

Tutti a Casa
**(All at Home) -
A Housing First
inspired experience
in Bologna, Italy**

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1 The initiative and the initiators

The project *Tutti a casa* (All at Home) was coordinated by the non-profit organisation *Piazza Grande*¹ in the city of Bologna, the capital of the Emilia-Romagna Region, in central Italy. It was selected within the *ImPRovE* research project as the first implementation of the Housing First model in Italy.

It was born at the end of 2012, and financed by the Bank Foundation *Del Monte of Bologna and Ravenna*. By August 2013, the project was managing 40 private and 4 public apartments in the Municipality of Bologna, providing for 160 ex-homeless tenants.

The history of *Piazza Grande* starts in 1993, in Bologna, with the publication of the homonymous newspaper, written, produced and circulated by homeless people as an initiative to actively combat social exclusion by self-and-mutual-help and affirm the rights of homeless people, giving them a voice. In 1994, in the public shelter “Beltrame”, the association was established with the support of the local CGIL (one of most important trade unions in Italy), with the majority of its members being homeless.

Piazza Grande has always been an original experience in the Italian context, both in its composition and in its guiding principles. Its birth and growth during these years is thanks to many homeless people’s ideas and efforts. As explained on its website, it is based on the belief that only the search for new strategies of social intervention based on self-organisation and mutual-support can help people living on the street to overcome their status and condition of marginality to become active and actors in the society. In this context, the association has developed the methodology of “peer-operators”, people with experience of poverty and social exclusion working in social intervention (e.g. peer-to-peer intervention in public dormitories or by the street), side by side with professionals, who function as “mediators” in dealing with homeless people; their needs and requests. Homeless and ex-homeless people are not only beneficiaries of the association’s activities but they often collaborate in its projects and some are members and participate in its internal democratic processes.

Piazza Grande is one of the main organisations working on poverty and social exclusion in Bologna and Emilia-Romagna. During its 20 year history, it has promoted many projects², some of them spawned autonomous organisations aimed at offering homeless people opportunities of participation and activation.

¹ See: www.piazzagrande.it.

² Actually, “The World of Piazza Grande” (as mentioned on the association’s website) includes: - the Supporting Mobile Service (*Servizio Mobile di Sostegno*), a service aimed at distributing meals, cloths, blankets and other basic necessities to homeless by the street; - the Rostom Shelter, opened in 2011 in collaboration with *Antoniano*, after a protest of homeless; - *Piazza Grande*, the newspaper written and distributed by homeless; - the Street-Lawyers Association (*Avvocato di strada*) project has constituted a specific association from 2007 to assist homeless in all the Country, involving more than 200 voluntary lawyers; - Homeless Psychologists (*Psicologi senza dimora*) is a project to offer homeless a psychological support through voluntary professionals; - The Theatre Fraternal Troup (*Il Teatro Fraternal Compagnia*) to create shows about social issues involving homeless; - *La Leonarda*, a very successful shop placed in Bologna city centre, specialised on used vintage cloths (and tailoring) and books, receiving, repairing and selling donations from citizens; - *BiciCentro Demetra Social Bike*, a workshop for repairing and selling used bicycles and promoting a way of life respectful of the environment. The Association also gave birth two social cooperatives to offer homeless people jobs: *La Strada di Piazza Grande* and *Fare Mondì*, working on social intervention, cleaning, garden caring, managing the municipal reuse-centre *Second life*, etc.

The Municipality of Bologna acts as the main partner of Piazza Grande. The central unit of the Sector of Social Services (*Ufficio Adulti Vulnerabili ed Inclusione Sociale*) and the territorial social services (*Servizi Sociali Territoriali*) are located in six city-neighbourhoods (*Quartieri*). The central unit coordinates meetings of public-private professionals to select the tenants, elaborate the tailored projects and deal with their pathways.

A network of public and private organisations collaborate in the project, providing the tenants health and social services and opportunities for “activation” in coordination with *Piazza Grande* social workers (see: par.6).

A Bank Foundation, *Fondazione Del Monte of Bologna and Ravenna*, is the main financier of this project. Bank Foundations are non-profit institutions pursuing aims of public interest and social utility. They are linked to the banks from which they receive a percentage of their resources, but they are private and autonomous organisations managed with the involvement of local public institutions, which are part of their governing body (*Consiglio d’amministrazione*). They were formed during the 1990s³ and have become increasingly important for the amount of resources they make available (although the crisis hit them too in recent years) in sectors such as culture, arts, science, education and social issues and have assumed a subsidiary role (locally configured) in the field of welfare. They total about 80 in number, spread all over Italy.

Del Monte’s funds are destined, in part, to the regional budget to support volunteer associations (as established by the NL 266/1991); in part, they are reserved for their own projects, formulated within working groups together with experts and referents of the local public and private organisations; in part, they are assigned to third sector organisations through public calls for projects, held twice a year, based on annual strategic programmes and guidelines. The Foundation’s strategic programme was funded with around 6 million Euros in 2014 (compared to around 21 million in 2005-2006 before the crisis) divided across four topical areas: Arts and Culture, Services to People and Solidarity, Local Development and Scientific Research. According with the call for projects, the proposals are evaluated by the Foundation in consideration of their congruence with the local annual strategic programme (elaborated with the involvement of institutional referents and experts in thematic meetings on the different topics) and an equal territorial distribution. The main assessment criteria are the potential of continuity, sustainability, concreteness, feasibility and innovation. *Piazza Grande* participated and was among the winners in these competitions in 2012 and 2013 with the project *Tutti a casa*.

2 Basic information on the (local) context and the emerging problems

In 2012, the National Institute of Statistics (*Istat*) published the first census of homeless people in Italy, in collaboration with *Caritas Italiana* and *Fio.PSD* (Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People).

The census was conducted in 158 Municipalities and it estimated the presence of 45,000 homeless people. About 40% of them are Italian, the majority are men (87%), under 45 years old (57.9%), holding a secondary lower school leaver’s certificate or less (about 66%) and live in the North of the Country (58.5%).

³ They were constituted with the NL 218/1990; then reformed in 1998/1999 and in 2001 between 2001 and 2004 through the financial laws.

62% of them lost a permanent job contract before becoming homeless and 60% had separated from spouses and/or children. 33.7% state these to have been the causes of their homelessness.

The average time of living on the street is about 2 years and a half. 28% claim to be employed, but not earning enough to live in a house: they work on average 13 days and the average earning is 347 € per month. 53.4% of them receive economic support from their own families, relatives, friends, donors and other people.

In the 12 months before the interviews, 89.4% of homeless people ate in canteens for poor people, 71.2% slept in shelters and 63.1% used services for personal hygiene. Other services like medicine distribution, daily centres and mobile services are less often used.

Rome and Milan is home to more than 70% of the estimated homeless population. In Bologna, a medium-sized city of about 378,000 inhabitants, there are 1,005 homeless people and 51.6% of them are foreign citizens. In Emilia-Romagna Region 4,394 have been recorded..

Since many years, the Emilia-Romagna Region has provided specific funds for fighting poverty and social exclusion through Social and Health Regional Plans. The Municipalities (organised in groups called Social Zones) adapt these guidelines at the local level through Local Social and Health Plans (*Piani di Zona per la Salute e il Benessere Sociale*), in collaboration with local third sector organisations and trade unions.

The Municipality of Bologna has activated, since the 1990s, a Permanent Council to combat social exclusion, a panel in which the local administration meets and discusses policy strategies with around 100 third sector organisations.

The task of implementing social intervention is assigned to the six city-neighbourhoods (*Quartieri*), which manage the Social Desks and the Territorial Social Services, while the Public Agency for Services to People (*ASP-Città di Bologna*) coordinates the providers, mainly social cooperatives and voluntary associations.

As regards to the specific problem of accommodation, public shelters in Bologna for adults (Italian and foreign people with regular documents, 18-65 years old) are classified in four typologies, depending on different requirements for access:

- 2 facilities with direct access (*strutture a bassa soglia d'accesso*), 15 day stay (possibility of extension under some conditions), for 32 and 40 guests;
- 3 facilities with access mediated by social or health services (*strutture di primo livello*), permanence for 3 months (possibility of extension up to 6 months), for 64, 28 and 4 guests;
- 2 facilities with access bound by the acceptance of an individual social project proposed by the social or health services (*strutture di secondo livello*), permanence related to the duration of the project (approximately 6+6 months), for 83 and 15 guests;
- 5 group-apartments for pre-autonomy (*strutture di pre-autonomia, gruppi appartamento*), with access and permanence bounded by the acceptance of an advanced social project proposed by social or health services and reserved to people with economic independence, for 10, 6, 6, 3, 3 guests.

During winter, around 250 beds more are made available (*Piano freddo*), with no criteria for access. In that period, the city can accommodate more than 550 adult homeless people in total.

Some of these structures are only open at night; others also offer guests daily activities. They are all financed by public funds and managed by third sector organisations.

This structure is based on the logic of “staircase” in social interventions on homelessness, based on probation periods to gradually obtain better accommodation. The Housing First method seeks to change exactly this logic.

The city offers many other services to homeless people, such as public canteens and toilets, distribution of essential goods, health services for non-residents and so on.

A little book-guide called “Where to go to” (*Dove andare per*) is published yearly and distributed for free by the Street Lawyers Association to help homeless people find services.

An interesting recent project called Zanardi’s Houses (*Case Zanardi*), promoted and coordinated by the municipality, strives to create new multifunctional centres where third sector organisations offer services for poverty and social exclusion, from information and the distribution of essential goods to opportunities of activation.

The municipality also provides measures to control rent costs in the private market and manages the allocation of public housing. Public lists based on economic and social criteria regulate the access to these provisions. However these kinds of measures are not considered as part of the policies to fight homelessness. Analogue to the logic of the “staircase” approach, stable accommodation is proposed by social workers to people who have accomplished a social inclusion and activation pathway. Furthermore, the applicants must be in the register of residents and present documents detailing their financial situation; for the homeless it is difficult to meet these complicated procedures and demanding pathways.

A review of the data provided by the Province of Bologna (2012), reveals that there were 16,542 public housing units (ERP) managed by the agency for public housing (ACER) in the Province in 2010. The vast majority is occupied and from 2007 to 2010, only 949 applications could be accepted. In the Municipality of Bologna, the number of requests for support in the field of housing (economic support for rent and/or access to public house) totalled 13,098 in 2010 and concerned 24,493 people. In 2012, the list for access to public housing in the municipality contained 8,485 valid applications. It is evident that the public supply is insufficient and the Province estimates the minimum deficit of houses in its territory to be between 20,500 and 27,000 units (*ibidem*).

3 Genesis of the initiative

As mentioned above, the *Tutti a casa* project started in 2012, with funds provided by the Bank Foundation *Del Monte*. However, it is interesting to go back to 2010 to understand how the initial idea was developed before manifesting into a project, through a complex and dense pathway, and to analyse the reasons why it is growing so rapidly.

- 2010/2011: Overcoming a crisis

At the end of the 2000s, *Piazza Grande* was facing severe financial difficulties, even risking a default because of debts. The services provision on offer was poor. Professionals were weakly coordinated and lacked motivated. The association seemed to have lost its usual innovative attitude.

In 2010, a concrete reaction to this crisis started, through a comprehensive renewal of the organisation, its managers and professionals. Thanks to the new human resources, the association restarted to research new solutions and ideas to support homeless people, beginning with an analysis of problems.

As a result of this research-driven approach, Piazza Grande identified the lack of residence documents as a crucial obstacle preventing homeless people from accessing some social and health services. Therefore, the association, supported by the street-lawyers' association (*Associazione Avvocato di Strada*), started to give many of them (dozens of people, according to the interviewees) the possibility to register their residence at the address of *Piazza Grande*. The municipality could not legally refuse a request of residence under those conditions. Thus, the demand of services for poor and homeless people started to increase exponentially and the supply could not satisfy it.

In 2010, after the closing of the winter shelters, some 50 homeless people slept in the main square of the city for 10 days, to protest against the municipality for the lack of services. *Piazza Grande* led the demonstration, which had a great impact on the local media. The main goal of the protest pushed for a general reform of the local welfare provisions addressed to homeless people, thus overcoming the solutions of collective shelters. The immediate effect, however, was the reopening of one of the shelters.

This protest opened up a period of conflict between Piazza Grande and the municipality. The long-term trust relationships between the local administration and the association, which was also a provider of services managing public resources, was at least partially broken in that moment.

In the meanwhile, the association was regaining its enthusiasm and grassroots origin: the importance of giving a voice to homeless people to promote their rights. A new pathway of reflection internal to the association was supported by a psychiatrist (expert in community psychiatry): every fifteen days, the group of professionals had meetings to discuss the cases and situations they were dealing with, share problems and solutions, elaborate common strategies of their own work and new ideas about social intervention in general.

These meetings acted as a seed bed on which a shared opinion emerged: public shelters were unanimously considered an inadequate solution to homelessness. They were defined as places where problems concentrate and multiply: not giving people safety and calmness, not allowing them to rest enough to work, not supporting any pathway of self-care and activation. The best solution seemed the promotion of activation pathways:

In that moment, we were not thinking of housing. We were engaged in another important project on repairing bicycles. We were mainly thinking to develop opportunities for occupation, because we thought: if we help them to find a job, then they could pay their own house rent (...). That idea was simply wrong: you cannot carry on a work if you don't have at least a base, like a home is. (President of Piazza Grande)

- 2011/2012: Some converging conditions toward a new idea

In June 2011, a social worker of Piazza Grande participated in a congress in Milan, where one of the speakers was José Ornelas, one of the main promoters of the Housing First model in Europe, who explained his experience in Portugal with homeless people with psychiatric needs. The idea was enthusiastically and immediately received. The association started to reflect about it and to study literature on Housing First, from Tsemberis' method to European experiences.

Halfway through 2012, the Foundation *Serra-Zanetti*, belonging to the Municipality, opened a public competition to assign a small number of apartments to third sector organisations for social projects. The rent was free, but they had to be furnished and utilities had to be paid. The association participated and obtained three flats to conduct a first trial project on housing.

The first guests were: a) a man who was sleeping in a public shelter and working in a social cooperative, waiting to find affordable accommodation; b) a homeless ex-drug-addict, directly coming off the street, who had refused a place in the shelters offered by social assistants to avoid contact with drugs; c) a family with young children, which was repeatedly moved by the social services from one place to another and still lived in temporary accommodation and separated: the father was sleeping in a car and the mother with the children in a hotel paid by the Municipality.

The selection was almost casual: the requests were so numerous and all from people in difficult situations that the association tried to choose what they considered the worst emergencies.

The social services were immediately involved to help these people to pay their utilities and propose measures of activation.

At that moment, the association's intention was mainly to give them relief and plan further steps. There was not yet a clear methodological and practical strategy for supporting these people and their pathways. This was essentially a period of experimentation on the topic of housing, trying to build a new kind of intervention as a work-in-progress experience:

At the beginning, social workers were all sceptical. They had many doubts about the people to whom we wanted to assign an apartment. They said: ... maybe this person is not ready ... maybe a probing period is necessary ... Nowadays, they are maybe too confident, because we receive too many requests from them. The reason is that the project has proved to work in the field, having immediate good effects on people's lives, wellbeing and autonomy. (President of Piazza Grande)

Some months later, at the end of 2012, the possibility to start a real Housing First experience became real: *Piazza Grande* presented a proposal named "Tutti a casa" to a call for projects from the Bank Foundation Del Monte of Bologna and Ravenna. The project aimed to support homeless pathways toward housing, work and social inclusion. What was innovative was the method of intervention, based on the access to housing as the first step for a multidimensional intervention.

The Foundation evaluated it positively and financed the project with 20,000 €. However, there was still a problem: the Municipality, included as a partner within the project to supply housing stock for the experimentation could not respect the agreement. *Piazza Grande* had to rapidly find a different solution.

At the same time, the pressure for housing was very strong in the city in those winter months. In December 2012, for the first time in Bologna, a homeless family with minor children lived in a public emergency shelter because the Municipality could not provide a more adequate housing solution. Children have always been a priority for the local administration and all efforts are made to guarantee them and their parents (usually for mothers and children) appropriate accommodation. In fact, as already explained, winter shelters are open during the coldest months and the access is direct from the street without any "barrier". They are only open at night and have big rooms with many beds. They usually welcome homeless people facing significant difficulties, who may be sick or dealing with psychiatric problems, or immigrants without documents or active drug- or alcohol-addicted people. The situation was considered harmful, dangerous, and unhealthy for the four children, but the

Municipality had no intention to find another option. The reason was that the family was not formally residing in the city and thus only had the right to access emergency services. Piazza Grande decided to intervene: a campaign aimed at raising awareness was launched across local TV and newspapers, appealing to public opinion and calling for support through crowdfunding. The campaign to find a house for the so-called “K-Family” was successful and in less than two months, 8,000 € was raised (6,000 € was the target) to rent an apartment.

Nevertheless the problem of identifying available housing remained unsolved:

It was about one year ago, we had 20,000 € from the Foundation, 8,000 € for the K-Family ... and zero apartments. When there is a problem, I think that a solution can be found in studying. So I started to study ... (President of Piazza Grande)

The idea was found in Belgian and English experiences with Rental Social Agencies, where the agency (in this case the association) is not simply an intermediary between owners and tenants (like in the private market), but the rental-contract holder. It guarantees payments and supervises the management of the apartments’ use; in exchange, the owners agree to receive lower rents than usual. In contrast to private agencies, the association provides all the bureaucratic procedures required to complete a rental agreement as a service free of charge. The advantages for private owners have to be promoted and clearly explained, because this is conceived as a new proposal in the housing market.

The social aspects of the initiative are clear: a) to make apartments available for homeless people, as they cannot afford on their own the free market rents and provide any bank sureties or deposits to guarantee rent contracts; b) to allow the homeless to leave inadequate accommodation, support their physical and mental health and offer them the opportunity to start a new life pathway; c) it also affirms every citizens’ right to have access to a house, seen not as an individual problem but as a collective responsibility.

The tenants have the duty to pay their rent and respect the usual rules for living in an apartment. However, as elaborated in the following, they are fully supported in reaching these aims by the association and a network of public and third sector organisations (see Par. 4).

After the success of the crowdfunding campaign in favour of the K-Family, and taking advantage of the established good contacts with the local media, the association decided to launch a new social campaign to find new rental housing properties. The campaign “*Piazza Grande cerca casa*” (Piazza Grande searches for a house) was published in the newspapers and transmitted on local TV. The association is well known in Bologna and Emilia-Romagna and trusted as a serious and respected organisation. The offers started to arrive.

The constituted flexibility in the use of the funds from the Foundation permitted the furnishing of the apartments to renew them if necessary. As it will be detailed in the following, this became one of the key developments of the project: the rent for housing in need of renewal is set lower and presents advantages also for the owners.

At the beginning of 2013, the K-Family’s children too could move in to their own home.

- 2013/2014: The development and the institutionalization

Until that moment, the local administrators, officials and social workers remained generally sceptical about, if not openly adverse to, the *Tutti a casa* project. *Piazza Grande*’s support for the homeless in taking up residence and access to social services in Bologna in 2010, and public claims for shelters in

2011 and the social campaign for the K-Family in 2012 had highlighted the weaknesses of municipal policies to fight extreme poverty. This was perceived as an attack by the local administration and services, in a city that has traditionally based its own identity on solidarity and advanced social policies. The association hoped for a collaboration with the municipality in the project after it had obtained a good evaluation and funds by the Foundation, but this strategy was not immediately successful.

The turning point transpired during an important conference, held in Bologna in April 2013, about policies in favour of homelessness in Italian municipalities, involving politicians, experts and social workers:

The most important professor of the panel, from Milan, talked for a long time about Housing First. I was at home, trying to give the soup to my twins ... I had soup everywhere ... and I received a call from the Municipality's manager. She told me: - please, send me some information, because the assessor is asking me to make an intervention. Here they are all talking about Housing First and we are the only city in Italy with a similar experience, we have to tell something! I sent her a quick e-mail and she could talk about Piazza Grande's experience ... I do not want to be ungrateful, because they have always helped our association ... But they had never approved this project (...). This started to open the doors ... (President of Piazza Grande)

From that moment, a process of rapid growth and institutionalisation began for the project.

The Municipality of Bologna set up a working group to analyse and discuss *Piazza Grande's* experience and to start sharing information, expertise and strategies with the association. This common reflection has been important to overcome the tensions that had accumulated during the previous years and to re-establish a dialogue between the two organisations.

The traditional intervention on homelessness has always been based on a cultural approach based on accommodating people in collective structures. Their size was reduced in the last years from a maximum of 120 to 60 beds. In fact, we saw that reducing their size increases security and creates a more familiar climate, people feel more attached to the context and there are less damages and conflicts. So there was already a reflection about these topics. We were ready to welcome new solutions in the direction inspired by Tutti a casa. (Official of the Municipality of Bologna)

According to the interviews, one of the strengths of the project is situated in its efficiency: it was calculated by *Piazza Grande* that the expenditure carried by the municipality for shelters in Bologna is about 700 € per capita per month, while in *Tutti a casa*, the apartments cost around 150 €.

After some months, the first working group, mainly oriented to reflection, was concluded in order to leave room for more operative groups aimed at sharing the individual case management mainly involving social workers from different organisations collaborating in the project.

Some municipalities in the Province of Bologna started to collaborate with *Piazza Grande* around the same time, reserving public apartments to the Housing First experiment. As emerged in the interviews, sometimes the association works as a volunteer (without asking money), solely to demonstrate the good effects of the project.

The Local Health Services Agency (*Ausl*) of Bologna, specifically the Centre for Mental Health (*Centro Salute Mentale*) and the Service for Addicts (*Ser.T – Servizio Tossicodipendenze*), started to show interest in the project and in collaborating with *Piazza Grande* in operative tasks. Some interviews revealed a clear purpose to start a new collaboration on specific Housing First interventions for people with both social and health problems.

Many referents of public and private organisations working on extreme poverty problems gathered information about *Tutti a casa* from all over the country. *Piazza Grande* handles communication with care and produces reports on the completed activities to share the project's aims and approach, to disseminate its positive effects on homeless people's wellbeing and to highlight economic aspects and benefits. In fact, in times of scarce resources, the latter argument is of particular interest, especially for public institutions.

In 2014, the association obtained a new financial contribution from the Bank Foundation *Del Monte* to greenlight the continuation of the project. It is important to underline that the Foundation financed the start-up of the project for one-year, and its follow-up for another year. According to the interviews, the first iteration of the project was positively assessed by the Foundation mainly for its innovative potential in the local context and for being able to demonstrate a good guarantee of continuity through a solid supportive partnership. The second version was also appreciated for the effective re-adaptation of the project's activities to the previously achieved results.

Finally, in August 2014, the Municipality of Bologna through its public agency for social services, *ASP Città di Bologna*, issued a public tender for third sector providers to implement the project "*Housing First – Co.Bo*". The project provided 4 public apartments and sought to find others in the private market. The aim was to accommodate 64 homeless persons to be also involved in personalised pathways aimed at overcoming poverty and social inclusion. It was financed with 334.000 € for a period of two years (2014-2015). As the main expert on the Housing First approach, *Piazza Grande* won the competition and could start a new programme in this field.

4 The activities and organisation

Inspired by the Housing-Led approach and Housing First model, the *Tutti a casa* project aims, as a first step, to provide homeless people with affordable and stable housing and to offer them social, psychological and relational support, opportunities of activation and health care, according to their needs and wishes. The following section highlights the complexity of the intervention, which involves many different organisations and professionals to accomplish a multidimensional task.

The project involved two target groups over a period of around two years:

- Adult homeless people, coming from the street or other unhealthy situations or from shelters, with long-term difficult pathways and often complex needs;
- Families with minor children, who are homeless or coming from temporary accommodation with public support or living in inadequate, precarious and/or unhealthy situations.

In the first trial period, *Piazza Grande* assigned the apartments to people on the basis of emergency and quite casually. With the development of the project, especially after having established the collaboration with the municipality, the selection has become more formalised. Potential tenants are assessed within the aforementioned mixed public-private working groups, which are charged with evaluating the cases and providing the necessary resources and competences to support their pathways toward social inclusion and autonomy.

Two groups, which discuss cases on adults and on families separately, involve the association, managers and social workers from municipal central and territorial social services (*SST*) and from the

public agency for social services (*ASP*). Another panel involves the association and the health services, in particular the Mental Health Centre (*CSM*), to coordinate social and health intervention.

It is in discussion to unify all the panels into one.

Single apartments are assigned to families and to people with long-term histories on the street or in shelters, based on the supposition that they could have more difficulties in cohabitation. These are the priorities, but the specific allocation of housing to adults obviously depends also on the availability of big or small apartments.

The apartments are not free of charge for the tenants. The rent is lower than market rents and includes the utilities. The rental rate is around 150-200 €, both for adults and families. Furthermore, *Piazza Grande* provides the economic and formal guarantees and takes care of the bureaucratic practices.

Elderly and disabled people cover this cost with their pensions. The Territorial Social Services of the municipality and Job centres of the Province of Bologna assign the other tenants paid internships in social cooperatives, associations or private companies.

Some local social cooperatives - *CSAPSA*, *La Strada* and *Fare mondi* – provided special availability to welcome these people in their activities (such as cleaning, gardening, social work, etc.) and support their pathways with individual tutoring. *Piazza Grande* also offers job opportunities in its activities (such as repairing bicycles, tailoring clothes, etc.).

The association is the holder of the rental contracts and is responsible for the apartments' management. A team of professionals offer relational and organisational support to all the tenants through individual weekly meetings with their case manager and fortnightly group meetings in each apartment. A psychiatrist, a project coordinator, four social workers, and four psychologists comprise the *Tutti a casa* team.

The professionals are available 24 hours a day for any emergency in the housing arrangement. The team organises periodical collective and individual meetings, support the houses' organisation and manage the conflicts in the groups.

The social workers interviewed highlighted that they had to give special support to groups including people with psychiatric problems, who had more difficulties in sharing the management of common spaces.

Thanks to a special agreement with the health services, the tenants who need ongoing aid receive assistance directly at home (for example, people in psychiatric care). This is reinforcing the operative, but also managerial relationships between the association and the local health services for psychiatric and drug or alcohol addiction problems and is even stimulating improved socio-medical integration in dealing with complex cases.

The project has developed, both in time and experience, two new activities defined as “unexpected” by the interviewees:

- 1) The so called “self-help housing”: starting from skills in construction, which emerged from one of the tenants (who totally renewed his own apartment, surprising the social workers), the association has started to offer the owners basic renovation and periodical maintenance of housing in exchange for lower rents. This has also created a new opportunity for job training and placement for tenants.

2) The crucial importance of the “community work” has emerged. The operative team supporting the tenants quickly understood that it was necessary to help them in making contact with neighbourhoods, local services, resources and opportunities. It is possible that this process does not start spontaneously, especially for people with psychological and social problems. Some of them come from shelters and going from a pathway of institutionalisation, being assigned to single houses or single rooms is a considerable change. The exploration of the territory has become a relevant part of the support given to people in the first period of the assignment: for example, the social workers participate in local public events and parties with them, accompany them to the city parks and gardens or social centres for elderly people or public libraries, bars, supermarket and shops.

Building confidence in the neighbourhoods is considered as important in the pathway towards social inclusion, to feel safe and autonomous and to create relationships with the space around the, and with the people living there. The aim is also to build a new relational network outside the circuit of services for poor people, finding local and more inclusive solutions.

The idea of creating an after-school group for the children of Tutti a casa tenants has been immediately excluded, because it had meant to isolate them and give birth to a sort of ghetto. Thanks to an agreement with the Antoniano onlus, they have access to the homework services offered by this association to all the children, but without any payment. The families have to be addressed to the opportunities organised by local associations. (Coordinator of Tutti a Casa project)

Similarly, the concentration of *Tutti a casa* houses has been carefully avoided (for example, an offer of managing an entire building with many apartments has been refused). They are spread across the whole city and some municipalities in the Province of Bologna. The reason is obviously to avoid a ghetto-effect.

With the same logic, the interviewees underline that the names on the doorbells are those of the tenants (even if formally the owner of the contract is the association) and that the residents are not informed about the special status of the apartments. This avoids any labelling-effects. However, if there are any problems in the residential area, due to noises for example (it happened in only one case: it was a family with six minor children), they may intervene to mediate the conflicts and/or suggest solutions and advice.

5 The innovative dimension of the initiative

As suggested by the literature about social innovation, the project has been analysed through three basic components (Gerometta et al. 2005; Moulaert et al. 2005a, 2005b): a) the satisfaction of basic social needs (content dimension); b) the transformation of social relations (process dimension); and c) the empowerment dimension, as activation of actors and relationships to create participation and activation of local actors.

a) Content dimension

Tutti a casa changes completely the traditional and diffused (at the local level as in all the country) policy approach on homelessness, strongly based on the “staircase” logic, which gradually provides improved accommodation depending on the positive results of a probation period to make them “ready” for re-housing.

Differently from the original Housing First experience realised in the USA and from the Portuguese one that directly inspired *Piazza Grande*, the target population is not limited to people with psychiatric problems, but targets homeless people and families without stable housing.

Within *Tutti a casa*, inspired by the new perspective, *Piazza Grande* provides homeless people and families with affordable houses. At the same time, it activates a network of public and private resources to guarantee them a) an internship (aimed at a more stable occupation), if there's not a pension to pay their rent, b) help in the organization and management of the apartment, c) health care at home and psychological and social support.

Activation is part of the housing intervention as part of a pathway towards autonomy. This pathway does not have a definitive duration; it depends on the needs in each case. Its aim is the stability and permanent autonomy of the beneficiaries in the accommodation. That is why people with problems of active drug or alcohol addiction who are not in treatment have not been included in the project, at least until now. The interviewees of the association and the municipality highlighted that *Tutti a casa* proposal could not be the right solution for all people with housing problems, but only for those who can accomplish the project's goals. They added the new approach has to become part of a variegated offer of social and housing policies to meet the characteristics of different targets.

b) Process dimension

As explained in the section on the genesis of the project, the *Tutti a casa* project started in a bottom-up logic, from a moment of crisis and conflict in the leading organisation in 2010. *Piazza Grande* was able to identify and develop a new solution in the field of local social policies, to find the resources to conduct a trial project, to involve the main public local actors in its implementation and to communicate and spread the project's results. The association challenged the local policies and practices in the field of homelessness and family housing. The relationship with the municipality, as the main institution responsible for local social policies, shifted from a phase of conflict to one of strong collaboration.

The most important result that we have obtained is to 'move' the ideas of local public managers after a long pathway. That was the starting point of a reflection involving all the social workers.
(President of *Piazza Grande*)

The first attempt to share with the municipality the selection and management of the cases was initially difficult for *Piazza Grande*, which had to coordinate directly with the territorial (decentralised) social services, dealing with different referents and procedures. To overcome this problem, the central sector of the Municipality introduced a different praxis from usual, activating two centralised working groups on single adults and families with minor children.

A special operative integration with the local health services (that accepted to send professionals to *Tutti a casa* beneficiaries when needed) has opened a discussion about the possibility of developing new potential local social-medical practices and projects in favour of people with psychiatric difficulties and with drug or alcohol addiction.

The public competition for public resources and housing, organised by the Municipality of Bologna to realise a new Housing First project from 2014 is a good occasion to go on developing local policies in that direction.

c) Empowerment dimension

As association created by homeless people, *Piazza Grande's* philosophy has always been based on participation, empowerment and peer-to-peer intervention. It has always been also active in promoting the rights of homeless people without avoiding campaigns of the press and public protests in some moment of its history, as told before about the access to residence documents and consequently to welfare measures. Individual and collective empowerment aims are interweaved in the association's identity and in its initiatives. The peer-to-peer method in social intervention, already mentioned, and the involvement of homeless and ex-homeless people is strongly embedded in the association and does not concern this specific project only, but all its activities.

The *Tutti a casa* project does not have a specific strategy to involve the beneficiaries in its design or management. However, it aims to empower tenants through housing autonomy and shared responsibility.

To have a stable living arrangement is considered as a precondition for any other social, economic or health aim. The professionals interviewed argue that guaranteeing housing means to preserve people's psychological status, health and dignity, progressively and negatively affected by living on the street or without stable accommodation. They suggest that without satisfying this basic need, it would be extremely difficult for anyone to maintain themselves in employment or to take care of his/her own health or to do anything else aimed at wellbeing.

Apartments are provided at an affordable rent, as the project is based on shared responsibility among all the actors involved, including the tenants. Some of them receive a pension such as the elderly or disabled, but they do not have access to the private rental market, mainly due to high costs and requirements asked to the tenants. For others, the public services activate temporary economic support and/or finance internship programmes. Social cooperatives are the main providers of internships or job opportunities.

Furthermore, the "self-help housing" concept targeting at housing renewal was created following the initiative of one of the tenants who had masonry skills. This draws special attention to beneficiaries' potential, considering them as resources and not only as problematic and people with difficulties. Some of them are thus involved in renewing apartments rented by the association within the project.

6 Institutional mapping and governance relations

Piazza Grande is the creator and manager of the project. The association finds low cost houses in the private market, proposing special advantages to owners. The organisation supports tenants in furnishing the property and organising, if necessary, the co-inhabitants' collaboration. Through a multi-professional team, it offers social-psychological-relational intervention. It collaborates with local social, health and job services to guarantee tailored intervention based on the tenant's specific needs and requests.

The Bank Foundation *Del Monte* is the main financier of the project. It understood from the beginning the project's potential for innovation and its importance in the local context.

The project was co-financed by private donations obtained by the association through the crowdfunding campaigns, while the municipality contributed by assigning social benefits directly to the entitled tenants.

The Municipality of Bologna is the main partner of *Piazza Grande* in *Tutti a casa*. The collaboration had been difficult at the beginning of the project, but thereafter a strong cooperation on shared aims and operative coordination could be developed. The central social services sector coordinates the process of tenant selection, from receiving the requests coming from the territorial (decentralised) social services and discussing them within two thematic panels concerning families with minor children and adults respectively. The territorial social services conduct interviews and elaborates social projects on potential beneficiaries and they activate resources to support them in paying their rent, mainly through internships and temporary subsidies.

The local health services, in specific the Mental Health Service (*CSM*) and the Service on Addictions (*Ser.T*), operatively participate in the project offering home assistance to people with psychiatric problems which may be linked to alcohol or drug abuse. Such a strong integration of social and health services is exceptional and represents an innovation in the local governance processes. Negotiations on potential new collaborations on common aims and projects have subsequently been conducted between *Piazza Grande* and the health services, starting from this first experience.

Through the economic support of the social services and the provincial job centre, some social cooperatives (especially *CSAPSA*, *La Strada* and *Fare Mondi*) host tenants in internships or jobs. More rarely, they get opportunities in the private sector. *Piazza Grande* also offers them the opportunity to participate in its own social-economic activities.

The only duty of the tenants is to pay their rent and respect the usual rules on living in rented accommodation. However, as explained, they are fully supported in reaching these aims. A special demand requiring intervention was unexpected by the social workers: many tenants asked to be assisted in getting to know: the neighbourhood where their new house is located, the services and opportunities offered and the events and possibilities for a full social inclusion. In the second iteration of *Tutti a casa*, presented by *Piazza Grande* to Foundation *Del Monte* in applying for follow up financing, there is a special focus on the community work needed to provide this kind of support. The activities consist, for example, in finding a gym owner offering free admission for a tenant or a free service to support *Tutti a casa* children in their homework in the promotion of social inclusion.

Within this aim, the local community (public, private and third sector) is involved in the project, as it is asked to offer the tenants cultural, sport, recreational, social and educative opportunities.

In fact, as already highlighted, the municipality decided to assign resources to realise a Housing First project in 2014.

In the opinion of the interviewees, the conditions that produced the rapid institutionalisation of the project are the following:

A CRISIS TO BE OVERCOME - the crisis of local policies for homelessness (mainly due to increasing needs and decreasing public resources) likely stimulated the research of new more effective and less expensive solutions, as *Tutti a casa* is considered. However, some interviewees argued that a deep crisis could reduce the creativity and potential of innovation, converging all the energies to cope with emergency and operative efforts and cutting the “space” for reflection and experimentation.

A PROJECT BUILT ON LOCAL SPECIFICITIES - The project is an adaptation of the Housing First approach to the local specificities. It was built on the study of the original model and a deep knowledge of the local context, needs and resources. The main differences with the original model are that the experimentation involves not only homeless individuals but also families with minor children as a target population; it strongly integrates the access to a stable house with health, social and activation measures; and it is using a “community work” strategy in supporting the processes of social integration. It faced up to an emergency, proposing an adequate solution and finding the funds to realise it. *Piazza Grande*'s long experience in the field of homelessness was important in the design of the innovative proposal and its network was crucial in finding resources and having a concrete possibility to start the implementation phase.

BUILDING A MODEL AND SHARING IT - *Piazza Grande* was able to build not just a context-sensitive re-adaptation of the Housing First approach, but also to suggest at the local level a “new” model of intervention and stimulate reflection on its transferability. The association conducted a sort of experimentation within *Tutti a casa*, observing and discussing trials and errors, considering the cost, evaluating the results, reflecting and readapting the intervention. As highlighted by the interviewees, the Bank Foundation granted a second funding to the project due to its re-adaptation to the achieved results.

The association aimed at a communication strategy, based on its capacity of “reading and telling” its own experience, to share the results (participating at experts meetings and conferences, but also on TV and newspapers), to highlight its effectiveness and efficiency. The new experience raised a debate in the city (and beyond) about the *Tutti a casa* project and the possibility to implement it in the local system of services and the potential of transferability to other contexts. A recent Housing First experience has been activated in the Municipality of Rimini and Emilia-Romagna Region, inspired by *Piazza Grande*'s project. Another project is going to be established in Sicily, created by Caritas. The good reputation of the association in Bologna has been crucial in the success of the co-funding strategies (as in the case of the *K Family*) and in finding low cost houses to rent within the project.

THE INTERNAL “RESILIENCE” - The association was facing an internal crisis when the project was created. Its capacity of reaction to these problems; reorganisation and rethinking its own strategy of intervention shows a flexible structure and willingness to change. This gave birth to a solid project aimed at development, including new professionals or redefining the internal roles, acquiring new competences and starting new relationships. Some needs were not foreseen beforehand but emerged during the experimentation (as for example concerning the mediation in the community) and were included in a second version of the project, thus allowing the improvement and development of the initial idea.

HORIZONTAL AND PARTICIPATORY LOCAL WELFARE - The attitude of public institutions towards social innovation is considered as crucial. The ability to re-define their priorities (and items of expenditure) in a continuously and rapidly changing context and to recognise the competences and resources available in the territory where they act are the conditions increasing the innovative potential. As already highlighted, in the tradition of the Municipality of Bologna, the relationship with the third sector has always been strong. The horizontal organisation of the local welfare system and the participatory governance style have been indicated in the interviews as good conditions to develop innovative practices and experiences. To realise a public experimentation of housing-led policies in the field of homelessness, the municipality decided to close a traditional shelter: changing a budget allocation in a period of crisis and limited public resources is not easy for an administration, but *Tutti a casa* has been really compelling, even for politicians.

The capacity and engagement of *Piazza Grande* in communicating the projects' aims and results (even in terms of cost reduction) has been very important in spreading the idea of a different approach to homelessness.

During the interviews, the respondents of the association declared that they have been inspired by Housing First, but that they are actually working on housing-led intervention for homeless people. They have been also inspired by the Italian psychiatrist Franco Basaglia's experience on the de-institutionalisation of psychiatric patients that led to the approval of the NL 180/1978 to close the asylums and inspired during the 1980s and 1990s the formation of social cooperatives offering disadvantaged people job opportunities. However, they recognise that the use of the label "Housing First" has been useful to raise interest in the project and strengthen its possibility of spreading.

In only four years, this approach has been able to become part of local policies on homelessness and raised interest and emulation attempts in the whole Country. The number of houses and beneficiaries involved in *Tutti a casa* is growing in Bologna and the surrounding municipalities and a new similar project is being activated in Rimini, another municipality in the Emilia-Romagna region. It is a sort of horizontal process of spreading, not institutionally coordinated, but based on local awareness and attention to other contexts and experiences. The possibility to upscale the project through a national strategy and investment is not actually an aim, due to the mainly municipal connotation of the Italian welfare system and the lack of automatic "mechanisms" to individuate local best practices (or emerging needs) aimed at upscaling or mainstreaming them. This is a condition for the well-known territorial differentiation and fragmentation of the national welfare system (see: 7.2).

The trial project is raising relevant questions about the method of intervention in favour of homeless people and families: how is it possible to adapt the intervention to different targets (families, homeless adult or elder people)? What will be its effects on beneficiaries' long-term pathways? How to best manage the operative integration with the health services? What are the limits and potential of the social community support?

The debate is open and it is involving Bologna and social workers, professionals and even politicians in other regions.

7.2 Governing welfare mix: avoiding fragmentation

Following an initial period of conflict, the association established a good alliance with the municipality. Some activities are co-managed, such as the selection of tenants and the search for opportunities to

sustain their rent. The network built around the project is actually large and complex, involving different public institutions and third sector organisations. This network guarantees the tenants a multi-dimensional and coherent support, avoiding the fragmentation of competences based on different needs, as housing, social, job and health interventions are coordinated.

As already explained (see: 7.1), the project is also receiving attention in other geographic contexts, in which the Bologna model serves as an example, such as in the Municipality of Rimini, in the south of the Region. However, an upscaling or mainstreaming process coordinated through a national strategy is not actually an aim. Until now the diffusion of the practice has depended on spontaneous exchanges among local organisations (municipalities, third sector) and this contributes to create the conditions for the territorial differentiation and fragmentation of the Italian welfare system.

7.3 Governing welfare mix: developing a participatory governance style

As an association created by homeless people, participation has always been of constitutive value for *Piazza Grande*.

Over time, the association has developed a method of social intervention based on peer-support among people who have experienced extreme poverty and social exclusion. The so-called peer-operators usually work side by side with professional-operators, acting as “mediators” between the services and the “homeless’ world”. Mixed staff-groups are considered as more effective in reaching marginalised people, representing their needs and requests and even help professionals to identify and implement suitable interventions. This method (which would be complex to explain here in detail) lies at the origin and in the identity of the association and of the linked organizations (described in footnote 2).

To reiterate, the *Tutti a casa* project currently has no specific strategy to involve the beneficiaries in its design or management, some of them even take part in the project or other activities of the association. The “self-help housing” is one example, as it concerns involving some tenants in renewing rented apartments. However the expectation towards the tenants is to build and keep their own housing autonomy and all the actors involved in the project aim at support them in this effort.

A participatory dimension of the project can be identified in the already described network contributing to the project. It involves professionals and organisations belonging to public institutions and third sector organisations, with different roles and tasks, in managing the project and/or supporting the tenants.

7.4 Equality and diversity

The attention to a balancing of equality and diversity in the selection of the tenants is reinforced by sharing this task with the municipality and integrates a professional assessment of each case by the social assistants.

Different kinds of tenants were selected for the project with the aim of casting a wider net of representativeness: Italian and immigrant families with minor children as well as elder and adult homeless with various difficulties were considered. The selection depended also on the typology of housing available in terms of number of rooms.

The interviewees reported that immigrant tenants tend to lack relational networks and they have less knowledge about the city, thus the work surrounding these aspects has to be sufficiently resourced to help them get to know the neighbourhoods and the local services, and to find opportunities of socialisation for adults and children.

Until now, people with active drug or alcohol addictions who are not in treatment have not been included in the programme. The interviewed argue that a reflection process is needed about this possibility: they highlight that this may not be the right housing solution for them if they cannot accomplish basic tasks in managing a house or perhaps they need to specifically adapt future projects.

Special attention is paid in avoiding the concentration of *Tutti a casa* apartments in the city. To pursue this goal, *Piazza Grande* rejected some apartments (which were in the same building), a measure considered as necessary for the effectiveness of the project. The idea of finding private owners to rent the houses tends to ensure a spreading effect.

To avoid a labelling effect on the tenants, the names stated the door bells are their own and there is no reference to *Piazza Grande* or *Tutti a casa*. As the aim is to create pathways of autonomy and social inclusion, their identity as homeless or families with difficulties have to be overcome, at least in the perception of their neighbourhoods. To have a stable house represents a new start and labels can act as an obstacle.

7.5 Uneven access

The project is mainly aimed at homeless people facing multiple issues and to families without stable accommodation. The only three rules to have access to the apartments are: paying a rent contribution (the cost is supported by the association or public benefits if it is needed), participating in meetings with social workers and respecting the rules of coexistence in the house and in the residence. The process of selection of tenants has been already described and it is analysed in terms of guaranteeing equality (see: 7.4).

The problem of uneven access is only due to the relevant need of affordable houses in the city and the exclusion of weaker people from the rental market. Public housing opportunities aim at different targets, but they are far from satisfying the demand.

The potential beneficiaries of *Tutti a casa* or other housing projects could be a relevant number. As emerged during the interviews, the municipal social assistants are overstretched with cases of housing problems, but it has not been possible to grant equal access to all the people in need. The risk could be to reserve the apartments only to people in extreme poverty, while other situations of vulnerability risk to worsen and descend into extreme poverty.

Furthermore, some interviewees highlight that the *Tutti a casa* proposal is not be the right solution for all people with housing problems. For example, it is in discussion whether to open access to active drug or alcohol addicted homeless people to this kind of intervention (see: 7.4). They argue it should become part of a variegated offer of social and housing policies responding to the characteristics of different targets.

7.6 Avoiding responsibility

As already told, due to a conflict between Piazza Grande and the Municipality, the public institution that is responsible for local social policies did not participate to the project's start-up. The risk of experimentation was taken in charge by the association and by the Bank Foundation *Del Monte*, which financed *Tutti a casa* first version for one year (and then a second year). Thus, it could be said that the Municipality has preferred to avoid the risk of failure that is always implicit in social innovative experiences.

Currently, the Municipality is fully involved in the project. Furthermore, it finances its own housing-led proposal on homelessness from 2014. In the end, after the initial risk-phase, the administration was ready to invest in the direction opened by *Tutti a casa*.

7.7 Managing intra-organisational tensions

According to the interviewed *Piazza Grande* referents, the organisational changes needed to overcome the internal crisis of the association and the start of a new experimental project, obviously created enthusiasm as well as discontent and opposition. New aims were defined, young professionals were hired and some consolidated roles have been redefined. The transformation was urgent and rapid, hence not easy to be accepted by everybody. Even the President of the association risked losing his role. A challenge for *Tutti a casa* supporters was to demonstrate the project's effectiveness not only to external stakeholders (like social workers, managers and politicians of the municipality), but also to some internal members of the association who did not immediately appreciate the changes and risks linked to this new approach.

In spite of this uncertainty, *Tutti a casa* has become one of the main projects of the association and represents an important part of its activities and future investments. The tensions appear to be dissolved or at least weakened within the association, also thanks to the success of the programme.

As already explained, initially *Piazza Grande* tried to share the selection and management of the cases directly with the six territorial (decentralised) social services, as it had to deal with different referents and procedures. To overcome this problem, the central sector of the municipality introduced a different praxis from usual: two mixed public-private working groups have been activated to coordinate the selection of the tenants and define multi-dimensional interventions in their favour involving professionals with different competences and from various organisations.

No particular tensions were reported about these groups. However, it was highlighted that some social workers from the municipal social services, often overloaded with work, suggest many potential beneficiaries for the project. Thus, often the case-load to be discussed piles up. This means that probably more opportunities and/or more strict and representative criteria of selection have to be defined.

It has been also argued that some social workers show a level of methodological scepticism towards the medium-term results of the project: how to reach the aim of housing autonomy when the temporary municipal contributions will end, if people won't find a job, considering the labour market crisis? What is different in *Tutti a casa* concrete intervention from the previous housing-led projects realised in the field of family intervention? In terms of effects, as already highlighted by *Piazza Grande* social workers, not everything is already clear and defined in the method of intervention, as it has still

to be partially codified, learning from the fieldwork. Ultimately, this is the purpose of a trial project or experiment as in this case.

7.8 Enabling legal framework

A special procedure was established, different from usual, to select *Tutti a casa* beneficiaries.

The candidates are presented by the central social sector of the municipality, which collects the proposals made by the social assistants of the Territorial Social Service, to the two panels (on families with minor children and single homeless) to be analysed. Even *Piazza Grande* submits its own cases to the social services and the panels. This is a different procedure from the usual one, because the central sector of the municipality's task is on policy programmes and general coordination. However, the association had some difficulties to collaborate on the cases directly with the nine municipal Territorial Social Services: firstly, because each of them has its own procedures; secondly, because of limited and stretched resources, they tried to send too many cases to the project. These are the reasons why *Piazza Grande* called for a central coordination. The municipality's reaction has been positive and flexible, as it has modified the procedures to meet this request.

It is possible that in the future it will be necessary to establish better defined criteria to select the beneficiaries, depending on the experimentation's results, and make the procedures of selection more fluid.

Some interviewees identified in the lack of a minimum income measure a major obstacle to the implementation of a pure Housing First project. The economic subsidies provided by the municipality can be also temporary and have well defined duration. Excluding elderly people who have pensions or others receiving disability benefits, it is necessary to offer other tenants job or (paid) internship opportunities to pay their rents. At the same time, these activation measures are considered as positive to reinforce tenants' self-confidence and their competences, responsibility of housing autonomy in the medium period and the idea of starting a new life with new relationships and life activities. They added that these proposals are usually appreciated by the tenants and that they take in account as much as possible their requests and attitudes.

Regarding the aforementioned recent public competition on a new Housing-Led project organised by the Municipality of Bologna and considering that a public shelter has been closed, the local policies on homelessness assume a clear direction in where to invest in the next years.

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Appendix

As established in the ImPRovE methodological paper on social innovation (Kazepov et. al, 2013), the field research aims, through a complex transdisciplinary and integrated methodology, to analyse the conditions influencing the rise of innovative experiences on poverty problems and their potential of mainstreaming in different welfare models. Following the established protocols for the fieldwork, the actions conducted for the case study by the University of Urbino team, between February and June 2014, are:

Analysis of documents, data and publications concerning the innovative experience, aimed to individuate useful information about its working and development. Analysis of institutional documents and programs, data and researches to describe local policies on homeless and social housing in the context where the project is realised (e.g. local social plans containing needs analysis, implementation programmes and evaluation reports).

4 qualitative interviews involving 6 people: a) the President of the association Piazza Grande; b) the two social workers of Piazza Grande coordinating the project; c) the responsible of Vulnerable Adults and Social Inclusion Office (Ufficio Adulti Vulnerabili e Inclusione Sociale) of Social Services Sector of the Municipality of Bologna and another referent of the office collaborating at the project; d) the referent of Bank Foundation Del Monte, financier of the project.

The interviews aimed at describing in depth the project, its genesis and potential, its organisation and network, the characteristics of the local context and policies for social housing and for homeless people.

A focus group involving 7 referents: a) the two coordinators of the project, belonging to *Piazza Grande*; b) a social worker of the Social Cooperative La Strada di Piazza Grande, working on activation pathways; c) a social assistant and an educator of the Public Agency for Services to People ASP Città di Bologna; d) a social assistant of the Municipality of Bologna; e) a social worker of the Mobile Service for Homeless People (Unità di Strada) of Piazza Grande.

The focus group aimed at go in deep on the analysis of the project, better describing its innovative characteristics in the relation with the context where it is realised.

ImPRovE: Poverty Reduction in Europe. Social Policy and Innovation

Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation (ImPRovE) is an international research project that brings together ten outstanding research institutes and a broad network of researchers in a concerted effort to study poverty, social policy and social innovation in Europe. The ImPRovE project aims to improve the basis for evidence-based policy making in Europe, both in the short and in the long term. In the short term, this is done by carrying out research that is directly relevant for policymakers. At the same time however, ImPRovE invests in improving the long-term capacity for evidence-based policy making by upgrading the available research infrastructure, by combining both applied and fundamental research, and by optimising the information flow of research results to relevant policy makers and the civil society at large.

The two central questions driving the ImPRovE project are:

How can social cohesion be achieved in Europe?

How can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro-level policies and vice versa?

The project runs from March 2012 till February 2016 and receives EU research support to the amount of Euro 2.7 million under the 7th Framework Programme. The output of ImPRovE will include over 55 research papers, about 16 policy briefs and at least 3 scientific books. The ImPRovE Consortium will organise two international conferences (Spring 2014 and Winter 2015). In addition, ImPRovE will develop a new database of local projects of social innovation in Europe, cross-national comparable reference budgets for 6 countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Spain) and will strongly expand the available policy scenarios in the European microsimulation model EUROMOD.

More detailed information is available on the website <http://improve-research.eu>.

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