corviale. Stops and walks were planned to observe directly and interact with local actors who were involved in participated processes: Arrival and walk in Primavalle - Presentation of the participatory process in the Neighbourhood Contract, Arrival and walk in Corviale, with the neighbourhood’s inhabitants - Presentation of the Territorial Laboratory

**PRESENTATIONS**

- Introduction to the theme and the workshop based on the Roman local survey
- Theoretical focus of the Rome Workshop based on the previous Brussels Workshop
- The interactive tool of the Suburb’s Map, a GIS system based on satellite imagery allowing officers and citizens to read and survey the territory in an integrated approach
- Overview on tools and communication activities linked to the urban transformation programmes.
- The Local Development Agencies in Newcastle as integrated planning tools and the strategies for economic operators’ involvement
- The Community Empowerment Fund in Newcastle and their communication strategies
- Training of actors in the participatory processes in Rome

**ROMA, JANUARY 20-22 2005**

**METHODS AND TOOLS FOR CITIZEN’S PARTICIPATION**

60 PARTICIPANTS, OF WHOM 43 INHABITANTS AND LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE HOSTING CITY

**TOUR**

The tour explored the neighbourhoods of Ostiense, Eur, Laurentino and Garbatella. Stops and walks were planned to observe directly and interact with local actors who were involved in participated processes: Arrival and walk in Laurentino - Presentation of the Laurentino Laboratory and of the participatory processes in the Neighbourhood Contract, Arrival and walk in Ostiense-Garbatella, meeting with the neighbourhood inhabitants.

**PRESENTATIONS**

- The participated processes in the XI District
- Focus on the theme based on the Rome Local Survey
- Laurentino neighbourhood contract and laboratory
- Garbatella neighbourhood contract
- The participatory process for the creation of the “City of Alternative Economy”
- Economic policies for participated local development.
VENETIA, FEBRUARY 10-12 2005

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING OF ACTORS

39 PARTICIPANTS, OF WHOM 15 INHABITANTS AND LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE HOSTING CITY

TOUR
• San Giuliano Park: PIC URBAN I
• Altobello Area - Neighborhood Contract II - Etam Unit - City of Venice and Delegazione di Zona di Altobello
• Giudecca Area and District Council 2 area - Urban Italia programme “ Apriamo i muri” (Let’s Open The Walls)

PRESENTATIONS
• Focus on the theme: Communication and training in Urban Regeneration Projects
• Participatory Budget. The Experience of the XI Municipality of Rome
• Knowledge as a precondition for participation: Social and Environmental Reporting in the City of Venice
• Participation arena: the philosophy of intervention of the ETAM Agency of the City of Venice
• Communication strategies for the empowerment of local actors: the beltways-effect project
• Official Opening of the Digital Participatory Space in Marghera - Digital Participation of Citizens - Interreg III B Cades LHASA Project

BORDEAUX, MARCH 17-19 2005

PARTICIPATION, WHY AND FOR WHOM?

103 PARTICIPANTS, OF WHOM 82 INHABITANTS AND LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE HOSTING CITY

TOUR
A “zoom on experiences” substituted the Tour, with 3 presentations and debates:
• Council on Handicap in the City
• Citizens’ dialogue group of the Municipal Social Action Centre (CCAS)
• The voice of youth / Youth Council (15-22 years old)

PRESENTATIONS
• Opening by the Mayor of Bordeaux
• Presentation of the Workshop programme by the City Counsellor
• Objectives of the Workshop and introduction on key questions by an expert Facilitator
• The experience of the monitoring group on citizen participation (Bordeaux 2001-2002), by the City Counsellor
• Presentation of the Bordeaux Local Inquiries by the Experts (the Local Council to prevent Insecurity in St Michel neighbourhood, the Urban Planning Lab of Chartrons-Nord)

Update on the Partecipando Network
Newcastle, April 7-10 2005

How to Assess the Results and Impact of Participation?

64 Participants, of whom 26 inhabitants and local officers from the hosting city

Tour
- City Centre Walking Tour to the Newcastle’s award winning restoration and renewal programme in Grainger town and the surrounding city centre. The tour provided information on community involvement in the regeneration of the central business district and how it was evaluated.
- Bus and walking tour of projects and the New Deal for Communities area in the West End of Newcastle: programme offices and meeting with some of the project leaders and local people that have contributed to the regeneration of the area.
- Bus/walking trip to the Baltic Art Gallery. The gallery contains some of the most important contemporary art exhibits in the region. The building itself is a converted flour mill in Gateshead along the banks of the River Tyne. It is a fine example of the recent cultural led regeneration and also the Newcastle/Gateshead collaboration of Councils, which has further improved visitor attraction to cultural activities.

Presentations
- New Deal for Communities regeneration programme: overview of the programme, the governance structure, how the community is involved and the future
- Newcastle Partnership EU Urbact Young Citizens’ Project:
  - Investing in Children and the Children and Young People’s Partnership in Newcastle
  - Youth Inclusion Programme in Newcastle’s West End
- METROINVISIBILE - Urban Naples’ project for young people
- Evaluation of the New Deal for Communities Programme
- Community Empowerment Fund
- “The Big Idea”
- Grenoble on Evaluation Tool of Participation

Pamplona, May 27-28 2005

Participation, Why and for Whom?

40 Participants, of whom 18 inhabitants and local officers from the hosting city

Tour
The URBAN neighbourhood:
- Environmental Education Center S. Pedro
- Media Library for new Businesses
- Palacio Condestable
- Paseo de Ronda.

Presentations
- Welcome and opening of the workshop by the Mayor
- Introduction to the workshop’s objectives
- Relationship with the Summary of the Bordeaux Workshop. Summary of Conclusions
- Launching the key questions and reactions from partners
- Citizen participation experiences in Pamplona
- Pamplona URBAN experience. The spirit of participation and concertation in urban regeneration
Objectives of participation, involvement of the weakest groups, role and definition of the actors’ framework

- A symptom of failures, distance between politics and society ideally united in the polis
- A way to improve effectiveness, democracy and social cohesion
- Single, specific objects to be linked with big challenges
- Reach the weakest groups: a methodological challenge
- Pressure on the most powerful parties absent (real estate, …): a political duty
- Representativity is not an issue: diversity is to be achieved
- explicit objects, rules and framework
- Honour pact, not image operation
- Lasting attention and commitment
- Institutionnalisation may create a positive inclusion of participatory practices in everyday institutional and organisational behaviour but risks of creating empty recipients which people abandon, specific skills required

Information - training - communication, access to knowledge, creation of a common language and communication contexts, interaction between actors

- “Outreach” to the final beneficiary
- Project approach instead of programme approach, never interrupt the flow of communication

Guidelines from the Thematic Workshops

- Promote mutual learning and self-training
- activate local social resources
- Create convivial moments within the neighbourhood
- Innovative tools, interactive maps, arts and creative tools, different approaches for different targets
- Value other languages, apart from the written and oral communication, spontaneous initiatives
- Promote participatory training within primary and secondary school
- Serious lack of financial resources specifically allocated (facilitators, supplies and documents)
- Entrusting external consultants to coordinate the participatory processes may improve quality and efficiency, but has higher costs; training internal staff is suitable, but their personal attitude towards social dialogue and the quality of the training programmes must be valued beforehand
- Asset-based approach, in order to invert the usual problem-based approach, Change the stereotyped vision of the neighbourhoods

Tools, spaces and time for participation, resources, processes’ management and evaluation

- No tool is the best one
- Creative aspect in participated project planning: designing of complex processes adapted to each specific context
- Time, human assets and financial resources required
Territorial laboratories are a good means of keeping community involvement active. Applies to social policies, and not only physical regeneration policies, participation is a social process. Value impact on skills, confidence, dignity, and involvement of the community, not only direct products.

Integrated approach for local development, participation at different levels: deepness of involvement and geographic scale.

- Construct involvement regardless of who initiated the process - inhabitants or administration.
- Regular information to absent and remote stakeholders.
- Organize varying degrees of participation: greater involvement with the more “motivated” participants without neglecting other beneficiaries, continuity, flexibility and adaptability.
- Before: discuss objectives - After: maintenance, follow up, evaluation.
- Connection between decentralisation and participation is not automatic.
- Start from the identity of places to order specific priorities, but avoid localism: solidarity + subsidiarity.
- Social Workers are the first step in outreach; they are real experts of the territory.
- Social policies overcome the risk of assistance for the mere sake of assistance by linking their activities to an integrated strategic vision for local sustainable development.

A Thematic Workshop for the elected officials regarding the theme ‘Delegated democracy and direct democracy’ was hosted by the city of Cosenza. The Workshop was attended by... elected officials from the partner cities and concluded with a political commitment document called ‘The Participation Charter’.

**Cosenza, September 22-24 2005**

**DELEGATED DEMOCRACY AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY: APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS AND LOCAL ACTORS’ INVOLVEMENT PROCESSES IN THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC POLICIES**

Local Elected Members attending:

Kadir BADUR, Elected member of the Municipal Council, Duzce
Claude FARGE, 1er adjoint au maire de Pont de Claix - délégué au Conseil communautaire de la Métro, Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise
Iraklis GONIADIS, City Counsellor, Stavroupoli
Marco GELMINI, Vicepresidente dell’Associazione Rete del Nuovo Municipio (ARNM)
Nuccio IOVINE, Senator della Repubblica
Mehmet KELES, Mayor, Duzce
Paul MASKEY, Deputy Chairman, Belfast
Nelson MC CAUSLAND, Chairman of Urban Regeneration and European Affairs, Belfast
Jean-Philippe MOTTE, Adjoint au maire de Grenoble délégué à la politique de la ville - délégué communautaire de la Métro, Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise
Diamantis PAPADOPOULOS, Mayor, Stavroupoli
Franco PIPERNO, Assessore alla Partecipazione, Cosenza
Michele PORCARI, Sindaco di Matera
Edouard SCHOENE, Conseiller municipal délégué aux équipements culturels mairie de Fontaine, Communauté d’Agglomération Grenobloise
Emilio VIAFORA, Segretario nazionale CGIL, Italia
Catherine GEGOUT, Conseillère de Paris et Présidente de la Commission des Affaires Sociales du Conseil de Paris
Aurelien ROUSSEAU, Cabinet de l’Adjoint à la décentralisation et aux relations avec les associations, les territoires et les citoyens
Olivia P’TITO, Députée du Parlement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale
The European Handbook for participation

All the work done thus far has contributed to the preparation of this European Participation Handbook produced in the third and last stage of the project. The Handbook reflects the activities of the network, as well as the experiences developed by the participating cities and towns, and translates the thinking of the local administrators, experts and citizens who have been involved in the project.

This present Handbook contains the findings of analyses, debates and reflections developed by the cities and towns involved in the Urbact Partecipando network and its major activities. The most interesting issues dealt with and key materials produced stem from local surveys carried out by the experts. Through the presentation of interesting local practices by the host city or town, the thematic workshops highlighted thematic issues to be tackled, and provided food for thought, as suggested by technical experts, citizens, and local administrators attending the workshops.

The participation Charter

The Participation Charter is a political commitment document for the development of participation in European cities as a result of debates, work, and the concrete exchange of experiences among elected members, public officials and inhabitants involved in the URBACT Partecipando network.

The Charter refers to the principles that have already been suggested by other European Union documents, i.e. the Recommendation by Council of Europe (Rec 2001/19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of citizens in local public life) and the Saarbrucken Declaration, signed at the European Conference on Urban Future in 2005.

The Saarbrucken Declaration, in particular, describes the essential criteria of the Urban approach and what are called the "Acquis Urban", enhancing inhabitants’ participation for urban transformation and the integrated approach.

The cities signing the Charter wish to forge ahead with respect to the aforementioned documents by adding concrete commitments to the principles enounced, striving to support inhabitants’ participation in the implementation of public policies (governance).

The cities, but also the groups of cities on a wider geographical scale, are the essential historical and physical places for the growth of democratic practices, places where citizens may have a main role in territorial development.

European Cities are now facing the problem of a crisis in representation systems and scarce citizens’ participation not only in voting but also in civic life overall, especially in deprived areas, with a rising lack of confidence and sense of powerlessness about decision making.

The cities realize that the different participatory strategies are neither equivalent nor neutral, since they represent specific ideas of society, cultural and practical standards, and basically, development models to be affirmed.

- To widen participation and local democratic spaces (integrating representative democracy and participatory democracy)
- A strategic vision of local development oriented towards environmental, social, economic and political sustainability
- The empowerment of citizens to improve social networking, solidarity, social justice, as well as the ability to make shared decisions in the common interest and recognize the value of "common wealth", territorial patrimony and public spaces.

The charter is organized under three titles:

I. Participation as a means to build concrete collective choices improving social cohesion
II. Participation as a mutual learning process, opened and continuous, where local communities grow and build collective knowledge
III. Participation builds civic networks, identity and self sustainable local development, transforms and renews public policies and local administration practices

Each title includes two kinds of statements:

- the Urbact Partecipando network Acquis
- the partner cities’ commitments
The capitalization of the network

Within the framework of the work accomplished by Urbact, the exchange among the partner cities and towns constituted a richness for the participants a wealth that should be made the object of further discussion and mutual learning. During the three-year period the network explored in depth the varieties of European participatory practices. The network participants - i.e. policy-makers, technical experts and ordinary citizens - availed themselves of the nature of the network and the methodological approach in order to gain a better understanding of the different local experiences through on-the-spot visits and dialogue with the parties directly concerned. The three-year involvement in the project has led to a considerable wealth of knowledge to be found not only be found in this present Handbook, but maintained and constantly updated on the project website.

The main drive for the network has always been the willingness to learn from the experience gained and the success factors, and to come to terms with difficulties. The commitment to defining guidelines and methodologies has always been driven by the concrete experiences gained by the partner cities and towns. The pathway developed has enabled us to capitalize on a number of results and now makes it possible to single out a few elements making up the so-called Acquis of the Urbact Partecipando network.

Following the lead of the Urban experience, the work of the network has shown that the adoption of an integrated approach to urban policies proves to be more and more effective. By tackling the multiple territorial, social, economic and cultural dimensions, this approach enhances the role of local players by putting the participatory processes at the core of urban rehabilitation and sustainable urban transformations.

Furthermore, the experience gained within this network has concretely shown the importance of fostering an exchange among European citizens on the implementation of urban policies.
The theme of participation is central to politics and to democracy. The very concept of politics, its entomological roots dating back to the Greek polis, recalls an image of participation: within the agora, those admitted intervened by expressing their own opinions, contributing to the elaboration of decisions.

Thanks to the endeavors organized by the European Union in the last 15 years, many citizens, activists, politicians and professionals, operating within or outside public administration and no-profit groups, have had a chance to compare ideas on participation, discuss the necessity to re-think forms of representation as well as to acknowledge and support the qualitative growth of social ties and of the new forms of direct citizen involvement. Amidst many differences, it is still possible to speak of a people on a quest, before and during the elaboration of the new European Convention, to give content and depth to a social Europe.

In modern advanced societies, we see a discussion underway, on an undeniable fact: government is not effective enough.

Though living conditions are improving, the opportunity gap is still too deep and widespread. Development models produce social polarization, living conditions not easily sustainable, even from an environmental point of view, while individualism, uncertainty and the feeling of insecurity are rising. Even though new generation public policies, shifts in government coalitions, and institutional reforms have fielded new models for consensus building and implementing a decision-making process in various European countries, the aforementioned problems highlight the presence of a broad based and collective phenomenon within which to rethink contents and forms of democracy, giving particular relevance to the contents and forms of people participation.

Work and discussion within the “Urbact - Partecipando” network has brought to the surface the need to address the theme of democracy starting from an awareness of the crisis in the traditional forms of politics, evident especially in a progressive withdrawal of the population from participation in public life and a growing mistrust towards institutions common to all cities in the network. Hence, the idea to organize a meeting between elected politicians from the cities of the network to discuss these themes, hosted by the city of Cosenza (Italy) the 22nd - 23rd of September 2005. During this meeting, the cities addressed the diverse styles of local government, starting from experiences and models described in the literature concerning this issue.
Democracy and participation models

Modern democracies are representative: decisions are taken by those persons, elected by the people and delegated by it to govern. In reality, there are different theories and models in democracy and different types of participation.

The US scholar David Held, developing work done by Canadian philosopher Crawford B. Macpherson (1911 - 1987) and without claiming to include all approaches, identifies four classical models of democracy (classic idea of democracy in ancient Athens, republican concept of self-government of a community - which, in turn, has two more variants in protective democracy and developing democracy - and the Marxist concept of direct democracy), and four contemporary models, elitist-competitive democracy, plural democracy, legal democracy and participatory democracy.

Variables of democracy according to Held’s scheme (1996)

Theoretically, a democracy needs citizens who are informed about political issues, actively involved in them and capable of exerting influence on public decisions. On the other hand, both research and direct observations question this model of the rational and very active citizen: more often than not, people are not well informed and not very committed, involved or active. Moreover, some do claim that a certain level of apathy is good for a democracy. Non participation could be read as a sign of positive consensus to those in governments (S.M. Lipset, 1963).

Ever since the 1970’s, a swift growth in new forms of political participation has been witnessed. Ever more present within contemporary democracies, correctives to this proxy principle have emerged (e.g. with referenda on specific themes, and different forms of citizens’ participation in policy making). Even though awareness associating efficacy of administration to the simplification of processes has increased, along with a reduction in the number of elected officials and an extension of their delegated powers, democratic systems in which ample forms of public discussion and dissent do exist, expand the degree of institutional democratic life, and, according to some authors, promise more credible effectiveness because they tackle dissent by increasing the degree of inclusion perceived by individuals and organizations.

We are dealing here with a sphere of practices different from those of political participation but no less relevant in terms of a social history of the city, and of European countries, for the renewal and the diffusion of cultural approaches, world-visions, and sets of values marking the life of significant segments of European society.

Moreover, these less-conventional forms of participation - even though in some cases clearly located in a sphere markedly distinct from the representative one - have not been lived as alternatives to more conventional forms.

Organizations at large (in a broad sense and therefore including foundations, co-ops, volunteer associations, grassroots organizations in general, etc), due to the significant contribution they have made to the practice of ideological and cultural pluralism, and in some cases bearing witness to the pursuit of self-government by the people, sparked growth in the quality and expansion of democracy, favoring access to spaces of public action that usual forms of representation would not have allowed. Considering the essential contribution provided by associations to the development of civic sense, evident is the link between reproduction and enhancement of social capital, expansion and en-
hancement of the democracy of contexts. (Robert Putnam, 1993, p. 66, claims that the quality of public life and the performance of institutions are powerfully influenced by the norms and networks of civic commitment).

Model I, Classic Democracy: citizens should enjoy political equality so as to be free to rule and, in turn, be ruled over.

Model II a, Protective Republic [see Machiavelli]: Political Participation as an essential condition for personal freedom; if the citizens do not rule, they will be ruled over by others.

Model II b, Development Republic: Citizens must enjoy political and economic equality capable of making sure that no one may be master of others and that others may enjoy the same freedom and independence in the process of collective development.

Model III a, Protective Democracy: Citizens want to be protected by those in office – and vice versa – in order to be assured that those in power pursue policies coherent with the general interests of the citizenship.

Model III b, Development democracy [see Stuart Mill]: Participation in political life is necessary not only for the participation to individual interests, but also for the creation of citizens who are informed, involved and prone to self development. Political involvement is essential for a “higher and harmonious” expansion of individual abilities.

Model IV [see Marx and Engels], Direct democracy and end of politics: The “free development by everyone” can only be achieved by the free development each person. To realize freedom, and an end to exploitation, fundamentally complete political and economic equality are needed; only equality can guarantee the conditions for the realization of the potentialities of every human being, so that “every woman and man may be able to give” according to their own capabilities and “receive whatever is needed”.

Model V, Competitive Elitism [see Shumpeter, Weber]: Selective method for an expert and creative elite able to take the necessary legislative and administrative decisions. An obstacle to the excesses of political leadership.

Model VI, Pluralism: Ensures government by minorities and therefore political freedom. It is a crucial obstacle to the development of excessively powerful factions and unreceptive state.

Model VII, Legal Democracy: The majoritary principle is an effective and desirable way to protect individuals from arbitrary government and to defend freedom itself. In order for political and economic life to become areas of freedom and personal enterprise, majority rule must be limited by the rule of law, with a view to its impartial and wise operation.

Model VIII, Participatory Democracy: An equal right to self-development can only be achieved in a “participatory society”, a society encouraging a feeling of political effectiveness, nurturing an interest towards collective problems and contributing to the development of a well informed citizenry, capable of retaining prolonged interest in the governance process.

Model IX a, Democratic Autonomy [or liberal socialism]: Individuals should enjoy equal rights and, consequently, equal obligations concerning the specification of the political context generating and limiting the opportunities available to them, on the condition that they do not use this context to deny the rights of others.

Model IX b, Cosmopolitan Democracy: In a world of intense regional and global relations determining “overlapping communities”, the principle of local autonomy has to be reinforced on both eth local and national level with respect to a supra-national propensity.

Democratization of representation

Promoted by institutions or from the grassroots, these initiatives seek to re-order and enhance democracy by reducing dimensions of proxy, while augmenting the quantity and quality of the forms of representation proposed. Therefore, they are efforts to inform people about decision-making processes. An attempt is made to boost the “councils’ democracy”, of caucuses, with several forms that, in some instances, are proposed according to what many authors define as deliberative democracy practices.

1 The term has already been proposed in literature by Bohrman, 1998, but here it is been used in a more empirical sense.
Learning from experience
THE DISTRICT COUNCILS (BORDEAUX)
Compulsory in France for cities with more than 80,000 inhabitants ever since February 2002, the District Councils were created in 1995 by the Mayor of Bordeaux in order to establish ongoing dialogue between inhabitants and the city council. They constitute one of the modes set in place in Bordeaux to foster participatory democracy.

The District Councils are discussion fora open to all those who either work or reside in a given district. It is of primordial importance for inhabitants to voice their opinions, but these councils are also places where information is provided in projects of interest to the district itself or to the whole city. Convened and chaired by the mayor or his delegated deputy, they meet at least twice a year in each district and are intended to ensure the broadest possible degree of participation and representation. People are informed about the holding of the meetings by press releases and posters. Those who sign up for the meeting receive a personal participation with a copy of the meeting agenda. Those who so wish may send in topics or issues they would like to discuss during such meetings. Attendance in rising in all the districts and ranges from 150 to 300 people at each meeting.
Meeting reports are made available on the mayor’s website and distributed to participants at the next meeting.

WHERE:
The city council has divided the municipality into 12 districts. Each one of which has its own council bearing the name of the district in question.

Associative democracy

Within experiences of associative democracy, on the other hand, the enhancement of democracy is not pursued by political participation alone. Ever since World War II, European history has been marked by well-known episodes as well as many minor facts, to say nothing of diverse forms of civil involvement on the part of organized groups in order to achieve goals of public utility. This is a field of practices different from those of political participation, but no less relevant for the social history of the cities and towns in Europe, for the renewal and the diffusion of cultural approaches, world visions and sets of values that have marked the life of significant segments of European society.
**Learning from experience**

“CRÈCHES RUN BY MOTHERS” (NAPOLI)

This experience has involved the active participation of a group of mothers called upon to manage directly the crèches. The reason for the success of this initiative lies with the fact that project beneficiaries have not been simply informed but actively involved in the development of the project.

Urban represents one of the most important co-funded urban policy programmes in Naples. Urban helped to sustain a more trusting relationship between citizens and public institutions. Urban was characterised by a high degree of collaboration and networking by the various actors and associations involved. The dense network of grass-roots organisations helped participants to gain recognition as partners already prior to the establishment of Urban.

WHERE:
The Urban programme was developed in Quartieri Spagnoli - the so-called Spanish neighbourhoods - , one of the most problematic and deprived areas in the city, as well as in the neighbourhood called Sanità, which is characterized by increasing unemployment, degradation of physical infrastructures and the re-emergence of crime, all of which have had negative consequences on the quality of life, the sense of belonging and perception of security, especially for older generations.

Moreover, these less conventional forms of participation have not been experienced as alternatives to more conventional forms, even if in some instances they have been clearly situated in a pre-political environment (distinct from the political confrontation fora).

Associations at large (including trade unions, foundations, cooperatives, voluntary organizations, social institutions at large), have contributed to the creation of spaces for public action and the enhancement of the social capital that usual forms of representation would not have allowed. It is doubtlessly in this case that we began to speak about deliberative democracy.

**Deliberative democracy**

The expression “deliberative democracy” refers, in general, to a process based on a public discussion among free and equal individuals, thereby providing grounds for its own legitimacy. Deliberation is to be intended not in the sense of decision, but as the dialogue or discussion preceding decision (see Morgan, 2005).

Within deliberative fora, decision-making is entrusted to the equal, organized interaction of the subjects involved, be they common citizens, public powers or organizations. Interaction is then organized according to specific techniques, accepting rules that the participants must share and agree upon. Deliberative fora are born more out of action on the part of representative institutions than by the initiative of social movements. Pressure from civil society is often necessary to breathe life into these experiences, but usually does not suffice. Actually needed is a meeting of minds between the thrust from the grassroots and the willingness of politicians or political institutions to seek new ways. (see Bobbio, 2002)
What is the purpose of enhancing Participation?

What is the purpose of fostering citizen participation, and which citizens are to be solicited? Such issues are eminently political. To find an answer, we must challenge our perception of democracy and citizenship, as well as of urban spaces and of their future; by extending and deepening the dialogue, participation raises issues of legitimacy: who can we legitimately dialogue with, about what, and why? Such issues are also eminently practical. From Rome to Grenoble, from Pamplona to Newcastle, from Cosenza to Bordeaux, notwithstanding great diversity and a few indisputable difficulties, experience has proven that the added-value of participation lies both in the quest for directly useful objectives and the creation of public spaces meeting a decisive collective will.

Participation, why?

The target: participation to make cities places where life together is pleasant... on a long-term basis.

The ambition: participation to “change things” together, in the general interest

Participation can only be meaningful if its ambition is to "change things" according to a resolutely collective way, in the interest of all. The challenge is to transform city and urban social relations, which entails fostering participation around multiple objects, from the most personal to the most general. Actually, the very specificity and strength of participatory initiatives lies in focusing on individual aspirations, concerns and habits to establish the general interest, and vice-versa, to discuss collective issues while at the same time considering individual lives. In fact, participation reintroduces a political touch in the urban sphere. Banking on community life, participation favours the crossbreeding of convictions, energies and competencies of civil society, experts and elected representatives. Comparing requirements, standpoints and different know-how makes it possible not only to construct social demand collectively, but also to identify points of consensus, or even the general interest, in order to prefigure action. Breaking with clientelism, a participatory approach relieves the pressure exercised on local authorities by multiple and diverging individual requests.
It enables citizens to assess both their differences and common points. So where is the challenge? To allow for cross-learning and reciprocal acknowledgement to favour a common urban culture and language, thereby encouraging each person to become more responsible. Participation is meaningful only if it prefigures action. It demands decisions, supports the achievement of tangible initiatives and concrete measures. Its absence causes frustration and demobilization, since any form of participatory action enables citizens to assess their interest in participation and engage durably in participatory approaches. Consequently, the results deserve to be highlighted; the effects must be perceptible, though they are symbolic.

“Participation is more than just talking. You can talk about anything at the pub, but that is not what participation is all about. You talk when you have the impression it can get you somewhere. Or else people will be disappointed. Participation must be encouraged provided people are really empowered to change things. Let us not offer the illusion that results can be attained when they cannot. “The purpose is to refrain from talking for the sake of it”. (Inhabitant of Brussels)

Learning from experience

THE TOWN PLANNING WORKSHOP AT CHARTRONS NORD (BORDEAUX)

Though the participants were satisfied with their contribution to the neighbourhood diagnosis, disappointment arose following the lack of communication concerning actions that had well and truly been undertaken, and the excessive delay between discussions and tangible implementation.

The Urban Development Workshop enabled the participants to speak about the problems they encounter day by day and led to the preparation of a programme document. Mobilized for the duration of the preparation of the district project were inhabitants, associations, main players in the district (e.g. directors of schools and social centers, merchants, etc.), elected officials and technical experts. This experience brought to the surface the inhabitants’ expertise regarding daily life in their district.

WHERE:
Chartrons, Bacalan, and Bastide districts.

Learning from experience

PIGNETO DISTRICT CONTRACT (ROMA)

After initial enthusiasm for the participatory approach, the citizens progressively became demobilized out of a lack of visible project implementation plans.

The neighbourhood contracts for the area called Pigneto are part of a local-development programme, which aims at rehabilitating and upgrading the landscape, as well as the urban, social and economic situation of the neighbourhood. The integrated and discussion-based actions taken entail the direct involvement of associations, economic players and institutional representatives at a local level. Therefore, a well-structured participatory process has been developed, formally integrated within project stages and the whole pathway leading to the approval of the neighbourhood contract.

WHERE:
The neighbourhood is located on a triangle-shaped area of some 70 ha, on the immediate outskirts of Rome. It can be fully considered to be part of the city, although it still shows signs of marginalization and degradation.
Learning from experience
THE CITIZEN DIALOGUE COMMITTEE
(BORDEAUX)

Thanks to their efforts, the social services were able to extend the criteria for free transport to people who until then had been excluded, thus contributing towards the consolidation of their commitment.

The citizen dialogue group is a place of encounter and discussion among the beneficiaries of social activities and the professional staff members of the Municipal Social Action Center (CCAS) of Bordeaux. This is an innovative approach insofar as the users of services become direct players. At stake here is the possibility of transcending assistance-oriented social policy in order to move in the direction of dynamic and concerted social work.

Objectives:
- Listen to the needs and aspirations of beneficiaries;
- Develop active citizenship, enabling each person to be an actor of change;
- Make professional practices evolve in order to improve relations between social workers and those who avail themselves of such a service.

WHERE:
The overall aim of this open discussion forum is to ensure the evolution of the social response throughout the city.

Learning from experience
THE URBAN PARTICIPATION FORA
(PAMPLONA)

The forum was instrumental in establishing a concrete project, viable in the short and medium term, and considered effective, to boost a real renovation impulse for the benefit of all.

The programme called Urban Pamplona is an integrated project, which mainly aims at the social and economic renewal of the old town (Casco Antiguo), and the neighbourhood called Rochapea. A budget of €23.18 million has been allocated to the programme over the period 2001-2006.

Caveat:
- Often the citizens’ impatience and incomprehension can be explained by the lengthy delays between debates and decision-making. The municipal representatives have undertaken to explain the schedules and waiting periods.
- In order to prevent the feeling that discussions are vain, activities must be undertaken concretely and all the results must be communicated and displayed.
- The symbolic benefits of participation which are increasingly difficult to appraise (increase in self-confidence, social assets, public peacefulness…) nevertheless deserve consideration when assessing mechanisms.

Three targets: improve urban management, democratize democracy, and foster social cohesion

Though collective results are a success factor, said results differ in nature according to three targets that appear upon the practical implementation of a participatory approach.

Participation to Improve Urban Management
The purpose of participation is to enhance urban management efficiency. The citizen associations allow for requirements, demands, opinions and recommendations to be submitted, and for practical know-how to be compared with technical expertise, in order to better estimate problems and draw up dossiers. The purpose is to shift from a public service that responds, to a public service that organises together with its citizens. So what
is the issue? Devise and implement useful, realistic, and suitable projects. Such a cooperation-based rationale favours the appropriation of projects by citizens concerned with ensuring durability and limiting non civic behaviour. It also transforms the modus operandi of the municipal teams, even internally, fostering namely a more transversal approach.

«I wish to underline how important it is to have interested parties as interlocutors, for they are the beneficiaries of the work; we technicians do not have their competence, which is why the technical need for such participation is fundamental.»
(A technician in Rome)

«Projects are better when they are established according to what people have to say»
(An elected representative in Pamplona)

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**Learning from experience**

**The residents’ Committee of Fontaine (Agglomération Grenobloise)**

Some members of the residents’ committee created an “independent group” that meets independently of the municipal team to evaluate the work of the Committee and submit proposals.

The Fontaine Residents’ Committee is a residents’ participation instance mainly working on urban planning and infrastructures. It is managed by a steering committee with 4 elected members, among whom the Mayor, 4 representatives from city departments, 2 associations’ representatives and up to 6 local residents. Some of the participants in the residents’ Committee later created an “independent group”, which meets without the City staff, in order to assess and value the work that has been done and frame proposals.

WHERE:
Fontaine is a city north of the Agglomération Grenobloise. About 23,500 residents, most of whom are workers and employees. Since the end of WWII, it has been led by the Communist Party (currently governing together with left wing majority). The city has a strong tradition of political and union-trade activism.

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**Learning from experience**

**Participatory budget in XI Municipality (Roma)**

The non-EU citizens who had taken part in the participating budget initiative in 2003 were later involved in the immigrants’ Council. They also participated in the campaign for the election of foreign community representatives in the different municipal committees of Rome.

In Italy Municipality XI stands as the first local administrative authority at an infra-municipal level to experiment PB instrument as an occasion to pursue - at the same time - both the goals of participation-effectiveness and of participation as democratic enhancement that the 1976 national Law n° 278 set as key-principles for implementing political decentralization.

WHERE:
The Municipality of Rome XI has a population of 138,569 people, accounting for about 5% of the entire population of Rome. This population lives in neighbourhoods of different origins and characteristics, in 8 urban areas. Municipality XI has one of the lowest unemployment rates among the 20 Roman Municipalities (average 16%), while school attendance turns out to be higher than that of the city average (especially with 14-29 years old, with its 43.6% school attendance exceeding the Roman average by 7 percentage points).
Participation to Democratize Democracy
Participation strives to extend and reinforce urban democracy. On the one hand, it is useful in increasing the openness, transparency and equal footing of the process to elaborate and implement collective choices. It supports the functioning of representative institutions. A participatory approach updates the principles of freedom of expression and acknowledgement of minority voices. Furthermore, it offers a platform for the expression of populations excluded from civic rights (such as children or non-EU foreigners, for instance). It also reveals any conflicts or disputes that are sometimes prevented, and often unravelled thanks to negotiation. Enjoying greater consideration, citizens have a new perception of their roles within the framework of a clear and more balanced democratic approach: they become aware that it is their duty and ability to contribute towards transforming their cities.

Participation to Favour Social Cohesion
The purpose of participation is to build up social ties, proving that “society is being changed”. It is inclusive and responds to the exclusion and disaffiliation of economically and socially weak citizens. More extensively, fostering and reinforcing individual autonomy leads to an increase in social participation, thus facilitating integration in the urban space. This is true namely for those mechanisms that resort to participants as mediators between the population and the institutions. Furthermore, there are real benefits in terms of sociability and reciprocal knowledge. To participate and encourage participation contributes towards giving substance to a territory and to convey a sense of belonging, thereby reinforcing local identity.

“I do what I do because I am proud of the city in which I live. I wish every citizen were proud of his/her city”. (An inhabitant of Newcastle)
“I had never ventured beyond the street delimiting the Mistral neighbourhood, but since working on the project, I have visited a colleague in the Mistral neighbourhood, I saw his flat which is as big as mine; I would never have imagined so”. (An inhabitant of Grenoble)

Learning from experience
THE ALI ALLE VELE PROGRAMME (NAPOLE)
The programme has made children and young unemployed people mediators between social workers and the families or social groups concerned by the renovation programme.

Ali alle Vele, is part of the Scampia Requalification and Urban Renewal Project launched in 1995. The project tackles the dwelling problem above all by means of the demolition of buildings in the Vele and the building of new houses in new areas or in progressively liberated lots. There are also other activities relative to transport, local streets, and endeavours to improve sociability (like a pilot project of Multimedia Square, University Departments, micro entrepreneurs).

• In practice, the three targets are reached thanks to programmes generating essential benefits in terms of decision effectiveness and legitimacy.
• Furthermore, by fostering reciprocal acknowledgement, the programmes are instrumental in re-establishing citizenship.
• In fact, participation contributes towards restoring confidence between the local populations and the institutions.

An open question: Is it always beneficial for a participatory programme to pursue these three targets?

YES. Places of debate have everything to gain in being concerned with effectiveness AND democracy AND social cohesion. Such targets cannot be considered separately. Calling for the participation of users in achieving a suitable project is paramount to acknowledging citizen capacity in favouring integration within the urban territory, which is both a social and political area. As a user-expert, citizen-elector and citizen, participants expect programmes to meet with the three aforementioned targets.

NO. The three targets can in fact turn out to be incompatible. An initiative to democratize an urban development process will not guarantee consequential service improvement - the concern about democracy can even slow down
Identify suitable players and define how to mobilize them

Ideally, participation is addressed to everyone. Through its democratic principle, quest for effectiveness and concern for social integration, it should have the means of mobilizing an extensive audience. However, nobody can impose participation, and absentees are often the ones who stand out the most. Furthermore, it is not easy to achieve an ideal of “openness” when different interests are at stake, or even in contradiction. For example: is it possible at the same time to be open to all (the democratic ideal) and work truly in common on precise projects (principle of effectiveness)? It is up to the organizing teams to think about the constitution and mobilization of the public at a very early stage, so as to establish areas of discussion that are suitable for the objects submitted to debate.

A Challenge: Mobilise the Absentees

Three categories of “chronic” absentees can be defined:
- The “fragile”: those whose social difficulties keep them away from public debates considered accesso-
  ry compared to their personal problems. Their ab-
  sence means that participation especially concerns
  the middle and top categories.
- The “disengaged”: the people that certainly have
  the competencies to enter the participatory debate,
  but whose critical and wary position versus the po-
  litical world in general prevents them from perceiv-
  ing the usefulness of such a commitment. Young
  people appear to be the archetypes of such disillusioned categories.
- The “powerful” who can afford to keep quiet, who
  have enough freedom of action to do without dia-
  logue, who believe they have sufficient legitimacy
  and competence to act alone (real estate sector);
  land owners and property developers are often ab-
  sent in the participatory arenas where the future of
  urban spaces is discussed, even though they are
  stakeholders.

Let us not surrender to fatalism: even the most cir-
cumspect and distrustful persons can be convinced to participate with enough common sense, imagination and concrete means of implementation.

Above all:
- The presence of the “powerful” requires political leverage. If civil society, especially the better-organised associations, is unable to establish dialogue with indispensable players, it is up to the elected representatives to invite them to sit around the discussion table. The presence of political leaders and pressure on private bodies are indispensable.
- Investment in the “fragile” and the “disengaged” can follow different pathways, one of which entails the creation of programmes with different categories and/or themes whose explicit objective is to interest people with well-known difficulties or reluctant to participate.

Example

In Bordeaux, as in many other cities, participatory pro-
grammes were set up specifically for people in difficulty
and receiving social security (“Le Groupe de Dialogue
Citoyen”), those with handicaps (“Conseil Ville Handi-
caps”) or youth (“Conseil des Jeunes”).

Furthermore, it may be necessary to accompany citi-
zens through the different stages leading towards a participatory approach. For some poor population categories that are shut within the spheres of their pri-
ivate lives - immigrant women, for instance - prepara-
tion to the exercise of democracy must be organised to prevent the risk of remaining at a purely formal and illusory threshold of the debate.

“Our concept of democracy is sometimes over republican. An open assembly does not mean that everyone can talk. If we want Muslim women to express themselves, we must first create women’s groups among them, which does not mean creating a ghetto, but setting the conditions for true equality”.

(association, Rome)

It is generally-speaking indispensable to pursue a vol-
untarist policy to establish contacts with citizens: the fact of being present on the scenes of their lives and so-
ciability, refraining from organising programmes with-
out having first listened to what “comes from the grass-roots”. This solicitation at the very heart of the public has the advantage of leaving a lot of leeway to playful, creative and festive aspects. To be attractive, participation must be amusing and have the necessary know how for exploiting cultural and artistic resources.

The difficulty of mobilisation lies in the fact that must be inviting and simulating, and not commanding.

Caveat:
Mobilising absentees should not become an obsession: democracy also means the right not to participate! Constant solicitation of the poorer groups can be perceived negatively, as a tool of moralisation and social control, a kind of blackmail performed by the institutions: “if you want the means participate!”

A relevant question: to give an institutional framework to participation

In regard to the serious problems that our cities are undergoing - gentrification processes, deeper segregations, difficult relationships among the different nationality groups - some cities chose to define a legal framework making participation compulsory in urban policies’ implementation. Either in the name of positive discrimination, like in the case of the Bruxelles-Capitale Region, or searching for a meeting point like some of the permanent commissions in Rome, Naples or Newcastle, experience shows how the search for transparency and a clear political will may give birth to new laws conferring a space to the inhabitants from areas or neighbourhoods involved in transforming their life environment. Such a legal framework may become a formal instance, where discontent is channelled. But it may also be an essential condition for a continuous presence of concerned inhabitants and their representatives. The formalisation of the framework also presents the advantage of giving a larger dimension to participation than just meetings between public authorities and associations.

This point of view is not unanimously approved by the cities involved in the Partecipando network. It is also an outstanding subject of debate, as to whether the institutionalisation of participation within a legal framework may permit broader citizen involvement in urban management.

Example
In the Bruxelles-Capitale Region, participation plays an important and a key role. In 1993, the challenge to make it compulsory was tackled, with the neighbour-hood contracts policy. Many urban conflicts had taken place in Brussels over things like saving a neighbourhood or finding new housing solutions for the inhabitants. People were culturally opposed to radical transformation proposed by real estate promoters (demolitions). The neighbourhood committees who monitored the city administration policies in the different local consultative commissions (on business, car traffic, immigration…) were mainly imbued with a spirit of mistrust and control. When participation was included in the new 5 year neighbourhood contracts’ tool, it appeared as a possibility to restore confidence, while renewing and regenerating urban areas in a democratic way. This challenge was named “new political culture” at first, and then governance; the core idea being the essential involvement of the inhabitants in each project.
How does one compose a group of pertinent participatory players?

All or a few
By mobilising the greatest possible number of citizens, do we aim at involving the entire population in participatory programmes? The maximum openness of a programme is indeed a guarantee of democracy and social inclusion; so how should one venture beyond the expression of individual interests, minor requests, and one’s own “backyard”? How can one launch a discussion that will make a precise project move forward? Not all programmes can be open to everyone. Placing participants in the capacity to act upon a precise object, a clearly defined project, also means being able to work in small groups, with a mechanism that knows how to “close in” for the sake of the obligation of supplying results. In the end, a participatory approach must rely on different mechanisms, some closed, others open, according to the modalities, objects and objectives of the debate.

“The question is who participates, on what object and on what territorial scale. Projects must be devised by a small group, which entails a selection of people (…). The issue is different when a decision-making process is to be assessed: in that case, the greatest number possible must be involved at any cost.” (A technician in Rome)

“The two forms (open/closed) must be created: open to capture the invisible, though closed when it is up to the people to become the players”. (A social worker, Bordeaux)

The successful “interlocking” of different mechanisms (some are open to everyone; others rely on organised players and offer perspectives of a stable engagement) is a guarantee for both democratic and efficient participation.

Representativeness or Diversity
If “closed” mechanisms are sometimes chosen for the working groups, who are the players? How can one prevent an arbitrary selection of participants? How can one make sure one does not always mobilize the same participants, the “habitues” and nearly “professionals” of participation? How is it possible to guarantee that these working groups are truly representative of all potential participants?
The “statistic” representativeness of the participatory arena - that would require the constitution of a coherent sample of the entire population of a neighbourhood or of a town - seems to be an impossible wager of no great pertinence. The real challenge is diversity: nobody must be left out; one needs a wide range of profiles and standpoints - even of minorities - and resistance to a certain monopoly in the engagement of already active and mobilized citizen elite.

“ The challenge is to ensure the expression of multiple viewpoints in a single debate: we look for people with different specificities, trying not to forget anyone, though they are only there for themselves. It is no sociological panel, though it does ensure a wide range of points of view”. (Cabinet Arpenteurs)

One solution could be a cooptation principle approaching “positive discrimination” (specifically solicited categories such as the young; participants appointed among ethnic minorities, for example, as is often the case in England). One could also try to involve the publicly least visible population in drawing lots to form the participating bodies.

Caveat:
The call for the direct participation of citizens makes it possible to refrain from privileging the traditional organised players, with the additional merit of finding new interlocutors for the municipal teams, also in view of the fact that, with the passing of time, a constituted group can be disconnected from the real issues and lose legitimacy in the eyes of the population. There is nevertheless a risk in making the urban social players who have been engaged in the dialogue for a long time feel they are being circumvented or shunted aside. We must not be deprived of precious players.

Learning from experience
PARTICIPATION IN FONTAINE
(AGGLOMÉRATION GRENOBLOISE)
A careful balance between open and closed programmes, the autonomy of citizens and the support of a municipality that knows how to train without gagging, favours the successful outcome of a participatory approach.

In Fontaine, a town of 23500 citizens to the north of Grenoble, participation takes place at three levels:
1. The plenary session of the citizens’ committee brings together close to one hundred people every two months.
2. The “steering committee” includes representatives of the citizen committee to identify priority issues to be addressed either according to proposals from the grassroots, or the demands of the services of elected representatives.
3. Flexible working groups are set up according to the requirements and issues the citizens and voluntary workers wish to address. They meet with the elected representatives and the services concerned individually, while their work is presented during a plenary session.
**Learning from experience**
**The Budget Consultation Council - Pont-de-Claix**

(AGGLOMÉRATION GRENOBLOISE) (CCB) was created for the management of the participatory budget, and has 50 members, of whom 35 are chosen drawing lots among voting citizens (7 for each polling station, and 7 more within 18 and 25 years old in order to promote youth participation).

Thus, the CCB represents a «citizens’ jury», mostly different from traditional representation where only the most active citizens contribute in public life.

WHERE:
In Pont-de-Claix, a traditionally industrial city of 12000 citizens in the area of Grenoble, a Budgetary Consultation Committee (BCC) of 50 members was created to manage the Participating Budget; 35 members were drawn from the electoral lists (in other words seven listed people per polling station, in addition to 7 listed people between the ages of 18 and 25 to promote the participation of the young). The BCC is thus a “citizen jury” with a different form of representativeness that was traditionally limited to a militant group of active citizens.

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**Learning from experience**
**Territorial Laboratory of Corviale (ROMA)**

The residents were given a questionnaire concerning neighbourhood problems and their knowledge of participatory mechanisms. However, the initiative made the existing citizen committees feel dismissed in their roles as spokespersons, which gave rise to lingering mistrust against the implementation of a common effort about the future of the neighbourhood.

The Territorial Laboratory is a decentralised structure of Department XIX, aiming at establishing dialogue with the local community on the subjects of project development, organisation and management of the local area. To this end, it is intended to foster participatory processes for awareness-raising and involvement of the local community in programmes, projects and actions capable of having a positive impact on the quality of life now and in the future. The Laboratory has its headquarters in the municipal multipurpose facility.

WHERE:
Public Housing block, planned as a linear city, on the pattern of Le Corbusier architecture. The isolated and unitary building block has 9 floors and is 1km long. It has a dominating position over the valley, and stands out against the surrounding suburbs.

An Urban Regeneration Programme has been implemented and a proposal for a Neighbourhood Contract has been written. Now awaited is a response to the request for funding of 10 million Euro.

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Participation must be characterised by a variable geometry
- Taking into account the elements existing in the field, namely associations, thereby working with the organised players who wish to be involved and put themselves in a position to do so,
- But without ever forgetting to inform, solicit and listen to the “ordinary” citizens.
Conclusion

Participatory democracy takes on its full meaning compared to representative democracy when it favours the expression of the widest range possible of standpoints, including those of minorities. It is thanks to such diversity that the decisions generated or supported are perceived as both pertinent and legitimate, since they are the outcome of jointly established commitments.

Thus, the ultimate challenge is the acknowledgement of the legitimacy and competences of others within the participatory arena, and, more extensively, in social life. Greater tolerance and openness to others, the capacity of sharing knowledge and together achieving the collective interest, are both the conditions and the added-value of effective and democratic participation fostering social cohesion. This is when participation becomes a matter of collective political choice to give a concrete response to changes in relationships, means of mediation and representation currently featuring our societies.

Enhancing positive aspects of participation: advices from the cities’ experiences

From the discussions had in Newcastle over the evaluation of the results and impact of participatory processes, several elements show how relevant it can be to have the right approach, in order to value the “positive aspects of participation” and avoid the “negative” effects or risks it may present:

The types of participation identified by partner cities relating to the different projects fell into five categories:

Types of participation
- Information
- Consultation
- Deciding together
- Acting together
- Self Help

The majority fell into deciding together and acting together with consultation and information being the second most used types of participation. Not all projects used the same type of participation throughout.

Positive aspects of participation
The positive aspects of community participation in regeneration projects range from giving the government structures a meaningful insight into the real needs of the population, to reviving dormant apathetic communities giving them the spark to become involved in shaping their own area. Other positive aspects include:
- creating new opportunities for community involvement
- introducing new concepts such as volunteering to areas/countries where this is not the general way of working
- increased employment opportunities, commercial and physical regeneration
- surprisingly high numbers of residents taking part in training programmes
- continuing engagement of local people through the lifespan of the project
- higher levels of satisfaction and participation in regeneration projects
- gaining the trust of local people which then leads to an increase in their participation
- sharing good practice with other localities
- renew the dignity of people and communities
- better information and dialogue between administrations and local people
- increases trust in local authorities

Generally participation is good for increasing the skills, confidence, dignity, and involvement of members of the community. It creates a more dynamic social environment where governmental structures and the people actively engage with one another in many ways.

Difficulties experienced in trying to develop participatory practices
Generally the difficulties fall into the categories; time, money, and political structures. The time issues mainly stem from the fact that wide participation and the reaching of agreements between actors is extremely time consuming. With government led initiatives often there is a lot of pressure to spend the money and deliver on targets in a pre-determined time scale that is not compatible with wide participation. It takes time to involve the community and build their trust.

Very often there is not sufficient money (closely linked to the time factor) to build the participation of the people to a high level. The other money issue is the time limited nature of funding which has an impact on the sustainability of projects.

The political structures are not always as open to enabling the participation of local people. Often there is a problem with limited democracy. It can be difficult to get agencies to recognise the importance of participation, this is especially true of the private sector.
Negative aspects of participation

Often the ‘voices’ of the community are not widely representative, this is partly due to difficulties with access to the structures for expressing views and interests. Other aspects of this problem spring from a lack of confidence and capacity of local people. Closely linked to this is the lack of specialist knowledge sometimes needed to be fully involved.

With many different points of view and interests being represented it can be a difficult and complicated process to reach consensus.

Evaluating participation

Participation indicators can be useful. Evaluation can be carried out by third parties, the community or a combination of both. The working group recognised that different styles of evaluation can be complementary to each other and often the best way is to use a combination of both.

Surveys can be costly and difficult. Indicators must cover every aspect of a project and the participants in order to gain a full and meaningful evaluation.

Added value of participation

Participation is an essential for successful regeneration. Throughout the workshops many examples were quoted to verify this i.e. where the community had been involved the projects were more successful than where they were not. An overarching theme from the examples presented a cautionary note was that if regeneration is not what the people want then it will not be effective.

The importance of maintaining community involvement after a project ends was recognised as very important. Territorial laboratories that act as a point of reference for the community were suggested as a means of keeping community involvement active. The importance of feeding back to participants was highlighted. Updating participants as to how their contribution has made a difference and the different stages of activity reached is important to maintain community engagement through and after a project has ended.
Participation when?

Influence of the context and the opening of decision-making processes

The theoretical considerations of scholars and the more implicit ones elaborated by stakeholders involved in projects concur about the effectiveness of policies being very much associated to the ability of contextualizing actions, adapting initiatives to the variety of places and conditions (actors, resources, limits, opportunities, local histories and traditions, occasions) and therefore choosing suitable tools (and using them) according to each situation.

Participation is not to be considered as a single recipe to be adopted indiscriminately, with the same goals and modes of action in every situation. Local administrators, players and citizens involved in fostering participatory processes have all become aware of how it is essential to raise a few preliminary questions, such as:

• Is the political context favourable? To what extent, and presumably for how long? With what explicit and/or implicit goals?
• Which are the issues of real interest to the people, and capable of actually mobilizing them?
• At which stage and with what players and stakeholders should participatory processes be launched?

Opening of the decision-making processes and contingent approaches

Inhabitants’ participation in projects and policies is always auspicious but it is necessary to adopt a contingent logic with a view to the initiatives’ effectiveness and to avoid contradicting the principles of responsibility ethics, active listening, and the end goals of the participatory approach.

The aggregate experiences within the ‘Partecipando’ network differ in terms of significance frameworks, political and civil pivoting, stakeholders involved, and finalities. We are always dealing with initiatives designed to pluralize decision-making processes linked to the transformations and living conditions within a given territory.

In several instances, at least beginning with the 1990’s, European policies for local and national administrative authorities have stimulated the opening up of decision-making processes, while the often rhetorical promises to activate participatory processes has been considered a success factor within competitive evaluations to obtain co-financing of proposals. On the other hand, many individuals and substantial sectors of institutions have indeed invested in participation during these years.

• Opening up towards relevant stakeholders, in order to enrich the processes through the constitution and mobilization of different sources (and forms) of knowledge, and/or also to tackle the issue of conflicting disagreement due to their a priori exclusion;
• Opening up towards groups of beneficiaries, with a view to both enriching knowledge types and styles as mobilized, and fostering the development of fora of consensus, instrumental in improving the effectiveness of activities and preventing conflict;
• Opening up in order to find and steer other public or private resources that only thanks to participation in one forum or another (with a more or less significant decision-making) can be invested by the holders of said resources.

Among the fundamental elements of the context to be taken into account during the activation of participatory processes, there just is the individuation of the picture of players involved. In the following scheme, we see an example of how different subjects can be involved according to the end goals of the process.

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**Learning from experience**

**Territorial Laboratory Laurentino (Roma)**

A space and place for participation like the Territorial Laboratory Laurentino is useful:
- to promote urban regeneration strategies and projects to improve the neighbourhood
- to enhance social cohesion in severely distressed contexts
- to improve the economic, social and urban structure of the neighbourhood

The laboratory is a space of permanent discussion where the inhabitants can analyse, value and propose urban projects to improve the neighbourhood together with the Municipal technicians. By outreach, focus groups, assemblies, workshops, visits, regular and occasional meetings, the laboratory develops communication activities, analysis and participated project design.

The Laboratory has written a strategic integrated policies’ plan, that proved to be a useful base for the implementation of several programmes such as: the Neighbourhood Contract, regeneration plans and last but not least, worked, according to the citizens’ demand, on the demolition of the bridges 9, 10 and 11. The laboratory has many territorial activities, organizes cultural and artistic events related to the neighbourhood situation and promoting an interaction between the artists and the inhabitants.

The laboratory benefits from a structure linked to the Public authorities, but also has social and cultural activities for the diffusion of cooperative culture, social inclusion and empowerment.

Objectives and activities of the laboratory:
- collect citizens’ suggestions and input about local emergencies
- examine the projects proposed by the Administration
- determine modifications to plans and projects
- propose design suggestions
- propose structural modifications of the neighbourhood
- dialogue with Comune di Roma - Regione Lazio - Ater
- animate the territory with y cultural and artistic events

WHERE:
The Laurentino Area Plan was created on a rationalistic scheme, as a self sufficient block. It is divided into “insulae” hosting about 1500 - 2000 inhabitants each with two kinds of buildings, long 8 floors ones, and high 14 floors towers. The original project included a separation of car and pedestrian traffic and the location of shops on the higher bridges.

The neighbourhood’s Emerging problems and causes of degradation:
- isolation because of the neighbourhood’s structure
- the 11 “bridge” buildings across the avenue with planned services did not work out
- the beltway does not include foresee transversal traffic and increases the feeling of isolation and the lack in development
- isolation of the basic housing unity, named “Insula”.

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04. Participation when?
Differentiation scheme of the diverse initiatives designed to ensure participation and/or the pluralization of modes in decision-making processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final goal for the opening up of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrate diverse activities on the part of elected officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve diverse resources held by various players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance and augment styles and forms of mobilized knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favour the emergence consensus concerning the actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster and mature social dialogue, communication, learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concretely favour the growth of social ties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipients of the opening up of decision-making processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other institutional players Aa Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of private organized players (strong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of entrepreneurs, trade unions, no-profit organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of citizens’ organizations (intended as users)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-organized direct users (classrooms, tenants of a condo) Nn Field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, these goals do not exclude one another. Concrete situations we often deal with a mix of finalities, shifting in time, not always immediately evident, clear and shared. At least in analytical terms, the matrix supports two general indications:
• the more the goals of the process initiators are concentrated in the top section of the first column in the matrix (Aa), the more the opening could it turn out to be power-driven, tendentially inconsistent and/or instrumental. Quite simply, the axis Aa - Nn is the variation field from top-down to bottom up for the construction of policies;
• a really rich, pluralistic process (perhaps also more efficient in the long run), is represented as an irregular cluster aggregating, together with the contributions of at least some institutions and competent experts, hubs from the diverse sections in the form, indicating a significant involvement of normally weaker players activated for the sharing of resources and knowledge, activation of social dialogue (not without conflicts) and the growth of social capital.

Participation when, as soon as possible?

A concept of participation deemed radical by some is actually ideological or mere propaganda; it is in fact a bad and counterproductive defense of this orientation. There are circumstances where, from many points of view, it could prove better to decide alone or in small numbers. This often happens in the decision-making processes for public decisions. The good quality and/or effectiveness of such decisions do not depend on the low number of persons deciding, but rather on their competence level with respect to the context (Bobbio, 2005).

In some contexts, the proposal for forms of self management is completely ineffective, just as it could prove completely wrong on the part of the authorities to exclude all segments of society from the construction of processes that anyway will in any case run the risk of being blocked in their implementation by the emergence of conflicts.

To clarify this passage, it is useful to note the suggestions already presented in the handbook edited by L. Bobbio (2005) to indicate the diverse approaches to participation. In brief, Bobbio proposes a strong link between the success of policies and attention to circumstances on the part of the promoters, or those responsible for said policies.
### When is it useful to realize participatory processes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicts have emerged or are foreseeable</th>
<th>Necessity to create conditions of manageability of conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More ambitious objectives and/or prevision of difficulties</td>
<td>Other resources are needed to realize objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature itself of policy (integrated, multi-player) necessitates an integrated approach</td>
<td>Economic, cultural, consensual, cooperative resources available to other players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process objectives linked to those of product</td>
<td>Enhance or support the development of social interaction, boost social ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better the knowledge and relations between citizens, groups, organizations and public administrations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those responsible for public policies should mature the competence enabling them to read circumstances, context and pre-conditions, thereby anticipating the most likely scenarios in the most objective manner possible.

**Caveat:**

When about to start initiatives with rather high expectations as to objectives, or when it is already possible to foresee difficulties in addressing issues that directly conflict with interests, habits or visions, it is not only advisable to open up the decision-making process, but to do so in adequate forms and ways as soon as possible.
Learning from experience

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRACT
PRIMAVALLE - TORREVECCHIA (ROMA)

This experience made the most of the launch of the participatory process well before the development of the preliminary project submitted in order to obtain the funds.

A strongly innovative characteristic of the Neighborhood Contract Primavalle - Torrevecchia in the City of Rome has been the choice to involve the inhabitants from the preliminary stage in order to apply for regional financing. Their involvement of the inhabitants from this stage helped solve a few difficulties created by the previous ‘first generation’ Neighborhood Contracts. Moreover, the project’s success has been favored by several factors: good facilitation capacity reached by the technicians trained within the administration, sensitivity for the themes tied into sustainability as elements of quality for the project, ability to adapt to unpredictable twists and turns (changing of some of the referents for the project, inclusion of areas previously excluded, decision to elaborate two different project proposals).

The preparation of the proposal for a second neighbourhood contract has seen the development of a long and complex participatory process, organized in multiple stages, each with the use of different tools, such as:

- Semi-structured interviews of opinion-leaders;
- Focus groups and SWOT analyses;
- Workshops, Visioning;
- Workshops, definition of projects and sub-projects;
- Workshops, thorough analysis of urban, social and economic backgrounds and data

WHERE:
The Primavalle neighbourhood was born in the 30’s to house the people evicted from the Borgo San Pietro neighbourhood and other historical downtown areas, following demolition work done by the Fascist government. Isolated from the rest of the city in a semi-rural area that had only one primary school and one church in Piazza Clemente XI, it housed mostly “segregated” and deprived citizens.

During the 50’s The north-western rim of the city reached the neighbourhood as a result of an intense urban development that disregarded the City’s Urban Plan guidelines

The Area-based Plans are implemented on a solid private urban tissue. They are meant to improve the quality of this urban fabric and bring services into this area: schools, sports, entertainment, public services.

It is often necessary to attract external resources. What is needed in other instances to access the cultural resources of other players, not only the experts as such, but also those of people holding shared knowledge, which is essential to enrich the competences of experts, making them better suited to the context. In yet other instances it is indispensable to obtain true cooperation from others and hence avoid inertia or plain opposition. In other instances participation is essential in order to highlight not just the necessity to cooperate, but also to identify opportunities, resources and limitations with utmost clarity in order to create credible interfaces and modes of interaction that must not be taken for granted.

It therefore becomes clear that, beginning with the stage of problem interpretation, a certain degree of opening up in decision-making processes within integrated policies is suitable and probably unavoidable.

Caveat:

Forms of participation is also auspicious when process objectives are connected with the initiatives in question. Some activities can also be carried out also to foster the enhancement of social interaction and strengthen social ties, in order to improve open discussion and bolster a climate of mutual trust among active players. Above and beyond having a declared objective, some endeavors could be designed and planned as trust-building policies.
Lessons learned from experience
THE URBAN PROJECT (PAMPLONA)

The city of Pamplona (Spain) encountered some difficulties in involving various social subjects in the initial stage of the Urban Project. Only the larger associations present in the city (e.g. enhancement of the inner city, shopkeepers) did participate actively in the management of the forums. This because Urban was the first participatory experience promoted by the administration and the take-off happened in a climate of strong mistrust towards the work of the institutions. Weighing heavily on this initial stage, was a previous experience when associations conducting an survey on the problems of neighborhoods, and asking to be considered counterparts of the City administration were not taken into serious consideration.

Learning from experience
THE RECLAMATION AND RESTORATION
OF VILLA GUARNA, SBARRE NEIGHBOURHOOD
(REGGIO CALABRIA)

The case of “Villa Guarna” represents a field-test of a social research methodology regarding what citizens think about the processes of urban development in areas chosen in the PSU. Used was an instrument of research-participation through the survey of a sample of citizens living on the area, who were asked to fill out a questionnaire.

WHERE:
Villa Guarna, a unique example of a twentieth-century villa with garden, is located in the highly populated Sbarre neighbourhood, just off Via Sbarre Centrale that cuts across the entire neighbourhood. The area is part of a territory of about 110,000 square metres about 600 metres from Villa Guarna. The area is characterised by high population density (the VI District is the one that presents the highest population density in the whole city, equal to 10,073 inhabitants per Kmq). As a matter of fact, notwithstanding the relatively small size of the area, the actual resident population amounts to 1,879 inhabitants.

The experience garnered within ‘Partecipando’, therefore, treats the theme of participation by adopting diverse initiatives; on one hand to widen representation, and on the other to activate inclusion endeavours that would objectively increase people’s degree of involvement.

Taking into account a greater degree of awareness concerning the shortage of resources and therefore the necessity to protect the collectivity and institutions from mistakes generating the waste of resources and incomplete processes, the professionals involved in the ‘Partecipando’ network believe that the opening of processes - if done from the initial stage of problem construction - is strongly assimilable to the effectiveness of processes and policies. These researchers have some common references in authors such as J. Habermas and J. Dowey3. They start from some basic points, typical of the consensus building approach:

- In the setting of strategies centered on the search for effectiveness, complexity is to be considered a resource;
- knowledge useful for effective solutions comes from many sources and is the heritage of different players;
- conflicts are inevitable, and it is more convenient to have them emerge and try to address them in a negotiated way. At times, conflicts generate new facts, for the improvement of reality.

3 A much quoted author by these researchers is John Dowey, cited, among others, by Calducci (1996): “Until the prejudice, secrecy, poor representation of needs or plain ignorance will not be substituted by a serious attitude of research and true opening of the process of decision building, we will never understand how much apt the intellect of common people is in solving the problems posed to the public policies.” Dowey, J. (1946) “The Public and Its Problems”
They start from the conviction that “the consensual decision process is just the opposite of the more traditional tools of authoritative tradition or technical decision, and appears better suited to addressing problems involving numerous public and private interests”, not only for small scale planning problems, but also for other public policies, such as those referring to the situations labeled as NIMBY.

More knowledgeable professionals recommend the adoption of adequate techniques and procedures for listening to and really involving subjects normally excluded from decision-making processes, avoiding amateurism or manipulation and using as an indicator (of a real significance in the opening of processes) the degree of mutation from the original orientations by those responsible for the projects, due to the intervention within said processes of subjects not delegated to the production of decisions.

Learning from experience
A FUTURE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF NISIDA (NAPLES)
This project is of paramount importance, as it pursues the capacity building of the young population. The following workshops have so far been activated within the framework of the project: catering, development and management of green areas, pottery and ceramics, stagecraft and museum woodworking.

The project Nisida Futuro Ragazzi is addressed to seriously disadvantaged young people with family, financial, psychological, cultural or background difficulties, or at a risk of criminal prosecution. The project is intended to develop training pathways by means of working experiences, and provide more precise indications to allow youngsters to develop “their own personal projects”. The action model developed makes use of local resources and fosters individual and cultural growth processes related to theatre, pottery, and the environment. It also fosters the positive interaction of participating young people with one another, as well as with adults, the local context and, more generally speaking, the local community.

WHERE:
In the 20th Century, the island of Nisida hosted first a military prison and then a correctional home. Today, the island hosts the Juvenile Detention Centre for young offenders, both male and female. A new view of detention is being asserted there, with in-house activities developed, closely related to the outside world.

Reflection upon experience, however, tends to consider effectiveness is a by-product - even partially casual, in the sense of unprogrammable - of a whole set of pre-conditions at work in the real interaction underway as the processes come into being.

4 See the remarks by Luigi Bobbio in the panel discussion in Janin Rivolin (1996), p. 69
At which stage of the process is participation advisable?

The work done by the ‘Partecipando’ network has also projected a different understanding of the “when” issue in participation, highlighting the vision of processes in stages. This is an interpretation already under discussion among scholars, that can prove useful when suggesting ways to better interpret situations and take more suitable action on them. Proposed in the meetings of the network was the matrix presented in the handbook edited by Nick Wates (2000)⁵.

Participation Matrix*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of community involvement</th>
<th>Project stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Help Community control</td>
<td>Community initiates action alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Shared working and decision making</td>
<td>Authorities and community jointly initiate action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Authorities ask community for opinions</td>
<td>Authorities initiate action after consulting community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information One way flow of information Public relations</td>
<td>Authorities initiate action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This Matrix cross-checks the degree of participation (subdivided in four classes of depth: self management, partnership, consultation, information) and four stages of processes (proposal, elaboration, realization, maintenance). It immediately suggests that, in the course of a public policy, the degree of openness of the decisional process can be more or less wide. The history of a case can therefore assume a prevailing character, but often it will have to be considered as a flux of action that, in time, - perhaps necessarily - will assume different characteristics.

Learning from experience
INTEGRATED AND PARTICIPATED PROCESSES (AGGLOMÉRATION GRENOBLOISE)

In the Agglomération Grenobloise, integrated and participated processes are systematically implemented, before, during and after project development (urban, planning, social and cultural projects...). In Echirolles, within the urban renewal project of the western neighbourhoods (9,500 inhabitants), the City administration has set up an Urban and Social Public Workshop (APUS), leading the negotiation process throughout the project. 450 inhabitants have been involved in 77 different meetings since 2001, with a regular participation of 25 to 60 people, depending on project groups. The rules in APUS are simple; the meetings are open to everyone, everyone may speak and final decisions are taken by the City Council. Anyone leaving his name once on the attendance list will keep receiving a personal invitation and reports from the work sessions. APUS really allowed the inhabitants to be productive jointly, with the elected representatives and the professionals from the partner institutions, each being a concrete part of the urban planning tool for the western neighbourhoods (Leisure park, playgrounds, social and cultural infrastructures, settling of businesses and services, renewal of streets and public spaces...). Each single action is discussed in a working group. The meetings are managed by an external facilitator who ensures the mediation, granting equal attention to each point of view, and writes the discussion reports.

The proposals from each working group are then endorsed in APUS plenary sessions and taken into account by the City Councils.

The inhabitants working on the projects are trained into qualification workshops (training on urban project planning, architecture, landscape, social and cultural infrastructures’ planning, ...). The participants are free to become involved in the projects they are more interested in (e.g. a group of young people and adults has been working for 10 months on the preparatory stage for the Picasso Youth Area with the architect). APUS has had a yearly budget of 100,000€ for the last 5 years. The approach is the same in Grenoble with the Mistral neighbourhood urban project, the Sector Consultation Council, project fora on the neighbourhood, discussions about infrastructures, an important work on the history of the neighbourhood... with specific resources for funding participation. A staff of professionals is permanently dedicated to such dialogue, and is supported by both architects and urban planners. The urban renewal project in the Mistral neighbourhood was discussed within the Sector Consultation Council and voted, choosing among the different options proposed for the City Council’s final decision.
In both examples, dialogue extends from the initial preparatory stage to the stages of planning and implementation, making it possible to adapt the project, check its progress and initiate complementary or supervisory activity if necessary. Citizen mobilization is therefore maintained, and this improves both the solidarity and the quality of common life.

Caveat:
While the case studies include examples of involvement level at the lowest level (when the authorities at best communicate what they have decided and realized) or the highest one (when the community substantially assumes responsibility from inception to ordinary management of an initiative), joint reflection is more interesting when composite situations arise.

**Learning from experience**

**Dialogue Top Down / Bottom Up (Roma)**

Over the last few years in the City of Rome we have seen interesting cases of top-down/bottom-up dialogue initiated under the auspices of self-organized movements. Through direct local action on issues of strong social relevance (public spaces for convivial and cultural production, housing policies, supportive economy, etc.), these movements became interesting counterparts to the administration. In this way, the over 30 self-managed social centers within the city (e.g. the Coordination for housing struggle Action, the realities of the Other Economy in Rome) are involved in interesting practices of the restoration of buildings, for residential and collective use, reconstruction of public spaces and the creation of areas in which to promote and give visibility to the realities of critical consumer practices and solidarity-prone economy.

In this case as well, an idea came to the surface in the network: if it is true that processes can be identified by an essentially top down or bottom up character, experience teaches that in order to understand the context and operate more efficiently, such a dichotomy has to be overcome in many situations. Case stories reveal that what we witness more frequently is a blind of decision-oriented characteristics and pluralistic components within decision-making processes. This cannot be fully appreciated if one assumes all too comprehensive categories. Wates' scheme, in fact, suggests the adoption of “authority” and “community” categories, which are too unitary and general. In field cases, sharing, cross-fertilization, alliances, moments of confrontation between components of the local community and sections of the authority occur, and only rarely do we witness two distinct and separate solid fronts.

An analysis of diverse cases, divided in stages, has also highlighted the fact that participation can be considered as a prior condition for the effectiveness of a territorial governance processes, but it can also be seen as an outcome of some forms of conduct. Here as well, we are dealing with different things, that can correspond to different intentions and programs.

Caveat:
A process whose outcome has been dissatisfactory in a given area may well have played a significant role in producing networks of mutual trust, competency and so forth, thus representing a good condition for the start up of a new process. It is therefore evident that participatory processes within local communities have a sort of cross-value - between issues and policies - extending (for better or worse) beyond the single issues at hand.

**Learning from experience**

**Neighbourhood Contract of Pigneto (Roma)**

The Neighbourhood Contract of Pigneto in Rome has been the hub for further financing (creation of a municipal urbanistic office by the City support plan, the Zone Social plan, new Neighbourhood Contract of Villa Gordiani) and for the stabilization of some participatory practices, creating a network effect among otherwise episodic projects. Moreover we note a proposal for the activation of a City-wide regulation for participation.
The stage by stage interpretation approach can also help project general guidelines which are always useful: decision-making processes concerning the life of the territories, the spaces of life in common (with respect to issues where uncertainty and conflict is latent, emerged or likely) should always reflect openness in decision-making, quite possibly from the initial identification of problems and not just at the end to proclaim solutions.

Caveat:
At every stage in the realization of a project it is possible to identify a key role for inhabitants, not just as co-planners and co-decidors, but as self-builders, responsible for supervision and evaluation, and real managers of the spaces and activities.

Stage by stage reading and interpretation are also useful for the identification of different modes and tools of openness. A focus group meeting proposed during the early stage of problem treatment can be considered and managed in a substantially different way from the same type of meeting held when dealing with a decision already made and/or an operational solution, perhaps facing implementation problems. It is equally evident that some tools are more useful than others at certain stages.

Learning from experience:
Follow-up group for the Parbecipando project (Agglomération Grenobloise)
The City of Grenoble (France), after the local workshop, actively attended by many inhabitants and elected politicians, established a follow-up group for the “Partecipando” project, recording the various stages and actively working on reflections about the course taken and the revision of the material produced by some of the cities in the network.

Conclusion

This stance helps to convey the idea that the development of a democratic culture striving to deal with contradictions in territorial governance during the initial decades of the new millennium presupposes that participation be neither occasional nor irregular, but rather a common and constant practice undertaken by public officials and citizens, always to be interpreted in a context-related and critical manner.
**Participation how?**

*Organizing participatory processes*

Experience of a person in charge of a technical department in Grenoble

“One of the major difficulties in presenting a project is that people represent themselves within the proposed environment. We perhaps unfortunately still use traditional tools, in other words plans, overhead projectors, videos, etc., so it is difficult for people to realise the implications on a real scale (...). We organised a 4th meeting on the Ponadière market place to materially paint what the planned green areas, the square geometry, etc. would look like, so that they could understand the project on a large scale. People have to be able to understand concretely that a “lane of such and such a width will be situated at this or that point”, etc. And this is when things start changing. Of course all available means of communication are necessary, but concrete elements must be given to the citizens to help them understand. The work with citizens is also interactive. They expect simple explanations and straightforward answers”. (Agglomération Grenobloise)

Are there universally valid organizational models and methods that ensure the resounding success of participatory courses? Are there forms of communication which are better than others for involving inhabitants and maintaining a “continuous line” of dialogue throughout the different stages of a process?

The experience of several cities in the Network suggests that looking at what it is done elsewhere is fundamental to grow and enrich our own experiments. But it also indicates that among the multiple tools of involvement of the inhabitants there is not a “single one” absolutely better than all the rest, always the most adequate one in every case. Finally, it reveals that rarely - in practice - the “models” to which we shall make reference below are applied “to the letter”. Often, in fact, they are not even known by technicians in the local administrations, so that the experimentations carried out do have an “empirical” character and adopt, just as “cultural reference”, the schools of thought of Anglo-Saxon Action Planning rather than that of the South American Participatory Budget.

Thus, reflection within the Network has started from concrete and imperfect experiences, at times sustained by theories, and other times by spontaneous elaboration of creative and innovative practices. Such a course has strengthened in its participants the conviction that the “transferability” of methods, codified or not, is in itself a romantic myth, while what really counts is the adaptive capacity of methods to the territory and its physical, social and institutional features and characteristics. From this viewpoint, every participation process cannot but appear as a learning space “in progress”, accumulating and emphasizing its value and knowledge with time. To such end, it is fundamental for every course of social dialogue to come out of the announcement and drawing board stages to “get down” and revisit itself in contact with the daily reality of experimentation. It appears just as essential that every “practical” experience be accompanied by careful monitoring and by cyclical courses of critical evaluation for the correspondence of the process’ outcomes to the initial objectives, as much as of its “unexpected” (positive and negative) effects.

The following part of this chapter will not so much be a showcase for “consolidated models” of courses and techniques (they will just be cited for the record), but rather a space in which to explicitate and exemplify some guiding principles that - within the “Partecipando” project - have emerged as likely factors of success or failure for an experience in social dialogue. They articulate themselves around 6 primary thematic sets:

- Explicitation and clarity in the rules and in the “stakes” of a process

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**p**articipation **how**?
• Central role, provenience, training and role of facilitators in participatory processes
• Suitability of financial resources and professional contributions allocated to develop and support a course of social dialogue
• The creative level of the projectuality stemming from the alchemy between territorial players, on the one hand, and the surrounding conditions and existing resources for the building of a participatory course on the other
• Integration between mid- and long term strategic objectives and the forecast and solidity of results - even small ones - achieved “step after step” during the progress of work.

Only when considered in their complexity and reciprocal articulations, these attention levels can guarantee wider and more creative results than the simple sum of financial and human resources fielded to “organize” a course of social dialogue.

A challenge
To integrate participatory practices into daily behaviors and the common practice of the public administration in order to avoid the effects of “statute-zation” or “institutionalization” turning into the creation of “empty vessels” or formal spaces deserted by the inhabitants. Espousing a strong political will with the use of techniques capable of “attracting” and widespread interest towards the themes discussed might have positive results, since methods do not “crystallize” and “bureaucratize”, repeating themselves in a routinary manner and unable to be renewed in time. It must not be forgotten that the citizens tend to link the image of participation to that of “de-bureaucratization” with regards to the relationships with institutions. This renders extremely important not only care for the organization of the process itself, but also its insertion within the decision and management procedures of the local administration supporting it.

Methods and tools
If the involvement of the inhabitants in decision-making processes must favor the questioning of consolidated positions and the construction of collective knowledge, it is necessary to choose adequate methods and tools for the task, doing so in the most conscientious - if not “scientific” - manner possible.

For some years now, also within the European Union, the production of handbooks illustrating and suggesting consolidated techniques and structured methodologies to be used in the building of courses of social dialogue has been increasing. To find one’s own way in this maze of indications is not easy and entails the risk of developing too much faith in the ability of these techniques to be a sort of ‘magic wand’ in solving the conflicts and tension that every transformation of the territory generates.

The infinite variety of local situations constitutes a factor of complexity that always makes the ultimate and definitive definition of a participatory methodology problematic. A good handbook should at the most admit value as an example, with a view to continuous ‘re-invention’ in the use of its techniques. It should also be clear about the fact that defining a priori a participatory course in its methodological components proves difficult due to the “relevant specificity” of each situation faced, and that a course of social dialogue cannot be defined as “structured” only when using “codified” methodologies within literature connected to the management of territorial transformations.

Who is supposed to “structure” a participatory course?
It is obvious that, before everything else, the construction of a “contract” upon which to base social dialogue is a political choice. However, the diverse problems exposed so far also correspond to the specific competence set of the “participatory planner”, that is to say that new expert role and profile (that can also be a single individual or, more advantageously, a group of people) whose knowledge makes it possible to choose among a multiplicity of possible tools, interpreting the most opportune combinations to face the construction of the rules and roles that will structure that particular participation course in the peculiar context chosen. Such a person (or group) could coincide or less with that of the animator, who will work within the participatory course to facilitate, fluidify and stimulate its dynamism.

So, when may a process be defined as “structured”?
Results from Bordeaux’s Local Surveys clearly indicate that: “Participation must be based upon a “contract” clarifying the objectives of the process, statute of the participants, methods and rules chosen” The entire experience of the Network confirms this orientation, suggesting that in order to have a “structured” process it is often sufficient to clearly and precisely establish times, spaces, rules and roles guaranteeing everyone equal rights of participation, expression and being heard.
What has emerged by analyzing the experience of the French town is confirmed by the very different experiences of the Municipio Roma XI and of the three Venetian Municipalities of Favaro, Lido and Marghera. In all five cases, the Participatory Budgets have assumed very different shapes thanks to technical coordination staffs, which, starting from clear local political willingness, “structured” rules and thought out the methodologies to be used in relation to the specific characteristics of their contexts and to the different degrees of development of “participatory consciousness” on the part of the local administration and involved citizenry.

**Learning from experience**

LE BUDGET PARTICIPATIF (AGGLOMÉRATION GRENOBOIsnake)

“The Participatory Budget is not so much a method, but rather a political objective that can be achieved in every context using different methods, as seen by the comparison with other experiences. What matters is to reach common objectives, but organizational forms adapted to places are more effective. Here, chance drawing of inhabitants has allowed the voices of immigrants to enter the process. By themselves - perhaps - they would never have participated.” (a manager of Pont-de-Claix)

Which is the first objective that the “contract” must have in his sights and on the basis of which a Participatory course will be structured?

The experience of the Network reveals that the theme of access to participatory courses becomes fundamental for its participants in order to guarantee a broad and pluralistic diversity of experiences, needs and standpoints. This comes to terms with the existence of “different abilities” and “social inequalities” that need to be re-balanced or overturned through investments targeted to provide each citizen with the type of resources he or she lacks (cultural, time, expressive or understanding capability, etc.). For instance, if we do not want to run the risk for the public of a participatory course being comprised mostly of senior citizens (those with the most amount of the time-resource), a free babysitting service within or close to the meeting places has proven an effective way to ensure the presence of a higher number of parents from young or middle-aged families.

Caveat:

In order to address the problems of subjects that normally have less access than others to the system of political representation (e.g., children, the disabled, non-resident workers of a territory, etc.), necessary would be necessary specific measures and investments. The experience of our Network shows that does rarely a participatory process also become a course of social inclusion (as a natural “collateral” effect) unless specific objectives to that end have been chosen, supporting them with investments in human and financial resources. There are “techniques”, however, which can facilitate the quest for dialogue with weaker social subjects, such as crossing and outreach. These are methods aiming at crossing places, re-discovering visiting routes and unusual perspectives, as well as meeting people and “discovering” problems that would hardly emerge in a the participatory course of people “have to go to its home”. Within the participatory course, moreover, it is possible to use techniques and tools capable of increasing accessibility in terms of the transparency of information, the real sharing and construction of knowledge. For instance, the use of communicative maps, “fond places” maps, models or other graphic and 3D documents helping to situate the information concerning the area at hand.

The nomadic apprenticeship

Can the choice of a place influence the outcome of a participatory process? The answer which emerged from the comparison among the cities in the Network is YES. A specific place may, in fact, communicate wrong information about itself and sap stimuli to participation on the part of groups of persons whose active presence would be auspicious. In this sense, it could be useful to think about “itinerant” forms in which physical spaces giving shape to participatory processes could be different and complementary: for example, in the Saione neighborhood in Arezzo (Italy), meetings for the Neighborhood Participatory Budget for 2005 have taken place in parks and public gardens when the weather so permitted. In any case, it is advisable to avoid a meeting place between administration and citizens being held in physically marginal or places little known with respect to the territory in question, marked by physical access...
barriers or overly connotated under the profile of the type of public normally using it. Experience shows that a library, a gym or a social centre are more “attractive” than a mosque, a senior citizens’ centre or a self-managed squat, because they generate less “prejudice” in those who would like to intervene and do not “alter” the communication of the event. Obviously, these “cautions” could become meaningless if there is an attempt to communicate with a specific type of public.

Learning from experience  
PARTICIPATORY BUDGET IN XI MUNICIPALITY (ROMA)

During the first year of experimentation for the Participatory Budget of the Municipio Roma XI, the use of senior citizens’ centers as spaces for the public meetings did “distort” the communication on the process, ending up by attracting mostly a public of senior adults. Starting with the second year, the choice to be “itinerant” between different types of spaces re-balanced the absence of people that previously had mistaken the invitation message by the administration.

Learning from experience  
PARTICIPATORY BUDGET OF LIDO (VENEZIA)

During the first year of experimentation of the Participatory Budget of the Municipality of Lido Venice (Italy), the choice of “parishes” as privileged spaces for the meetings proved most effective. The centre-left administration of the municipality, in fact, perceived a remarkable diffidence surrounding its action, finding itself in a neighborhood that - only recently and following a temporary “judiciary suspension from powers” - had opted for a political coalition other than the one traditionally preferred in that area. Therefore, the administration has deemed it better for public meetings to be held not in their own building (which could have given the impression of political endorsement), but in territories that could be perceived as more “neutral” or “equidistant” with respect to the two main political coalitions. As underlined by the process’ organizing staff: “It must never be forgotten that every proposal matured within a political organism - albeit participatory - can be poorly perceived by citizens, especially if they have little trust or familiarity with the proponent(s)”.

Within the Network the usefulness of having permanent Territorial Laboratories to carry out multiple activities in a territory has clearly emerged, with recognizable premises of their own. In particular, such spaces are capable of stimulating the gradual growth of mutual trust between administrators and citizens, and acting as “bonding agents” for the inhabitants’ sense of belonging to the territory in which they live. Moreover, they pursue a common project thrust linked to mid and long term visions, which makes it possible to draw up projects that can be assessed in the course of time with diverse and integrative sources of financing without losing their approach, finalized as it is to the “sharing of choices” even when facing very short deadlines.

Some discussion techniques and their related families

Existing literature highlights two main families of techniques: those finalized to listening and to the construction of knowledge, and those finalized to the project production. Part of handbook literature considers the conflict solving techniques as a third and separate category, but within the Network it has been deemed useful to include them within the methods for building new project thrust potential.

The close connection between knowledge and project has turned many techniques for the knowledge of places used with the inhabitants into planning modes, while many tools of participated planning have proven very useful in order to produce local knowledge.

There are techniques considered to be of “weaker structure” (more manageable and less rigid) and techniques of “stronger structure”, which are often associated with precise names, trademarks, authors and dates of birth. This happens especially within “fertile” contexts such as the Anglo-Saxon one, birthplace for a series of techniques centered on the workshop mode: for instance, “Planning for Real”, “Pattern Language” or “Action Planning”, and others in perpetual evolution. Nothing (except copyright, perhaps!) prevents their combination in unconventional settings (i.e. non traditional organizational contexts), through the modification of objectives and use modes. Results will hardly be exactly replicable from one context to the next. Each specific application context will have to choose the best blend of techniques and decide on the adequacy of each of its particular application modes.
A widely used methodology within European programming is EASW (European Awareness Scenario Workshop), based upon a combination of diverse techniques, more or less structured, used in codified sequences. The advantage in the use of “variable geometry” but “codified” methodologies such as this is to be found found in the high level of process formalization, tending to correspond a high level of legitimization of said process in the eyes of political and social players. It is interesting to note that the majority of structured techniques highlight emphasis on the meeting “face to face” between persons, although describing it in different terms. This, in fact, permits mutual listening and knowledge, thus facilitating the shift in players’ opinions during the process. Moreover, it takes into account the fact that our societies are still marked by high levels of informational gaps and techno-literacy among different social and age groups. That is why, in the majority of successful processes, the use of systems for “e-deliberation” at best complements the existence of direct meeting spaces. To avoid the indefinite protraction of participatory processes (which often tend to drive inhabitants away) many techniques set for themselves visible yet numerically limited objectives to be quickly achieved. The achieved outcomes stimulate a sense of trust in citizens and can pave the way for the use of more relaxed and deeper probing courses at a later date.

Learning from experience

Neighbourhood Contrats (Roma)

Neighbourhood contracts in Rome: Action Planning is a very useful structured technique to quickly plan in small groups, without losing the overall vision of the linkage between small projects and visions of urban scenarios in transformation. Its biggest advantage is that it operates through workshops and work-tables of small dimensions, thereby permitting active participation on the part of people not used to speak in public, giving the same weight to all opinions. At the same time it makes it possible to reach concrete results even when there is a need not to lose financing with a tight deadline, but also a desire to plan without a top down attitude, preferring the direct involvement of citizens.

“For me and my colleagues, Action Planning has made possible to participate in the decisions without feeling forced to slate too much of our leisure time” (an inhabitant of Primavalle neighborhood in Rome, working on the Neighbourhood Contract)
The following scheme shows some of the more common types of “simple” tools (therefore “modulable” in sequences and diversified mix) described by “borrowing” the outlook of the citizens of the town Seregno (Italy), where the Italian Institute for Social Research in Milan carried out a participatory research-project to support the drawing up of the Urban Zoning Plan, working with the citizens also on the analysis of the techniques to be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOOLS</th>
<th>THEIR USE</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
<th>PRINCIPAUX SITES DE REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of available documents</td>
<td>Collection an analysis of information produced on the theme at hand</td>
<td>Needed to recuperate and organize already accumulated knowledge</td>
<td>Data and information are collected for other purposes, therefore are not always of use as they are.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.avventura">www.avventura</a> urbana.it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Observation</td>
<td>Analysis of relations between places and behaviour; analysis of problems in their visible elements; behaviour analysis</td>
<td>In depth analysis, with plenty information study of behaviour within natural settings</td>
<td>Data unable to quantify and generalize. Access to places to be observed is not always available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating Observation</td>
<td>Analysis of behaviour and activities while underway</td>
<td>In depth analysis, analysis of verbal and non verbal behaviour. Observer is present within the situation</td>
<td>Data not easy to quantify and generalize.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowing</td>
<td>Analysis of unknown behaviour and environments (of which there is no previous knowledge)</td>
<td>In depth analysis of verbal and non verbal behaviour.</td>
<td>Data not able to be quantified and handled. Possible resistance on the part of person observed.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.refresher.com">www.refresher.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry through questionnaires</td>
<td>Verify precise hypothesis (opinion poll) - survey on population groups</td>
<td>Quantifiable and general data. It is possible to reach a large number of persons and possible to make comparisons</td>
<td>Summary data; in depth analysis not possible. Method does not allow easy analysis of specific cases, and has high costs in terms of time.</td>
<td><a href="http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu">http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Informations collection on a specific theme (interviews to privileged witnesses); detailed analysis of people’s opinions, their problems’ image, their motivations;</td>
<td>In depth analysis and plenty of information</td>
<td>Data not able to be quantified or generalized (in a statistical sense).</td>
<td><a href="http://www.partnerships.org.uk">www.partnerships.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public meetings</td>
<td>Public meetings open to all interested parties: useful to present research or to illustrate and discuss the results</td>
<td>Large participation Visibility</td>
<td>Speakers are only those more used to doing so in public. Method does not allow in depth analysis or real discussion of between different positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td>Meeting open to people interested or expert on a theme, during which everyone freely speaks on everything they know about the subject; useful to set work</td>
<td>Useful to generate ideas and to share knowledge and information</td>
<td>Data are not systematic and non verifiable</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov">www.fhwa.dot.gov</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.gantthead.com">www.gantthead.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.effective">www.effective</a> meetings.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These “basic” tools can be composed and associated in different ways, giving life to countless methods. One of the more exhaustive handbooks circulating nowadays is dedicated to Community Planning and has identified at least 53 of them, underlining that the differences are often quite simply related to the setting, that is to say the framework in which participants are called to operate. This framework takes shape by a combination of he way in which problems are presented, the timing within which the interaction has to happen, the spatial placing of the participants, the type of support offered by facilitators and moderators, the subdivision of work into groups and stages, the forms chosen for communication among participants, etc.

**Caveat:**
Next to the use of “structured discussion techniques”, it is necessary to evaluate the usefulness of adopting experimental policies based on “learning by doing” and self-help, such as collective self-recuperation and self-building, accompanied by administration support. Besides being able to involve “antagonistic” or “less than docile” subjects accustomed to modes of more direct action to access traditional structured dialogue processes, they often prove useful as tools for the environmental education of inhabitants.

**Does the use of tried and true methods and techniques add value to the success of a participatory process?**

YES. To clarify rules and to “structure” a course of social dialogue is fundamental in order to make it effective. Many structured techniques were born and have improved with time to guarantee active and conscious involvement on the part of citizens in participatory processes, so they will not be used only to defend partisan interests or to instrumentally guarantee consensus around choices determined ahead of time by politics.

**Caveat:**
Constructing the rules of the game is a “focal” moment that can shift the balance of outcomes in a process favouring this or that individual player or specific groups. If the rules are discussed with the inhabitants, it is important that public players (administrators and/or facilitators) take up the role of guarantors of the right of everybody to participate and have their voice heard, with particular care and attention to the weakest segments of the population.
Learning from experience

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES (NEWCASTLE)

Presented below is a form prepared during a workshop of the “Participando” network held by the City of Newcastle. It outlines a participatory, highlighting tools and techniques used in the several stages:

City of Newcastle
Name of the project: Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
Kind of participants: local people, agencies, partnership & council staff
Number of participants: 200 people went to the meeting, wider community awareness
Situation of the area: disadvantaged areas in the city: West End, East End, North
Subject of the work: working towards everyone having the same level of services across the city
Promoter of the operation: Newcastle Partnership (local strategic partnership)
Duration: 1 year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOOLS</th>
<th>WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>LIMITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Steering group works all stages 1-5</td>
<td>to guide the organization and planning of participation</td>
<td>allows officers to gain a wider understanding of different perspectives</td>
<td>limits wider participation representing one community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Public meeting (group involvement)</td>
<td>- share experiences - information to develop the same level of knowledge</td>
<td>- ensure people are not left behind - feel valued heard - partnership understands local issues</td>
<td>- it has to be to a time scale - can be divisive if not well facilitated or agenda dictated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Facilitation tools e.g. post it notes brainstorming prioritisation confirmation within series of workshop meetings (thematic meetings)</td>
<td>- promote understanding of different views - get ideas - prioritise within group</td>
<td>- vary according to group dynamics – adjust according to situation - can be visible - can show common concerns and divergence of opinion - enable people to get involved with topic of concern</td>
<td>- some tools don’t help quieter people to participate - not always allows everyone an equal say - splitting themes can mean overarching issues aren’t dealt with holistically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communication - websites - newsletter - publicity</td>
<td>- keeping people up to date on progress of strategy - allows people to understand options for further feedback</td>
<td>- can be interactive: e.g. website - accessible formats can be adapted to audience - media for clear messages to be circulated widely, even to those that can’t be involved further</td>
<td>doesn’t reach everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mainstreaming Everyone’s day jobs change</td>
<td>to ensure disadvantaged areas needs are clearly met or at least addressed</td>
<td>partner agencies should not be able to avoid local priorities</td>
<td>- relies on commitment of partners - takes time for a ‘culture change’ to happen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which elements help to conceive a shared project?

A big contribution comes from the general approach linking many techniques: the “maieutic” slant. It recalls the art of the “midwife”, helping mothers in childbirth, inasmuch it clarifies and makes “explicit” needs and desires that are “implicit” and at first glance do not appear that evident or are difficult to interpret to transform into project-oriented images.

The majority of structured participatory methodologies tend to pursue the creation of spaces where people can feel cozy and relaxed, favoring in the participants a willingness to open up to dialogue, listen to others and respect their opinions. It also tends to offset the risk of “Darwinian self-selection” among participants (only the most motivated make it to the end of the process). These risks become higher when a process becomes boring, unproductive or monopolized by those more used to speaking in public.

Considering how important these objectives are, it is good to underline how inadequate it would be to imagine the construction of “cost-free” participatory courses. The lack of funding and investments for the “structuring” of processes, the production of information material and the build up of a team of professionals trained to lead them and support their success can represent, in fact, a marked reduction in their approachability and effectiveness.

Does the use of structured methodologies guarantee the effectiveness of a participatory process?

NO. Constructing participatory courses must be a creative act, not a mechanical one. Every “tool” is neutral and the maximum beneficial effect of each tool will depend on the way it is used. Every methodology has “inner limits” that have to be related to the duration of the participatory process and the inter-related flow of its stages, the number and type of players involved, the objectives to be reached and the competences of mediators among the players.

Carrying out a pre-inquiry and an energy mapping of conflicts and social vitality in a territory can help to start off on the right foot forward for the effectiveness of social dialogue processes and their ground rules.

Articulation of the continuity of the communicative flux and of the process, oriented to mid and long term strategic objectives and the solidity of results achieved step after step

Using structured organizational formulas, however, can often generate trust and give the feeling of reaching new results that add up at each stop along the participatory course. In order for that to happen, however, it is indispensable for citizens to have a clear picture of “what is at stake in the game” and may be achieved in exchange for their commitment in the process. Moreover, they must have a clear perception of the existence of a “political support” committed to ensuring the concrete application of a decision made in the course of the process.

Caveat:

Meetings - although formally open to anyone - are often a “selective” type of event. By using a stage or a table, they tend to separate those wielding decision-making power from those who simply inhabit a territory and can stimulate direct involvement only on the part of more vocal inhabitants. Smaller working groups generally allow for more equality among participants and a greater possibility to deepen the issues at hand. These remarks, however, should not be assumed as golden rules. In fact, there are places in the world and specific moments of a participatory process where the meeting mode is more effective, while courses that overtly subvert social rules and “formal” decision-making hierarchies are looked upon with suspicion and skepticism...

In the achievement of positive outcomes, how much does it matter who chooses or uses a technique?

In and of themselves, techniques can be well or poorly used, or even conscientiously so but with poor results or vice versa. Much depends on those using them and how they are used.

New professional profiles are assuming an ever greater importance today within participatory processes. Calling them moderators, facilitators, animators or in many other ways evokes their “complex” role, which
cannot be limited to being “performers” of techniques repeated ad libitum in a professional albeit cold and impersonal manner. The challenge facing these professional profiles is to conjugate their “political passion” that has historically given life to many participatory courses, with the “professionalism” of mastering and knowing how to profitably “combine” the blend among methods and techniques in order to make sure those inhabitants more used to speaking in public do not ‘drown out’ others, to construct “project” starting from the explicit disclosure of conflicts and tension between different players in the participatory course and their differing visions, to give voice to excluded players, to rebalance power imbalances and stimulate collective project thrust by providing alternatives and suggesting examples. If these professionals join in “trans-disciplinarian” groups, elements such as elaborated solutions and dialogue between “street level knowledge” (that of the people living in a territory) and “expert knowledge” (that of the people with a professional knowledge of the problems of a territory and imagining a range of solutions to solve them) will be enriched. Whoever wants to approach the use of structured methodologies must be open to the “unforeseeable.”

**Learning from experience**

**“NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES”**

**(NEWCASTLE)**

The programme has adopted an original methodology in order to train “mediators” between inhabitants and the administration. To allow for a deeper penetration of participatory processes into the social fabric, some citizens have been “trained” - at the project’s expense - as “community developing agents”, becoming “antennas” in the territory and fostering a more capillary knowledge of its problems.

Newcastle New Deal for Communities is an ambitious programme working to change the face of Arthur’s Hill, Cruddas Park, Rye Hill, and Elswick over a ten-year period. The programme tackles the big issues that matter in every community, a healthier future, better homes, an attractive environment, jobs, local business, crime, education. A community regeneration team helps residents identify local issues affecting their neighbourhood and find solutions for them.

**An open question:**

Can the use of external consultants for the structuring and facilitation of participatory courses heighten their quality and effectiveness? The experience of our Network would suggest a positive answer, but it is certain that this entails higher financial costs and means taking into account the risk involved in totally outsourcing the management of a process that should also be a space for growth and learning by the local political-administrative structures. On the other hand, the training of “in house” personnel in a territorial body is auspicious because it can help to ensure the sustainability of the courses activated; but it is certain that personal attitudes to social dialogue and the quality of the training programmes will have to be carefully evaluated beforehand.

The choice therefore often falls upon a “mixed” solution, gradually training “in house” personnel from the public bodies involved by having them work side by side with external consultants. The objective of guaranteeing a lasting transformation of administrative practices in the participatory sense will have to be supported by a balanced division of responsibilities (shifting in time) between “in house” and “external” resources. This, in turn, will call for political guarantees regarding the continuity of participatory processes and courses.

**Is there any Decalogue for the identification of a potentially good “mediator”?**

A Decalogue would probably be too rigid. In any case, the experience of our Network has confirmed that a good mediator must first of all possess a range of relational abilities, knowledge and attitudes not easily assimilable and transmissible in training (such as personal characteristics of empathy, listening ability, leadership, trust building, etc.), and is often far removed from a traditional professional profile. He or she will have to be able to:

- mediate between the enthusiasm that a “fired-up” participatory approach can stir and the risks of manipulation always implicit in the expert use of consolidated methods and techniques.
- moreover, mediators will have to explicitly commit themselves to remaining aloof from the risks of overestimate their own “power” (what the Greeks called...
the arrogance of the demiurge, the god-creator out of nothingness...) and from the illusion of being able to control the variables coming into play all on their own;

- master an “awareness of limits” helping them to avoid the surfacing of “paternalism”, “collusion” or “sterile opposition” towards individual players of the process;
- implement radical processes of questioning towards what has been expressed by participants, focusing on the “deconstruction of the perceived needs”, avoiding the reduction of a participatory course to the simple recording of needs expressed by the citizens and then assumed as “given”;
- favour the opening and the analysis of “black boxes”, i.e. of all those mechanisms functioning “in automatic mode” (the water system, traffic, transit, etc.) without a specific assessment of their effectiveness or capacity to address the request for total quality of life by the inhabitants.

To this end, the conscientious facilitator is a “divulger of scientific knowledge”, but also an “activator” of relations with experts within specific fields of knowledge that can help every citizen understand through exposure to data and indepth consideration of issues. The conscientious facilitator will be aware that his or her own “expert knowledge” can be questioned and reveal its limits. He or she is, therefore, prepared to question a personal standpoint with humility, using it as “material among other materials” so it may emerge from the process radically modified.

For this reason as well, his or her work will feature “methodologic flexibility” and will privilege “research-action”, where every action is examined and monitored in its effects in order to cumulatively heighten impact and feasibility of every methodological or content proposal. A conscientious facilitator will undertake to refocus specific attention on the “substantive” aspects of the participatory processes, such as the quality of projects and achievements, not meant as an optional aspect, but as the outcome of “social poetry” that must try to share and pair concepts of functionality and beauty collectively built. Moreover, he or she will be open to favor the gradual introduction of borderline themes into the discussion.

**A doubt: What if it were not always necessary to have facilitators...**

Many citizens think that the world (and participatory processes!) can go on even without expert facilitators. This does not take away from the fact that every participatory course needs moderator profiles. In many southern countries these people are representatives of the citizens themselves, are chosen during the early stage of the administrative course and often are trained for that task by the administrations. Elsewhere, “mixed” groups of players (chosen in equal measure from the administration and social base) are formed. Their work, either together or in turns, is to ensure orderly debates and exchanges of points of view. In Europe and North America there is a tendency to prefer the presence of consultants who are experts in social mediation.
An hypothesis:
Let facilitation processes maintain a “variable geometry” everywhere. In fact, it should not really matter “who” the moderator is, but rather the practical competences he or she can field in order to ensure that every participant perceives the same right as everyone else to access the participatory course and have “a voice that matters”. Certainly a professional facilitator can bring added value: especially if he or she has “expert” knowledge to contribute, not in the form of “solutions from outside” the participatory process, but of ideas that can stimulate the shaping of new project solutions and inventive options.

Are techniques are always rigorous, serious, boring? Don’t they run the risk of resembling mathematical formulas rather than expressions of social interaction?
NO, play and party always play a fundamental role in the construction of “social bonds” and in attracting the participants to commit themselves (and to return to) the diverse stages of a participatory process. And many techniques assume this tonality so they may not come across as either dull or burdensome. In any case, more serious moments can alternate with more convivial ones. Simulation, theatrical techniques (amongst which the “Oppressed Theatre” stemming from the collaboration between Brazilian pedagogist Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal) or role playing are often useful modes for nourishing the exchange of points of view and to building up in players the ability to identify with roles other than their own.

Learning from experience
TOOLS FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CITIZENS (VENZIA)
The City of Venice (Italy), with the collaboration of the University Lab “L’Ombrello”, has used a range of tools for the involvement of the citizens, including the forum theatre from the “Oppressed theatre”, a technique useful for facing several types of problems through the creation of scenarios and the search for “real time” resolutions shared by all participants.

Nonviolent training techniques and social animation are useful for creating to construct “group feeling” in order to dispel mistrust and prejudices among the participants so they may plan together together in a more harmonious way. Temporarily shifting roles and points of view does not mean discarding them from the decision-making course, which will then have to insert the decisions into the programmes of a public body so they may become concrete reality.
At the same time, using multiple forms of communication (even some rather “appetizing” ones, such as the use of drawings, 3D models, spoken word, video shooting or written texts) has a dual positive impact: everyone can make their participation more attractive, while expressing themselves in a way with which they feel more at ease.

Learning from experience
MARITIME NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRACT (RÉGION BRUXELLES - CAPITALE)
Local follow up surveys among inhabitants have shown that the habit of preparing meals together has been experienced as a very important moment of social togetherness. It has proven fundamental in creating habits and facilitating informal dialogue among players, lightening up the rigidity typical of debates.
Learning from experience
CORVIALE LABORATORY (ROMA)
Many investments from the City have funded artistic events and the use of the “Television” (grassroots’ television) to create curiosity and mutual knowledge among inhabitants. Corviale network is a TV channel designed so the inhabitants of the neighborhood can participate and voice their views. It is seen as a tool to project a new and creative image of the neighborhood, narrating and enhancing the changes underway there. Its aim is to contribute to a process leading to a sense of positive and forward-looking ownership of the neighborhood in the part of its inhabitants. It is an experiment seeking to make the outlying suburbs of the city become new poles of cultural attraction.

WHERE:
Corviale is a Public Housing block, planned as a linear city. This isolated and single building block has 9 floors and is 1km long. It occupies a dominating position over the valley and stands out over the surrounding suburbs.

Techniques last the time of their implementation. How to leave a trace of their passage on the territory
Worrying too much about this is simply not worth the trouble. Techniques are “means”; the important part is what is left behind in terms of substance created with their help. This does not mean, however, that it would not be nice to leave memories of the different moments in a participatory course. Filing material and producing notes of the meetings held and the decisions taken during a process helps those who may join in at a later date to follow events and contribute to the development of contents, without forcing the discussion to start over time and time again. At the end of the process, however, leaving behind material accessible and understandable to all is a way to “leave footprints” of the methodologies used, but also to make clear to those who will follow why and how a given result emerged from the application of given techniques. All the better if those memories wear bright, attractive colours and carry the faces of those who participated through movies and photos. Some were sorry - all too late - not to have recorded or photographed the moments of meetings in which people perceived their common growth...

Caveat:
People change quickly, especially in suburbia... It is important that the works produced by participatory courses record their own origins and genesis for future memory. It could be well worth it to place a sign commemorating the experience, also in order to heighten the feeling of ownership by the inhabitants and diminish the risk of neglect and possible vandalism.
Information, communication, training: practices that need reinventing

Needless to say, urban participation cannot exist without information or communication, though it is less vital as far as training is concerned. Talking about what the municipalities, technical departments, associations and citizens use to explain events soon gives rise to questions. Here is a short list of the frequently asked questions that are often without answer.

- Do urban development projects and actions entail clearly identified information and communication strategies?
- What are the costs of information, what elements of expenditure do they comprise, how are they financed?
- Is it more effective to train administration staff or to entrust communications to external consultants? How can the continuity of the process, the elements acquired in time and the memory of experience be ensured?
- What are the strategies for involving economic agents and investors in urban development actions?
- Is preference given to formal training or to on-site reciprocal training and self-training processes?
- How can reciprocal learning processes be organised so that interaction among the players is not hierarchical?
- Is it true that participation is learned by participating?
- What does training citizens mean?

Learning from experience

ATLAS, MAP OF SUBURBS (ROMA)

The Atlas, map of suburbs is an interactive communication and language instrument that support participatory process enabling inhabitants to localize urban transformations in comprehensible maps.

- To promote the diffusion of information and to increase the knowledge within participatory processes
- To promote mutual knowledge among inhabitants using different languages

An instrument, a map (on different scales) for a complete knowledge of the territory and the suburbs’ degradation, of the ongoing and foreseen projects.

It is a composite of georeferenced high-resolution satellite imagery and air photogrammetric cartography, where all the ongoing and foreseen projects in suburban areas’ peripheries are sited. As for project management, this Map helps to identify the strategic activities for future development.

The high-resolution satellite imagery (IKONOS 2000-2002) available for all the municipal territory, unlike traditional cartography, permits a user-friendly, dynamic and ever updated interpretation of urban transformations, especially concerning environmental degradation. Moreover, it permits the constant updating and monitoring of the transformation processes.

WHERE:
Roman suburbs
These questions reflect what today appears to be a greater demand for training and follow-up in terms of how to “ensure the existence of a programme or a project”. Furthermore, a clear distinction must be made between training tools and the objectives of communication. Past experience has revealed the need to meet a twofold requirement: to inform, but above all to elaborate communication strategies aimed at training citizens for a project of democratic management, whereby they not only express themselves and exchange information, but demand participation in decision-making, according to different modalities. This statement of fact rests on three principles.

The Three Principles

1. Communications and information are generally confused with the participation process; information is the lowest level of participation when it is limited to data transferral. On the contrary, the creation of a training programme involving citizens is considered as the highest level of participation in terms of the awareness of an act.

Caveat:

One of the main issues concerns the position of citizens within the participatory process: they can either be considered as INTERMEDIARIES between the different players (political, technical, economic, of associations), or they can setup their own strategies by means of their own tools. Both are possible, though observation has shown preference is often given to the former. This leads to a burning question: intermediaries for what?

2. Communication is a process that evolves with the development of projects (be it in terms of physical urban regeneration or the mutualisation of actions within an area - territory, neighbourhood, action perimeter, zone…). It must thus be considered before, during and after the launch of the participatory process, bearing in mind the following three questions:

- What is the prevailing rationale? A plan rationale? A project rationale? How can the results of the two be clearly differentiated to prevent any manipulations upon presentation of actions?
- Was it the object of a communication plan? It implies the use of financial means, but also the presence of players able to create new communication modes.
- Is it the object of the “active watch” that brings together decision-makers, experts, facilitators and citizens? At what speed? What importance is given to deliberation?

3. Communication is an essential criterion for assessing the impact of the participatory process; it cannot be limited to products (cards, logos, exhibitions…), but must consider the nature of the social or technical NETWORKS it was instrumental in creating. This is the essential result that must be reached regarding the development of communication and decision-making flows, irrespective of the time limits of the project.

I talk, you hear, he/she listens, we exchange… Is this the key to participation in decisions?

Information flows like water. It flows naturally, would be accessible to everyone and is apparently easy to supply. However, things are never so simple or obvious. We live in a society where water distribution is often entrusted to private companies, though it is a collective good. To inform is far more complex than supplying a piece of information, because it means working for the common good to achieve a community of peers.

We generally reassure ourselves by thinking first in terms of the tools used instead of the pre-established communications objectives; the different participatory experiences developed within the Partecipando Network have underscored the large diversity of such tools, like in a catalogue.

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6 By mutualisation we mean the practices that develop the pooling of financial, political, social and cultural resources for a common project that is the outcome of a negotiated agreement.
**Learning from experience**

**MARPITIME NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRACT (RÉGION BRUXELLES - CAPITALE)**

During this participatory process, fora and tools have been used with a view to fostering and improving the flow of communications, such as: neighbourhood general assemblies, the local integrated-development Commission, Open days of participation, Bills, a questionnaire, a Neighbourhood Atlas, the Neighbourhood Totem and an information Brochure.

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**Catalogue of Traditional Tools**

Whether in establishing neighbourhood committees or contracts in a socially intense dualistic city, or a scattered town, an example of good practice in terms of information is the combination of a series of actions aimed at informing and mobilizing the citizens in the area concerned by the urban project that is to be launched. The action scale is made up of a minimum of five operations:

- **What can be defined as “the most basic form of information”, i.e. the existence of folders, documents, newspapers or video clips, all prepared without interaction, without any effort to put people and groups into perspective; in other words, “dead” and cold material no one ever really uses.**

- **Press conferences held by the Mayor or the elected representatives concerned, to present and popularize the main features of projects.**

- **Personalised mail.** Since the launching stage, the citizens who participated at least once in the neighbourhood committees systematically receive an invitation and reports on the plenary meetings.

- **The local media.** The town press can reserve a page for information on participatory democracy experiences in the municipality, with the dates and places of upcoming neighbourhood committees and budgetary workshops, while the local radio and TV channel air the results and future public meetings.

- **Creation of a participants’ network.** For example, the participants of neighbourhood committees can be called upon to supply the personal details of relatives or neighbours who could be interested in the project.

In addition to a broad series of more or less useful techniques such as: open days, travelling exhibitions concerning the projects, workshops, discussion groups, opening of a free phone line, opinion polls, or even public hearings. According to the experience of the institutional players, their relations with the media and associations, information can take on various and multiple shapes. What we have learned by comparing the different ways the Partecipando cities approach the issue is that “too much information kills information”, diluting, stacking and creating a profusion of places, occasions and often languages.

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**Caveat:**

In some cities, such profusion often obliges the authorities to prepare information “kits” containing sets of envisaged tools: “Kit for the Organisation of a local Vote”; “Neighbourhood Consultant’s Kit”; training kit for creating “Dialogue Awareness” in the municipal services. Such tools guide the players along different stages. However useful this material may be, it makes communication “cold”. Everything depends on the importance given to spoken words and oral communication compared to such tools. In other words, there is no communication “kit”; it occurs within reciprocal, sometimes conflicting interaction.

Nevertheless, participants and the political and administrative personnel normally follow on-the-job training. The creation of a website can often be a solution for permanently supplying structured information, albeit with the constraint of having to update the information according to the progress and achievements of the project. In Rome (the USPEL office - see ref. doc.), many difficulties arose at this level. Sometimes old websites containing the memory of operations and schedules must be kept open to enable urban players to compare the progress and delays of the experience.
Information should therefore be perceived as a continuum making it possible to overcome the habit of resorting to the profusion of traditional information techniques, but especially to shift from “cold”, static information, to “warm”, interactive and reciprocal information, as indicated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Exchange</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Engagement/dialogue</th>
<th>Shared Decision-making</th>
<th>Shared Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information received</td>
<td>I listen and I talk</td>
<td>We talk and understand</td>
<td>We decide</td>
<td>We are responsible and bound to report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information supplied</td>
<td>You listen and you talk</td>
<td>each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Said continuum is nothing but a leading thread to understand the scope of mobilised information techniques, allowing the different aspects of communication to be envisaged. It represents an opportunity for understanding the necessary conditions, objectives and techniques to shift from information to communication.

**Beyond Information, Communication**

Communication is of course a way of speaking to one another, though more profoundly; it is a reciprocal, often ambivalent, not to say ambiguous exchange of the “I love you nor do I” kind. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that people who know how to communicate are powerful. The power to DO. Communication is also a right: to speak freely in a democratic society, to debate, decide and participate in setting the conditions for “living together” in said society. Though how can one make sure such principles are taken into account? By bearing in mind at least three requirements.

1. First, in preparing a communication plan or an active “watch”, one must necessarily think about the minimum indispensable requirement for making the participatory process work concretely. For instance, the presence of culture creators, qualification producers, citizenship players, supporters of solidarity... Places where innovative practices are born: citizen forums, electronic participation, conferences to explore the future of cities, dialogues on the diagnosis of public policies, study groups, anything allowing an in-depth, democratic study of issues pertaining to the collective good and interest.

2. The second requirement concerns the criteria for the significant elements in a communication plan, i.e. what must be agreed to assess the communicative effects of any action undertaken. For example, defining the targets, founding a driving group, elaborating a contract to “work together”, choosing mobilizing key words, looking for alternatives, permanently focusing on priorities, ensuring intermediation, stimulating solidarity networks... In other words, an analysis with the twofold requirement of establishing precise diagnostic and budgetary planning tools.

3. The third requirement consists in making sure communication plays a pivotal role in terms of the evaluation of the participation of institutions and citizens.

**Caveat:**

We believe that six issues should be addressed for a communication plan to be consistent (or credible) and to ensure it will be operational: a) What is the target and why? B) What are the expected results? How do we know we have been successful? C) On what grounds and with whom? D) With what and within which limits? E) On what should efforts be concentrated first? F) How is the team responsible for steering, developing and animating the project introduced?
The three requirements will enable us to make choices as to the forms of communication we wish to develop or not. As shown in the table below, it is important to bear in mind the way in which the communicative approach and level of knowledge integration are perceived or conceived, together with the management of communication.

### Communication practices and dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Perception of the communicative approach</th>
<th>Technical and Common Knowledge Levels of Integration</th>
<th>Communication Management Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Paternalistic or organised into a strict hierarchy</td>
<td>Highly technical (based on the technical division of operations)</td>
<td>Under the control of political authorities Citizen are mere onlookers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centred on a project</td>
<td>In partnership</td>
<td>Focused upon the construction of a project</td>
<td>Call for external support Citizens are intermediaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centred on a global approach</td>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
<td>Strong integration level (the technical aspects depend on the globalised approach)</td>
<td>Integrated switching back and forth between the town planners, public authorities and citizen groups. The inhabitants are citizens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table latently indicates the possible progression entailed in a communicational approach and can be put into perspective according to three different citizen figures:

- With the most basic form of communication, their role is limited to that of mere onlookers;
- They can become intermediaries, i.e. players participating in the realisation of a project, a mechanism.
- The highest level is citizenship, where all the information resources and communication strategies lead them to decide or participate in decision-making.

However, time has come to quickly move on to the next stage: training.

### Beyond informing and communicating, training and ... self-training

To present a table containing the different urban citizenship training programmes in the Partecipando network would be absolutely illusory. Few experiences have been attempted. Even though it is an issue deserving special attention in the impact assessment of the projects and actions whose main objective is citizen participation, it may be useful to underscore that training cannot be limited to a formalised process of courses or training days. The main target is the establishment of self-training processes centred upon collective learning.

Local studies and thematic workshops have all highlighted what appears quite obviously to be lacking: two-tiered training, for the urban administration staff that is often uncomfortable with communication processes, and the citizens who, beyond the information stage, wonder what will happen with their ideas and opinions, and how they in turn will inform “the absentees”, those who do not attend the meetings, workshops and citizen meetings.

**Caveat:**

Training in coordination or communication are two distinct operations that must be devised according to the relations among the elected representatives, municipal administrative services, citizens and users of space. It is crucial not only to imagine and plan periods for training but also to work towards the construction of a permanent structure with a self-training vocation focusing on horizontal communication and support to the social networks.

At least for the two categories of participants mentioned above, training should include not only the different project stages in an integrated approach process, but also action scales and levels, in other words the entire scope of a project. To communicate means taking into account the size of a territory, its atmosphere and resources, according to three different levels, so that the common good, the city where life is pleasant is not limited to the mere perspective of proximity, i.e. the “place where one lives”:

- The micro-local level, in other words the neighbourhood, with its proximity issues.
- The municipal level, including all the territorial and municipal projects.
The local inquiry in Rome has highlighted an interesting aspect among the social players involved in the Urban Laboratory activities, namely the presence of technicians who had participated in the previous participatory process experiences or in sociological field surveys in other cities. For instance in Venice, (see doc.) the lessons learned from the past have been “socialised”, thus contributing to collegial self-training opportunities and extending the participation and engagement of citizens in the social dialogue.

05. Participation how?

The work on participatory budgets - still at an early stage in Rome, Pont-de-Claix and Venice (see doc.) - is another innovative pathway in the sense that it requires the definition of training tools for establishing a Budgetary Committee or a study group. It is important to jointly elaborate and co-produce several didactic tools such as a financial glossary, a financial PowerPoint containing the detailed statement of all the income and expenditure of the previous year, a PowerPoint containing the detailed statement of all the income and expenditure of the previous year, a

Point on the communal, inter-communal, departmental and regional cross-competences, to enter the budgetary items and indicators of each municipal service and sector policy. All the collected information can be used to train the participants during the first meetings in the basic elements of municipal budgets, but especially, in the long run, to ensure data processing and communication, and the preparation of alternatives to submit to discussion.

In other words, the process launched in relation to the participatory budget has a triple advantage: it re-politicizes a budgetary tool that is too often “depoliticized” because of its technical and financial aspects; it makes it possible to run counter to a political culture according to which “speaking about money is dangerous” for several reasons (lack of knowledge about the technicalities, the NIMBY phenomenon, priority of individual interests, competition among players or areas…); thirdly, money issues are symbolically depicted as problems of power and democratic decision-making that must be considered versus the fair distribution of limited resources. These are all reasons why it is one of the self-training tools that should be put to the test systematically in participatory processes.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it may be useful to formulate a couple of recommendations:

Any problem encountered must be identified to establish basic agreements and consensus as to the importance of communication.

To do so, we must consider the passage from information to communication, bearing in mind the following aspects:

- Lack of a global communication strategy and importance of allowing for specific communication channels
- Set-up of complex communication networks involving several players in the production of communication (authorities and technical services, associations, citizens) to guarantee the circularity of communication flows; indeed, formal communication in one direction only - from the authorities to the citizens - merely fuels the “passivity” of participation, instead of permanently fostering communication flows.
- Organise key social interaction opportunities in the neighbourhoods and areas concerned by the intervention.
- Invest specific financial and cultural resources for the construction of communication strategies. One fundamental element has arisen in local studies: either no specific budget is allocated to communication, or such expenditure is hardly identifiable within the context of the entire action, or no inventory exists of the cultural actors involved in the creativity initiatives.
- Efforts must be made to make the nature and progress of processes more explicit and visible by fostering reciprocal learning and self-training.
- Use IT and multimedia tools more efficiently; experiment the use of new independent media (such as neighbourhood TV channels, radios, newspapers).
- Foster training courses for participatory citizenship at primary and secondary school.
- Experiment follow-up tools involving the citizens and enabling the monitoring of programmes and any modifications - for instance maps and PowerPoint presentations whose informative content must be updated constantly. Everyone underlines how difficult it is to ensure the continuity of processes - that depend on financing time limits - to allow for the consolidation and evolution of experiences.
- Develop reflection and comparative studies on the training programmes and didactic supports for the coordinators and facilitators to increase the effectiveness of communication and participation initia-
tives, and open new opportunities among the project leaders to exchange experiences.

- Develop reflection and comparative studies on the strategies to include the socially weaker categories, defining the languages used to assess their effects and performance.
- Carry out in-depth studies on the training of citizens, enhancing non-verbal language and spontaneous initiatives.
- Take into account the interval necessary between the establishment of social dialogue and the deadlines, budgetary commitments and results that depend on the legislative procedures and financing rules.

What we have, therefore, is an inventory to place both communication and the different strategies to make it operational and effective at the heart of the participatory approach, keeping sight of the objective to mobilise knowledge and implement self-training.

**Innovation to enhance the quality of deliberation**

In order to go beyond the traditional inventory of information tools to invent new communication channels, a democracy project must become central in urban governance.

Thus, the latter will not merely widen the gap between representative and participatory democracy. The third term of reference in our communication society is deliberative democracy that is not limited to participation, proximity or dialogue. Its purpose is participation to better “live together”.

**Caveat:**

*Though the purpose is co-production, the appropriation of the space and time dimensions of urban action nevertheless implies overcoming recurrent opposition in the management of policies or tools: on the one hand, communication with no discussion, where the different information techniques use participation as a sort of mini-survey in which the citizens express their needs, demands or proposals to the elected representatives, without any follow-up discussion; on the other, an approach based on a deliberative process, whereby the existence of regular working groups, the possibility of discussing within small groups, the focus placed upon the procedural quality of a project, the participation of people with experience in facilitating debates, the mass of available information and the established training, makes it possible to guarantee a high-quality deliberative process.*

Any opposition must be overcome by developing innovative communication strategies. This is one of the lessons that we can certainly learn from the work performed within the Partecipando network.
Participation challenges

Three opposing tensions: a reading of current urban transformations

Experience accumulated in these last few years by the cities experimenting participation did highlight some problematic areas, crucial in order to face the shallows onto which public policies and attempts at grassroots organizing have often sunk. Focusing on them can help us proceed further along the courses traveled so far and boost the power of participatory processes to actively and positively influence everyday reality for the population of so many cities and towns participating in the Urbact network. Each of these contexts comes across with its specificity and peculiarities due to the differences in culture, experience, socio-economic condition, territorial organization and administrative-political system; our effort in this final chapter will be to try and understand which are the common challenges to face in the near future.

Examples and case stories considered so far within this handbook have highlighted potentialities, but also limits, showing the far edge yet to be reached.

Some opposing “tensions”, common to many of the situations examined, seem to generate the problem area we have defined as the challenges of participation:

- The tension between inclusion and exclusion, those inside and those outside, those integrated within the city and those marginalized from social and political life, with limited access to goods and material resources. This does not only concern the economic sphere, but first and foremost, the cultural one and more in general, the issue of living together within equality and differences.

- The tension between top-down and bottom-up opposing a hierarchical approach “from above” to one based on local resources and demands, often translates into tension between institutions unable to reap this wealth coming from society, acting as agents of “repression” rather than as “catalysts”, and social groups capable of activating projects or initiatives from below, sometimes in the total absence of power and resources, such as to make survival impossible without institutional support, in other instances, stronger and able to self-organize and self-promote new ways of living, of inhabiting, producing, consuming and building spaces according to ideals and criteria closer to their individual and collective aspirations.

- The tension between marginal and central areas no longer corresponding to the traditional contraposition “downtown-suburbia” where the center is the city area that offers opportunities and quality of life, while suburbia is the place expelling functions and undesired populations or, on to a broader scale, the place of economic and cultural backwardness of the areas more distant from the metropolis. As some of the experiences of the “Urbact-Partecipando” cities have taught, the “downtown”, the “center”, often presents itself as a concentrate of problem issues and marginalized populations, while “suburbia” begins to become a refuge for the affluent part of society running away from unlivable cities, as a consequence, we see territorial models of difficult reading, characterized by an often unpredictable alternance between areas where capitals and opportunities are concentrated and areas excluded from these important fluxes.

Understandably, these tensions intertwine and overlap in generating problems, making it difficult for self-organization within local communities, as well as for the implementation of effective public policies capable of meeting social demands, reaching out for the excluded and raising the quality of life.

The odds for winning these challenges are tied to the overcoming of these three tension factors and thus the possibility to construct shared solutions as alternatives to the traditional model producing the tension factors in the first place.
Inclusion / Exclusion: towards the construction of a community culture

Participation and the construction of a collective knowledge

The construction of collective knowledge is a primary condition for the active and conscious involvement of a number of individuals within decisional processes. The possibility to construct this knowledge is based upon the re-definition of the relationship between “street level knowledge” and “expert knowledge”, upon the re-construction of the public space and the appreciation of the new forms of social communication. Challenges to face in this field are:

• Translate technical languages and make communication effective, without losing quality of contents. In order to reach this objective it is necessary to redefine the role of “expert knowledge”, capable of receiving the elements of innovation, making them available to participatory processes. It is necessary to look at “expert knowledge” as “one of the many contributions”, one that does not hierarchically set itself against all other forms of knowledge, but is capable to communicate with a wide system of diverse players. This means the appreciation of knowledge linked to experience and direct practice, to the real life of places, oral tales, collective narratives. Often it is difficult to have diverse and different knowledge collaborate: on the one hand due to the mistrust of the population, since expert knowledge is manipulated in order to legitimize political choices, on the other, experts do not assign any validity to “common knowledge” (contextual) coming from the population.

• Rebuild public space (also immaterial) as the place of social communication. Public places of the city play a very important role in the “regeneration of the agorà”, of the spontaneous modes of socially coming together, meeting, discussing and confronting. Policies and projects concerning the organization of public places should encourage forms of conviviality and meeting and rebuilding the habit of daily living within open urban spaces, meant as the primary places of social communication and of the construction of collective awareness and knowledge. In reality, the disappearance of public space is an emerging phenomenon in European cities, where forms of restrictions and control of convivial places are on the rise. It is necessary to face the problem of reconstructing the forms of interaction in the city with new tools, opposing the dissolution of public space which can only encourage exclusion and social isolation, the “privatization” of collective problems and consciousnesses.

• Encourage forms of expression using new media (multimedia, street tv, digital networks, etc.) as well as the restoration of meaning to urban spaces (public art, temporary installations, unforeseen modes of space use, etc.). Information and communication produced and diffused in an horizontal manner by the social fabric are playing an important and growing role today among young generations in building socially accessible, capillary, innovative communication. This type of communication often operates a “reversal” of the negative stigma assigned to some “decayed” neighbourhoods, re-processing their image starting from local resources and not from the problems, fundamental for the priming of social and urban regeneration processes.

Participation and construction of social ties

Interception and involvement of weak players, usually excluded from decisional processes, offers the opportunity to build new forms of social ties addressing a quickly evolving society:

• The challenge to be faced in this field concerns the experimentation of heretofore unheard of forms of social inclusion, creating the conditions to produce equal opportunities in accessing primary resources (education, healthcare, employment) for all citizens. It is necessary to activate local social resources, overcoming the risks of assistance and, together with the weak players, define a strategic, integrated vision of development (of their own empowerment).

• Such measures should ensure an ever more open access to the rights of citizenship, including the fundamental right to housing, employment and a decent life and involve a delicate and difficult reflection over the dialectic between legality and illegality (this reflection is included, for instance, in some steering papers by Unesco over the treatment of informal dwelling settlements and the squatting of lands under conditions of impossibility of access to these commodities by large segments of population) which has always been the engine of social innovation and has brought to life new rights and normative systems, addressing requests coming from the society.

• It is necessary to give dignity to the forms of knowledge borne different cultures and make them emerge; e.g., visions of the world and daily life linked to all too often ignored value systems that can stimulate the creation of completely new points of view necessary for the innovation of social interaction’s practices in a multi-ethnic and plural world and the construction of coexistence pacts based upon the reciprocity of rights and duties.
Top-down / Bottom-up: a new governance, where the initiatives of institutions and citizens converge

The difficult integration between institutional policy and civil society requires the construction of a new pact between institutions and citizens; the tools and modes of traditional politics are insufficient. To accept this challenge, institutions must deeply renovate themselves in terms of organizing structure and procedures.

Participation and renewal of politics

The crisis of democracy and the traditional forms of representation is due to many factors and current elements common to European society as a whole (the downfall of ideologies, large political parties and trade unions representativity crisis, social atomization, mistrust and lack of interest on the part of the citizens about “their administration”, etc.)

• The challenge coming from participation concerns the possibility to renew traditional forms of delegate democracy, integrating it with the practices of participatory democracy. It is necessary to create a new relationship of mutual trust between citizens and politicians, appreciating the requests and methods emerging from social movements and their ability in building networks, representing vested interests and territories, expressing political subjectivity and assuming responsibility towards the whole community.

• Another point of innovation in traditional politics touches the issue of power re-distribution, i.e. the necessity to re-define politics as an opening to social dialogue, as mature democracy and a new synthesis of many individualities, allowing citizens to influence the decisions. This step poses the problem of the re-definition of roles and responsibilities: when institutional politics decides to appreciate the forms of active citizenship and construct ongoing social dialogue with individual citizens, it embodies a fundamental role of guarantee for the quality of the final decision taken, the ownership and transparency of the process and respect for the outcomes stemming from shared decisions.

• Institutions open to participatory processes must understand their own role not just in a pro-active way, but also as a surrendering of spaces for self-determination to local communities; not in terms of the abdication of responsibilities, but rather as a possibility for the inner resources of that given community to strengthen and develop.

Participation and innovation of the administrative structure

One of the main problems encountered while implementing participatory practices and in the concrete realization of projects socially produced concerned procedures, the working of institutions (bureaucracy, rules and regulations, scheduling, etc.) and the sectoriality of the administrative behemoth (people from different departments not cooperating with each other, rigidity in the division of tasks, poor attitude towards cooperation, etc.). The necessity for an integrated approach to public policies will have to face these challenges.

• Participation implies a radical transformation of the administrative culture and reorganization of the structure, because it cannot be a sector among the many operated by a single councillor, but a way to understand politics that must cut cross institutional action at large in an integrated way. That is why it must become an ordinary form of governing the territory and impact the entire decision-making system regarding public policies.

• It is necessary to extend the principle of subsidiarity (ultimate decision belongs to the governmental level “closer” to the problem) in more than one direction: from inter-institutional cooperation among the same levels of government to the re-definition of the role of intermediate players, from the appreciation of the city administration and decentralized systems (agglomeration, metro regions, mountain community, etc.)

• Another challenge is that of the formalization of participatory practices. The institutionalization of participation can represent a danger of rigidity for a very complex form of socio-political interaction, diversified by its own nature in methods and forms. Current debate on the theme however, agrees on the need for institutions to ensure the real feasibility of participation, the implementation of decisions made (facilities, training of new professional figures, financial resources, etc.) the appreciation of the spontaneous processes.
Centrality / Marginality: shared and sustainable development models based on the identities of places, local economies and cooperative networks

The third tension factor, the one between central and marginal areas, points us in the direction of social and spatial organizational modes and therefore to the patterns of settlement adopted by diverse societies in time. All the differences offered to us by the history of peoples are nowadays nullified by a sort of “single model” of “metropolization” of the world, threatening the richness and diversity of spontaneous architecture, local identity, lifestyles and production/consumption modes.

The last challenge for participation deals with this: a support-oriented, participating community formulating the decisions concerning its future must come to terms with the problem of re-defining a sustainable, shared development model based on the appreciation of the identity of places, local economy, non-hierarchical dwelling models, but also forms of solidarity and cooperation networks overcoming the contraposition center-periphery, downtown-suburbia, thereby producing a new idea of beauty.

Participation and beauty

Participation is not only a procedural problem neutral to the outcome of choices; it has to attain concrete results. Participation is also the most effective method to ensure the quality of processes, buildings, collective spaces, cities. Participation can allow for a coming together of ethics (equality and sustainability in the use and distribution of resources) and aesthetics (the outcome of participatory process, equal expectations of citizens, beauty and quality of collective work).

The last challenge for participation stems from this awareness: places transformed by citizens through the union of an experimental, brave “expert knowledge” with a deep and sensitive “local knowledge”, adhere to the bodies of communities, are created with sensible care, they last and get better with time, use local, environmental-friendly materials. Things created within participation are therefore nicer and more comfortable than standard products - hostile and cold towards local cultures - deriving from globalizing processes forced from above and outside.

Participation, sustainability and strategic horizon

A community really wanting to be responsible for its own future and really capable of bettering its own living standards must also consciously face issues going beyond the micro-local scale and the policies of urban re-qualification. However, there is a tendency to exclude strategic choices (what to produce and how, on what to base an idea of progress and development, what to consider a common good and how to ensure common access to it by everyone and by the future generations) from the debate, choices that inform those same public policies in which citizens are asked to participate. The possibility to interact is often open only downstream of decision-making processes and over small scale issues.

The challenge in this field is to begin experimental endeavors also at the level of strategic choices, relating the level of the local problems to global phenomena often escaping the control of local communities. Within local as a strategic choice and as a field of action close to the physical bodies of people, there is an opportunity to renew politics, to better the capacity of government of municipalities with respect to action on the part of outside forces, but also to build cooperation networks among places, even distant ones, making environmentally sound territories and economies competitive on global markets.
Foreword

The Participation Charter is a political commitment document for the development of participation in European cities as a result of debates, work, and the exchange of concrete experiences among elected members, public officials and inhabitants involved in the URBACT Partecipando network.

The Charter refers to the principles that have already been set forth in other European Union documents, i.e. the Recommendation by the Council of Europe (Rec 2001/19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of citizens in local public life) and the Saarbrucken Declaration, signed at the European Conference on Urban Future in 2005.

The cities signing the Charter wish to move ahead concerning the above mentioned documents, by adding concrete commitments to the principles enounced, aiming to support inhabitants’ participation in the implementation of public policies (governance).

The cities, but also the groups of cities on a wider geographical scale, are the historical and physical essential places for the growth of democratic practices, where citizens may play have a main role in territorial development.

European Cities are now facing the problem of a crisis in representation systems and scarce citizen participation not only in voting but also in civic life at large, especially in deprived areas, with a mounting lack of confidence and sense of powerlessness about decision making.

The cities note that the different participatory strategies are neither equivalent nor neutral, since they represent specific ideas of society, cultural and practical standards, and basically, development models to be affirmed.

The general shared objectives of the signatory cities are:

• To widen participation and local democratic spaces (integrating representative democracy and participatory democracy)
• A strategic vision of local development oriented towards environmental, social, economic and political sustainability
• The empowerment of citizens to improve social networking, solidarity, social justice, as well as the ability to make shared decisions in the common interest and recognize the value of “common wealth”, territorial patrimony and public spaces.
Title I
*Participation as a means to build concrete collective choices improving social cohesion*

*Aquis from the network’s experiences:*
The reasons and the need for participation are linked to:
- The need to overcome a crisis of representative systems and bridge the distance between citizens and public life
- The participatory process makes it possible to forge transparent and democratic decisions in very complex contexts and systems of players.
- The opportunity to strengthen local social cohesion and promote debate and meeting among all categories of citizens, defining a new right to citizenship for everyone at a city level, and a new duty of responsibility for each person.
Participation is aimed at the active involvement of inhabitants and city users in identifying problems and opportunities, defining context analysis, and making strategic choices about the future of their territory, every aspect of everyday life and the implementation of transformation plans.
The participatory processes aren’t legitimized by the number of people involved, but by their diversity, their concern with the problems discussed, their aptitude to express multiple points of view and their commitment. The participatory processes, still ongoing and being launched, need to plan intermediary decision-making moments matching institutional processes so concrete activities may be set.

*The cities undertake to:*
Widen the experimentation of participation to all fields of public, city and local government policies, using an integrated approach.
Open the participatory processes to all inhabitants, not only representatives of interest groups, but also single and/or organized citizens from formal or informal groups.
Extend negotiation processes from a few strong players who don’t represent social variety, to the stakeholders who are usually excluded, and likewise permit direct citizen participation to have effective power in decision-making.
Give special attention to deprived areas, less powerful players and the weakest groups, by monitoring their concrete access to decision-making processes and using positive discrimination endeavours if necessary.
Integrate the different “key roles” of inhabitants (user of services and policies, decision making partner, implementation partner, controller-evaluator, worker-actor) at each level (information, consultation, joint-decision making, cooperation, support to local initiatives) or time stage (start-off, project design, implementation, management and evaluation).

Title II
*Participation as an opened and continuous mutual learning process, where local communities grow and build collective knowledge*

*Aquis from the network’s experiences:*
The inhabitants are not “listeners” to be merely informed about the decisions made. They possess competences and knowledge coming from experience that may match public policies in participatory processes and improve them. As a one-way process, information is therefore a necessary but not sufficient condition for the implementation of participatory practices in which many players shall interact in many ways.
Participation is a process that involves taking into account complex relationship dynamics (role of subjectivity, confidence, emotions, setting). Such a process involves unpredictable aspects, perfects and widens its output in progress, and thus needs good analysis, adaptation capacity and continuous follow up.
The communication and interaction methods are essential to a valuable mutual learning, collective knowledge production, valorisation of non-expert knowledge, integration of different competences and languages (verbal and non-verbal).

*The cities undertake to:*
Make sure all citizens have access to information by investing in the production of simple and easy information tools and training techniques to communicate with the general public as such.
Consider that many information tools involve the use of New Information Technology and may express their potential only if there are effective policies for the equal access of all citizens to such tools.
Make the spaces and time lapses for dialogue accessible by creating different communication contexts (i.e. formal meetings, parties, conviviality moments).
Value the competences of inhabitants, recognizing them fully as players in the development of their territory, whose potential impact ranges from concrete enterprise to the management of thematic meetings, and therefore support their training and self-training.
When necessary, use third party agents to facilitate dialogue and the management of relations during participatory processes, and also nourish discussions with external knowledge in order to provide a wider range of possible choices and better balance power disparities in debates and decision-making, while recognizing more spontaneous and direct interaction modes between inhabitants and institutions.

Title III
Participation builds civic networks, identity and self-sustainable local development, transforms and renews public policies and local administration practices

Aquis from the network’s experiences:
The participation of inhabitants in local policy production and implementation enhances social cohesion, stimulates creativity, preserves diversity and contributes to strengthen the autonomy and sovereignty of local governments, which become an experimentation field for the renewal of local, national and international policies. In participatory processes, the inhabitants learn how to recognize and value their identity and territorial patrimony as a milieu, (basin of endogenous resources: environment, landscape, culture, society, economy, organization and relationships) supporting local self-sustainable development processes (self-reliance).
By including the weakest actors’ interests in a complex and multi-cultural society, and addressing the issues of the quality of life according to wellness indicators that aren’t only economic, participation transforms and drives the objectives and strategic horizon of public policies.
Participation sustains cooperation and social cohesion, matching the idea of collective interest and common wealth, developing local networks and innovative initiatives. Cooperative and non competitive dynamics generated by participatory processes may support new ecological, innovative and ethical economies.
Integrated and inclusive participatory processes deal with the fragmentation generated by many divided decision-making processes and therefore recompose a citizen’s roles as worker, user of services, consumer and resident in one main role of inhabitant/producer of his life environment.
In order to preserve credibility with the inhabitants, participation must have concrete outputs. The necessary delays for project implementation (decision, funding, implementation) need to be clearly communicated, in order to avoid deceiving the inhabitants who usually have shorter timeframes (need to solve problems, satisfy needs...)

The cities undertake to:
Integrate participation into the ordinary management of local governance policies, not being limited to specific sector projects or special short-term funded projects.
Overcome the territory and sectoral divisions of the administrative structure so the participatory process may become part of the decision-making system in an integrated way.
Promote participation as a transversal element in public action instead of being limited to a specific sector.
Start decentralisation policies as a tool for the creation of minimal territorial units that may act as a first referent for local identity and citizens’ needs assessment.
Tackle the problem of process timesframes in the framework of a harmonization of process schedules and administrative schedules.
Recognize and value the self-organization, self-production and self-consuming capacities of civil society through special support to endeavors that embody environmental and socio-economic ethical values.
Value the aptitude to social relationships and disposition to social dialogue of their own human resources and broaden widen it by designing specific training schemes for the whole administrative structure.
Build tools for the permanent quantitative and qualitative evaluation and follow up of participatory processes and their social impact, as well as independent observation instruments involving the participation of beneficiaries.
Start up local centres (i.e. territorial labs, local agencies, observatories, urban centres, houses of the city) as tools to support residents’ project proposals and for the direct follow-up of political commitments by citizens.
Allocate specific and systematic economic and financial specific and systematic resources to the support of participatory processes in the policies, plans and projects of local administrations.
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Participation handbook on line

A più voci
www.cantieripa.it/allegati/A_piu_voci.pdf

Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation
www.berghof-handbook.net

Participatory methods toolkit. A practitioner’s manual
www.kbs-frb.be

The community Planning Handbook
www.nickwates.co.uk

Participation methods and tools sitography

Action Planning
www.actionplanning.co.uk

Community Planning
www.communityplanning.net

EASW - European Awariness Scenario Workshop
http://cordis.europa.eu/easw/home.html

OST - Open Space Tecnology
www.openspaceworld.org

Pattern Language
www.patternlanguage.com/

Pedagogia do Oprimido/Paulo Freire
www.paulofreire.org/

Pedagogia maieutica/Danilo Dolci
http://danilo1970.interfree.it/dolci.html

Planning for Real
www.nif.co.uk/planningforreal

Public Art
www.apionline.org

Teatro do Oprimido/Augusto Boal
www.ctorio.com.br