

The Territorial Living Lab of Sicily and Parterre Project for integrated programme of urban regeneration for the second district of Palermo

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CIP Programme

The ICT Policy Support Programme is a part of the Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme (CIP). The ICT Policy Support Programme (or ICT PSP) aims at stimulating innovation and competitiveness through the wider uptake and best use of ICT by citizens, governments and businesses.

Parterre project

The PARTERRE project demonstrated and validated the business potential of novel e-participatory methods and tools for spatial and strategic planning at the European level, by leveraging on two fully blown ICT solutions:

1. The Electronic Town Meeting (first introduced into Europe by Avventura Urbana srl and technically supported by the project's coordinating organisation, Regione Toscana), a deliberative democracy methodology and toolset combining the direct integration of small-groups discussion with the advantages of electronic communication.
2. The DEMOS-Plan solution for the management of participatory spatial planning, derived from the DEMOS deliberative discourse making machine which was successfully deployed by another project partner (TuTech Innovation GmbH) in collaboration with the City State of Hamburg in the context of a Preparatory Action on e-Participation, entitled "LexiPation", and used by Regione Toscana as an evaluation forum regarding its newly approved Law on participation.

In both cases, the ICT solutions have reached a sufficient refinement to become the core assets of the pan-European service envisaged, and its validation was the main result of the PARTERRE project.

The Parterre Pilot in Palermo, Sicily, Italy

Early results of the Pilot in Palermo of the European Parterre Project [CIP ICT PSP Programme (Grant Agreement No.: 256244 - Date of preparation of Annex I: V2.0 19.05.2011)] and mainly refers to the contents of Deliverable D.2.3 *Living Lab Methods and Tools for the EU Public Sector*, whose authors, together with J. Wallace (TRAIL - University of Ulster - UK) are: M. Mulvenna, B. Galbraith, S. Martin (TRAIL - University of Ulster - UK), F. Molinari (Regione Toscana), T. Ferm (TUAS - Turun Ammattikorkeakoulu - Finland), J. Marsh (Atelier, Palermo), J. Heaven (TUTECH - TuTech Innovation GmbH - Germany), S. Besteher (Hamburg – Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg - Germany), Iolanda Romano, Emanuela Galletto (Avventura Urbana s.r.l. - Italy); also the Deliverables D5.3 *Assessment of Policy Results* (edited by S. Besteher), Deliverable D5.2 *Technical Evaluation Results* (ed. By T. Fiirm) and mainly D5.6 *Living Labs Potential for Spatial Planning and Environmental Assessment* whose authors with J.Marsh are: F. Molinari and F. Trapani. Images comes from thesis of Francesca Montagna 2012 University of Palermo.

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The proposal. Parterre Project

Associations and movements of one of the most degraded neighbourhood of the city of Palermo (city regional capital of Sicily, Italy) asked the University to support their on-going activities for the promotion of local resources to contrast the trend of decline and against the mafia as a symbolic appropriation of the main landmark of the neighbourhood.

In support of an innovation of the local governance, a delegation responded by developing the participated planning of a Living Lab, to be both locally and territorially characterised (Territorial Living Lab Sicily). This

delegation proposed interpretative recommendations, as well as an integrated program concerning projects of urban regeneration, in the field of experimental activities for ICT policies and practices for the Information Society supported by EU Projects (MED and PIC). Such a contribution highlights the didactic and critical aspects that relate to the use of participatory tools, which start within the dimension of a 'game' and are oriented to the urban plan, only later.

The focused proposal of the Parterre project was to help actors of the territory of the Second Municipal District of Palermo in activating the qualification process and urban regeneration of several neighborhoods in the south-east large part of the city. Parterre has created the basis for the theoretical and practical organization of an event of electronic Town Meeting in Palermo in an area characterized by the dominant presence of the Mafia. For this purpose, the local actors Brancaccio have initiated a gradual construction process of a public-private partnership. In a first phase of this partnership has sought to animate the neighborhood population to test the feasibility of achieving a shared vision of future city plan and for starting the strategic evaluation assessment (SEA).

The assumption was that, at medium and long term, such a view based on bottom up approach supported by ICT methods (LL model), could help to define a unified framework of projects (infrastructure, training and business) to change the current trend in social and economic decline characterizing the south-east part of the city.

All the activities of public awareness, that members of the organizing committee have switched over a period of about six months, has served as a base of informations for organizing the first electronic Town Meeting of Palermo in a little time. In this way it was done a test and a validation (in terms of marketing) tool electronic Town Meeting in a particularly critic social and economic context of Southern Europe.

The starting point of the experience was created by local cultural associations with a request for help to solve the problem of recovering public Castle of Mareddolce that was occupied by some dangerous subjects of criminal organizations locally rooted. After a long period of acquisition (more of twenty years) and gradual restoration of the castle by the competence of the regional public authorities, the population of the district wanted to use the castle and the park to give a new image of the local citizenship different from that of delinquency and crime.

In a second phase, when the neighborhood associations involving the university, other national cultural associations and local authorities, the focus has shifted away to the whole of the Second Municipal District. In the next phase have been identified themes of regeneration as seen by the inhabitants. These objectives have been collected and organized as a town assembly organizational base. Because the territorial Living Labs of Sicily activity, was possible to use European funds for the methodological support and especially of a technological partnership with the international goal of guiding visions of the future of the inhabitants in order to build the foundations of the new city plan and the SEA of Palermo.

In addition to cultural heritage and tourism, the people who attended the Electronic Town meeting in the earlier period, were identified in the economic, social and cultural connections in the district the development direction for small industry, handicrafts and trade. So the project Parterre has led to the activities already undertaken by local actors to make the people more aware of the concrete possibilities for real change from within the resources *already* present and available. It was like a revolution in discussing public decision making for this part of the city.

In the first phase of listening to residents, the design themes to be developed were the following: a) recovery of the cohesion of groups, helping families, the weak and interventions to increase social security; b) rationalizing the retail trade, integrating the realities production area, develop an enterprise culture, internationalization of Brancaccio; c) create a network of ecosystem components (the vision of a future Mareddolce Urban Park); d) re-use of the castle Mareddolce, cultural entertainment activities for the new identity of the neighborhood, and d) re-connect the Brancaccio neighborhood to the other parts of the city, territory and the world both in the sense of physical accessibility (transport, etc..) and immaterial (access to information, support social networks, business management on the web) to overcome the actual urban and rural marginal condition.

So far, the actions - which although have been considerable, show a lack of cohesion - of Regional Councillor's office for Cultural Heritage, Superintendency, neighbourhood associations, parishes, Forces of Order and schools that have been productive by working in small steps, sometimes 'under track' and in

other occasions by means of events that have rightly drawn public attention by the Padre Nostro's Centre, such as Padre Puglisi's days¹ or "*Le giornate di Primavera*" by FAI², in the occasion of the opening of Castle of Mareddolce to citizenship.

Stakeholders are aware that an excessive attention both to the neighbourhood and to Don Puglisi's figure could represent a risk, in terms of efficiency of the above initiatives. Nevertheless, those are appreciable, as that had to be done and will have to be done, particularly in favour of Mareddolce and in the direction of promoting a new identity of Brancaccio.

Initially, DARCH took action in favour of Brancaccio, in response to the requests of civic associations and movements of the neighbourhood, by looking upon the castle. However, it was then clear that the existing issue had to be placed in a wider framework, and specifically within the broader theme of urban regeneration, to be meant as a node (and as a turning-point) of the accessibility- related problems of the capital city Palermo, as far as inland and east Sicily were concerned. Here, the term 'accessibility' has to be understood both in a physical sense (transports, public interest and private initiative facilities, social services, services for enterprises, social groups, etc.) and at a non-physical level (information about the Public Thing and the combination of production activities, communication and evidence of denied identity rights, social marginality, will of redemption, participatory pressure and compliance with the specific needs and requirements emerging both from marginalized people and from degradation of family units, quality of education, etc.).

Working hypothesis, preceding any consequent action, was that in order to start a processes of e-participation, it is necessary to pay attention to the social capital within every living condition, in order to fit policies for an improvement of living and housing conditions of the beneficiaries, and therefore to use innovative technological tools for enhancing efficiency and efficacy of the policies, which aim at an active participation of not-experienced stakeholders, in the institutional making-decision process; therefore, these tools are necessary in order to harmonize and drive the role of business, financial and voluntaristic initiatives of individual citizens, as well as their leading-role ambition.

Private and public domains combine in the II constituency, without providing a path to be taken for achieving neither a possible order nor a push for global development. Such is the widespread perception among all the social, institutional, economic and cultural operators, working in this specific part of the city, which counts 70,000 residents.

The project Parterre, in a survey³ of Living Labs involved in the several european pilots, suggests the relevance of the Living Lab partnership model and in particular the "territorial" approach, for providing an institutional structure for this trend.

TLL Sicily is the first concrete experience of a concept called Territorial Living Lab (TLL), which integrally applies the Living Lab approach to a territory and its citizens, its model of governance and its strategic plans for the future: in essence, it can be conceived of as a new model for regional development. In this sense, TLL has not *only* a technical but *also* a social and political dimension. The involvement of businesses, citizens and stakeholders with the public administration is required at the same level of effort. There are good experiences of a co-collaborative production considering the whole Living Lab experiences in the world now.

Jesse Marsh, in the Deliverable 5.6 of Parterre Project says that the Living Lab territorial approach and the e-participation experiences in Europe by Parterre pushed in the direction of creating a new integrated process/platform with Electronic Town Meeting and Demos Plan: *Parterre Service*. This new platform help local stakeholders to adopt a comprehensive approach, open to the future integration of other e-

¹ For national-level events that were organized through the support of Centre Padre Nostro in Brancaccio, see:

a. <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2002/09/12/quattro-giorni-per-don-puglisi-brancaccio-ci.html>;

b. http://www.centropadrenostro.it/articoli/11_LRP14_09_11.pdf;

c. For a press cutting on some local facts, see: <http://www.padrepuglisi.it/Rassegnastampa3.htm>.

² You can see more information on web site: <http://blog.fondoambiente.it/palermo/la-giornata-fai-di-primavera-in-provincia-di-palermo>.

³ Project Parterre, Deliverable D 2.3 edited by of Johnatan Wallace.

participation tools and methods, using Living Lab co-design processes for their optimum integration and appropriate innovation of spatial planning and environmental assessment approaches and procedures.

Pilot results

The outcome of the performance of the event Electronic Town Meeting in Palermo, (held on 18th February 2012), produced a programmatic document, which could constitute a valuable help to focus on those topics that are relevant to the urban changes in the IInd district, in order to accompany general directives (“Direttive generali”), the document of the town council for the city plan, and a contribution to the participatory activities that were provided by SEA, which will accompany the General Master Plan.

Moreover, it will be necessary to involve in the activities parishes and social centres extending up to companies and business (which will continue beyond Parterre project).

That ought to be done, in the assumption that Planning for Real and feedback of such activities through spontaneous blogs, synergy with Eu planning may allow highlighting topics, issues and information, as well as to help extending the perspective vision of stakeholders’ expectations (etc.).

Besides, the improvement, both of basic analytic conditions and participatory activities, pushes the involved expertise, firstly of university professors and consequently of the relevant Public Administration’s members, to produce outlines and project visions that may be tested and achieved in the didactic field, and which could be developed, in terms of real projects to be offered *from the city to the city*.

We consider the followings:

1. Accessibility. Toward a new solution system, concerning transports accessibility and new metropolitan spatiality scenarios;
2. Housing. Urban development scenarios centred on building rights compensation;
3. Policy. Awareness of the decision-making political actors involved about the importance of knowledge and the protection of the whole cultural heritage of Brancaccio considered not important for this topic;
4. Safety. Completing and developing the ‘security protocols’ that were started in the Brancaccio industrial area, to be later extended to the whole housing fabric for tourism purpose and for protecting disadvantaged people;
5. Design. Architectonical definition of spaces surrounding the Castle and the park of Maredolce, as these were investigated in several architectonical design laboratories;
6. Social. Push the development of topics that relate to social solidarity toward emarginated people and common well-being;
7. Environmental. Contribute to a definition of environmental topics and of those that are connected to the recovery of traditional agricultural systems (“Agriculture Km. Zero”) retrieving the experience of Life project of rural park in Ciaculli connecting to the other suburbs and to the wide distribution network;
8. Water. The site of the pilot project is very famous for the water presence in his history. Water and its responsible use, European experience exchange networks, symbolic forms, cultural meaning, relationship with artistic practices and their integration with policies for territorial enhancement was explored.

The ETM exercise in Palermo was made possible thanks to the presence of a series of actors who were able to find a positive operational setting. At this point, the study aims to identify both the positive and negative aspects of the organization and execution of the citizens’ assembly. In this context we highlight the attention towards the concrete effects of the activities of territorial animation that created the participatory environment. The effects were better than expected as concerns the actual event, with the same degree of participation as the events elsewhere in Europe that received greater technical assistance. This must be considered a significant success as an innovation in participatory planning.