Co-city Journal 6: final steps of the Turin project

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This sixth and final journal of the Co-City project introduce you to the final steps of the Co-City Turin project, drawing also from the Co-City Final Evaluation Report, that analyzed the project's results from the perspective of the Theory of Change approach.

Executive summary

Through the Co-City project on collaborative management of urban commons to counteract poverty and socio-spatial polarization that started in mid-2017, the City invested on the urban commons as a lever for addressing key urban governance issues such as poverty and target the most vulnerable communities in the city. The UIA Co-City project is carried out through a partnership with the Computer Science Department and Law School of the University of Turin, the National Association of Municipalities (ANCI) and the Cascina Roccafranca Foundation as the of the leader of the Neighborhood Houses Network. It aims at coordinating the efforts of different urban actors in promoting the implementation of the Turin Regulation. The project provides the renewal of real estate and public spaces considered as urban commons, as instrument of social inclusion and against poverty in many deprived areas of the City. The project is coordinated by the City Department for Decentralization, Youth and Equal Opportunities. The Neighborhood Houses is another key partner in the implementation of the Co-City project. They are a neighborhood-based network introduced by the city of Turin in 2006 to promote the diffusion of community spaces all over the city and represent a key platform for the project's implementation. In the Neighborhood Houses Network, city inhabitants find information on the Co-City project and the different opportunities it offers. They will find there the necessary support for drafting proposals of pacts of collaboration as well as the opportunity to meet other city inhabitants interested in establishing a cooperation to take care or regenerate the same urban commons. The project is now in the final phase. This is the sixth and last Co-City journal, it will summarize the main results and lessons learnt by the partners through the project and the possible evolutions and future steps of the project after the end of the UIA funding period, as well as the transfer capacity of the Co-City model and tools in other cities.

The first Co-City journal, published in January 2018 retraced the overall architecture of the project and provided an overview over the challenges its implementation poses to the City of Turin.

The second UIA Co-City journal, published in June 2018 looked deeply into the results of the calls for proposals for pacts of collaboration and the first steps carried out by the City of Turin in the pacts' co-design phase. The journal also provides an update on the other project's activities that are tackling the challenge of innovation of public procurement at the local level: the participation of the City of Turin and the UIA expert Christian Iaione to the Urban Partnership of the Urban Agenda for the EU on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement and the process of learning and exchange activated at the Italian level.

The third UIA Co-City Journal, published in February 2019 provides an update on the project's activities at the local, national and EU level and takes a deeper look at the basket of pacts of collaboration that are more advanced at this stage of the process. A first zoom in analyzed empirically and in depth the proposals of pacts of collaboration.

The fourth Journal, published in September 2019 shed light on how the Co-City Turin project is making impactful progresses at the local, national and EU level. At the local level, the first pacts of collaboration were officially approved.

The fifth journal, published in June 2020 provided a first introduction the "New Regulation for Governing the Urban Commons", issued by the City of Turin at the end of the Co-City implementation phase, based on the lessons learnt through the project. The fifth journal also provided updates on the main news about the project: first, a general update of the pacts of collaboration, specifically the recently approved pact of collaboration "Via Cumiana". The Via Cumiana pact is the very first pact of the category "A", involving the regeneration of building, to be activated. A new version of the Regulation for the Urban Commons, updated building on the knowledge generated by the Co-City project was issued by the City in December 2019 (the Zoom-in 3 is dedicated exclusively to the new Regulation's analysis, providing a Reader of the New Turin Regulation for Governing the Urban Commons). At the national level, the Co-City project is offering an important contribution to the debate between cities and national institutions such as ANCI in terms of the importance of conducting urban experimentations through innovative forms of partnership and public procurement. At the international level, the City of Turin's participation to the Urban Agenda for the EU through the Urban Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement is working in the direction positioning the pacts of collaboration as the first generation of urban innovation partnerships.

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In the final phase, Co-City invested efforts in the direction of accompanying the projects realized through the Pact of collaboration towards their first phase of implementation. At the same time, the Co-City project team worked to ensure that the knowledge and policy capacity on governance of urban commons produced is transferred to another UIA project that kick-started in February 2020, "To-Nite". The project aims at improving the livability of the areas along the Dora river through the improvement of public spaces and the activation of social inclusion processes with the technical and financial support of new welfare proximity services.

1. The Co-City project progresses at the local level.

At the local level, the main achievement is the kick-start of pacts of collaboration. 50 pacts of collaboration between the City Administration and city residents (i.e. NGOs, social organizations) have been signed. The pacts enable inhabitants' organizations to work closely together and with City officials, reinforcing trust in institutions, social cohesion, long-term commitment of the entire administrative machine. They were critical in keeping urban spaces safe and alive during the pandemic. Social bonds created by the pacts helped preserve the social interaction.

CO-CITY pacts aim at bringing together city communities, governments, knowledge institutions, social and private operators. CO-CITY is a good guidance for policymakers and social actors willing to build public-community cooperation. The regeneration of abandoned or underused spaces in different areas of the city is expected to contribute to the creation of new jobs in the "social economy" sector through the creation of new enterprises at the neighborhood level. These enterprises are expected to result from the close collaboration and working relationship between the local government, residents, and a network of Neighborhood Houses (Case del Quartiere) in the city. These Neighborhood Houses consist of eight neighborhood community centers located in formerly distressed or abandoned spaces that were regenerated and made available to the local community for civic, cultural, and educational uses that meet the needs of residents[1]. The networking of these houses is promoted and supported by the City and other public and private stakeholders to foster cooperation and free exchanges between the houses and to generate neighborhood level responses to the needs of vulnerable

individuals, specific groups and the community. To facilitate the construction of collaborative economies, the neighborhood houses are a critical institutional tool[2] further enabled by the UIA Co-City as illustrated in previous journals[3]. The eight Neighborhood houses are highly differentiated institutions, supported by public (city, regional, EU) and private funding (private and philanthropic foundations).

The previous journals and zoom-ins provided a detailed analysis of the pacts of collaboration through the lens of the so-called quintuple helix urban co-governance approach, aimed at stimulating neighborhood-based cooperation. The analytical grid, presented in The Co-City Zoom in 2, is based on 5 design principles for the co-governance of the commons in the city, briefly summarized below:

1. Co-governance refers to the presence of a governance approach based on multi-stakeholder collaboration;
2. Enabling State is the design principle that expresses the role of the City[4] acting as a platform for facilitating and enabling collective action;
3. Social and economic urban pooling. Creation of co-economies based on co-production and distributive/solidarity and social justice concerns;
4. Urban experimentalism is the adoption of a methodology approach for designing institutional processes built to enable scientific discoveries, social and economic innovations, testing of new technologies and true solutions for challenges related to the urban context in which the commons are inserted; and finally

Tech Justice[5] highlights the potential of access to the use, management and ownership of technology for vulnerable people and communities, as an enabling factor of inclusive and sustainable urban development.
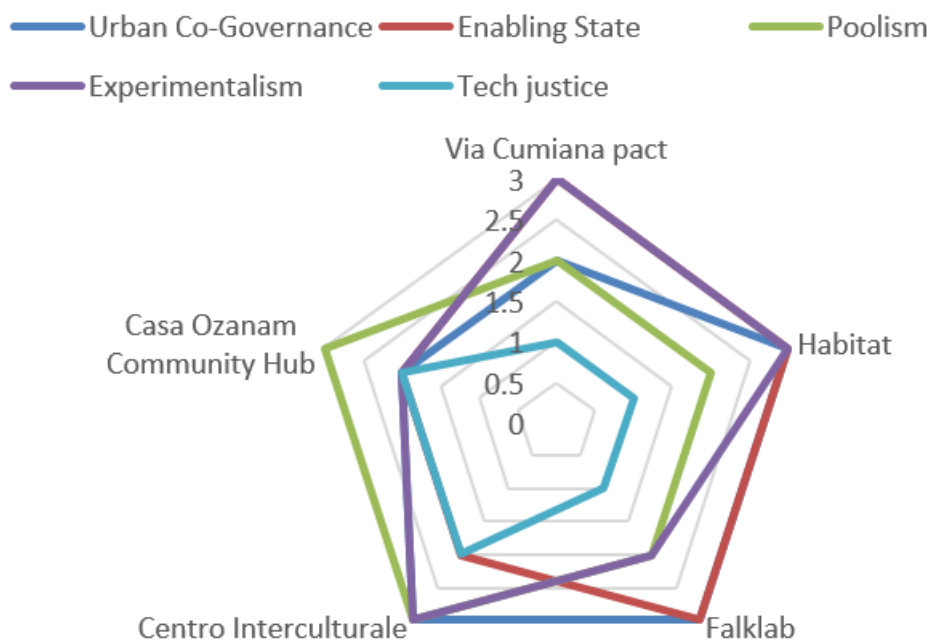
When analyzing the six pacts of collaboration studied and the five design principles, we noticed that the urban co-governance and enabling state dimensions are the strongest. It is quite significative as these are the design principles for which the City of Turin could have more impact. The enabling state criterion is particularly relevant for cities in general, but the strength of the urban co-governance also shows that they did not monopolize the process. On the contrary, the pacts of collaboration enabled a multi-stakeholder collaboration at the various stages of the process, which is a key step towards the Co-City. Social and economic pooling as well as experimentalism evolved from moderate to strong for several pacts, comparing the beginning and the end of the implementation phase. Lastly, the Tech justice design principle is apparently the most difficult variable to retrieve in the pacts of collaboration examined. Despite an apparent willingness to include digital solutions, the pacts of collaboration struggled to stimulate interest in the signatories of the pacts of collaboration to implement technological and digital innovations. The City is strongly committed to improve its performance under this standpoint, also through the work of the To-Nite UIA project that is aimed at improving security of public spaces by building a shared digital storytelling process.

Overall, the most complex and therefore one of the more relevant pacts of collaboration, for the purpose and impact of the Co-City project is the CUMIANA15 pact, which foresees the transformation of a former car-manufacturing factory requiring significant physical renovation into a hybrid indoor-outdoor space (half renewed industrial building, half covered square) functioning as a co-managed cultural-creative activities community hub.

Figure 1 Inaugural reception of CUMIANA15, September 2020. Source: TorinoOggi

[1] See http://www.retecasedelquartiere.org/. See also Tiziana Caponio and Davide Donatiello, Intercultural policy in times of crisis: theory and practice in the case of Turin, Italy, Comparative Migration Studies, 2017.

[2] See Anne Marie Brady and Lauren Burke, "Vibrant Neighborhoods Forum: Leveraging Civic Engagement for Social Impact." (2021), Retrieved 20 April, 2021 from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep28524.pdf; Sheila Foster and Christian Iaione, "Ostrom in the City: Design Principles for the Urban Commons", 2017, Retrieved 20 April, 2021 from https://www.thenatureofcities.com/2017/08/20/ostrom-city-designprinciples-urban-commons/; Polyak, Levente, Daniela Pattia and Bahanur Nasya. "Cascina Roccafranca", Open Heritage: People, Places, Potential, Retrieved 29 Nov, 2020 from https://openheritage.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/1_OpenHeritage_Cascina-Roccafrance_Observatory-Case.pdf; Patti, Daniela. "Regulating The Urban Commons – What We Can Learn From Italian Experiences", 2017 from https://cooperativecity.org/2017/11/21/urbancommons-learning-from-italy/; Valeria Vacchiano, Tiziana Eliantonio and Fabrizio Barbiero, "Social Inclusion Successful initiatives in Turin", 2018, Retrieved 20 April 2020 from https://urbact.eu/social-inclusion-successful-initiatives-turin

[3] See The role of the neighborhood Houses Network within the Co-City project is outlined in the Co-City Turin Journal n. 1, available here: https://www.uia-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2018-03/Turin_CO-City_UIAExpertJournal1%28Jan2018%29.pdf

[4] S. Foster, Collective Action and the Urban Commons, 87 Notre Dame Law Review 57 (2011) (voted one of the 5 best law review articles on land use for 2011-12 year and republished in the Land Use and Environmental Law Review); see also Christian Iaione, The Right to the CO-city, in Italian Journal of Public Law, 2017, 1.

[5] C. Iaione, E. De Nictolis and A. Berti Suman The Internet of Humans (IoH): Human Rights and Co-Governance to Achieve Tech Justice in the City., in Law and Ethics of Human Rights, 37:13, 263-299, 2019.

2. Achievements and lessons learnt

The final evaluation of the Co-City project (available in Italianhere) provided some very interesting final considerations regarding the main successes and shortcomings of the Co-City project.

The final evaluation is rooted in a methodological approach, the Theory of Change approach, which aims at describing the model of social intervention of the Co-City Turin project on the basis of its long-term ambition by identifying the actions, outputs and intermediate outcomes it achieved. Theory of Change takes into account the complexity of environment and relationships that a simple input–output model of evaluation would overlook. It also enables project staff to develop their own evaluation plan, based on the steps of change that they outline, and to have a clear plan for data collection.

First, it has been necessary to get back to the situation analysis that informed the project strategies and activities. Reviewing the background discussion on the project at the moment of the application makes explicit which

aspect of the general problem is addressed by the action.

The second step has been to reconstruct the implicit change process with the development of the outcome chain which shows the assumed cause and effect between immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes or impact. This has been the basis to identify the evaluation questions.

The third step has been the identification of the plan of action that associates to the map of outcomes the necessary outputs and actions for the implementation of the change.

The fourth step has been to determine what can/should be evaluated by making explicit the evaluation questions that are necessary to define the indicators.

The indicators and the sources of verification were the starting point for the actual evaluation of the project developed in the final report.

In order to have a full picture of the intervention, has been developed a parallel focus on the profiles of stakeholders that are directly and indirectly involved within each dimension area of the project, isolating the elements of the expected change that the project would have on them.

The ambition of the Co-City Turin project was to kick-start systemic change in the way the City of Turin governs retro regeneration processes towards the fight against poverty in marginalized and complex city neighborhoods. Co-City did so by empowering existing urban actors engaged in counteracting urban poverty (i.e. the Network of Neighborhood Houses, local NGOs, groups of City residents, Social Fare) with a toolkit composed of legal, institutional, digital, learning tools crafted with the support of the expertise and resources provided by the project partners (University of Turin; the UIA Co-City Expert; ANCI).

Co-City required extensive efforts in communicating new ideas and concepts from all actors involved in the project, which has sometimes caused misunderstandings or slowed down the process. A first general result of the project according to the evaluation report is the support it has been able to give to the emergence and consolidation of new "city makers" and their networks. Thanks to the project, these have been able to understand their ability to involve within processes of urban social change. Some preliminary effects of the project can be seen also in a general change of attitude of the City administration and of public officials who are starting to maximize a multi-sectoral approach to address urban challenges that transcend traditional sectoral boundaries.

The project promoted the empowerment of all Departments of the City on the topic of urban commons and encouraged a wider participation in the implementation and governance of pacts of collaboration.

The main achievement of the urban co-governance model implemented by Co-City can be summarized by the following key findings:

- co-design of the innovative process. The city created an integrated administrative structure, cutting across policy silos and strengthening the interplay between city central administrative offices and the decentralization units (i.e. the districts and the neighborhood houses), to ensure an integrated approach towards the creation of urban commons. Through co-design processes, all the feasibility issues of the pacts of collaboration are fine-tuned and issues are solved before they become a burden. The co-design process enables also a better drafting and management of the pact of collaboration which consequently helps accelerate inhabitants' organizations empowerment in turning public spaces into engines of neighborhood revitalization. As a matter of fact in this way the City and the civic actors share decision-making powers, identify reciprocal legal responsibilities and distribute economic benefits and public value produced by the urban regeneration processes;
- the project's implementation has contributed to the development of mutual trust and social inclusion. City officials and civil servants form 24 different city departments (around 90 officers) and social actors (more than 214 NGOs) were involved in the project implementation and evaluated positively the enabling role of Co-City as a way to innovate policies and practices aiming at delivering urban sustainable development.

The results achieved by the Co-City project are also relevant for other cities wishing to replicate the approach experimented by the UIA Co-City project. The discussion on urban commons and their management strategies as a means towards urban sustainable development is by now widely known across Europe. Through Co-City, the City of Turin has codified a set of enabling tools as well as potential critical barriers that might hinder their deployment. The investment carried out through Co-City on further legal experimentation, on refining the administrative procedures and institutional tools, on professional capacity – building of a larger part of the city bureaucracy positioned Turin as the most city to transfer them to other European cities that they are likely to face similar issues when addressing policies to enable urban commons.

First lesson is the focus on the process and the methodological approach towards the creation of innovative legal tools to support urban commons. Co-City was based on an innovative Regulation on the urban commons, and on its legal tool – the Pact of collaboration. These legal tools where introduced to facilitate a change of attitude in the public-communities relationship. One of the main outcomes of the Co-City project was indeed a new version

of the "Regulation for governing the urban commons", revised according to the lessons learnt through Co-City- The new Regulation recognized that more legal tools are needed to ensure to enable different levels of intensity public-community collaboration[1]. The Regulation therefore disciplines two main categories of collaboration: shared governance and self-management of urban commons Shared governance of urban commons can be regulated through the pact of collaboration, while for self-governance the Regulation identifies the use of the use of different tools: the civic and collective uses; the civic collective management; the Urban Commons Foundation. The civic and collective uses and civic collective management are both characterized by the presence of a community of reference - a coalition of local actors that recognizes and organizes itself as a neighborhood urban commons unit. The urban community of reference uses, manages and takes care of the urban commons in accordance with the principles of the regulation, such as inclusion and accessibility, guaranteed by a Self-Governance Charter democratically written and approved. The difference between the two tools is that with the civic and collective management the initiative for the definition of the civic deal for the management of urban commons is taken by the community of reference, upon which the municipal asset or property is entrusted. The community of reference takes on all the relevant liabilities, even though the property remains with the City administration. Finally, the Urban Commons Foundation is a tool for the most advanced levels of urban commons co-governance. Through this legal tool, the City can transfer one or more of assets to a Foundation established for the sole purpose of managing urban commons in the general, public, common interest. The transferred assets constitute a patrimony of the Foundation with restricted and inalienable destination by the same Foundation. This represents the basis for an innovative vision on urban commons co-governance and provide cities with a highly flexible legal toolkit. They can use different tools depending on the legal framework the context, the level of commitment of the urban communities involved, the needs and resources available.

Secondly, the role of Neighborhood Houses must be considered as central, both in the process of community engagement, and in the co-design process necessary to define the objects, goals, roles and resources necessary to take care of and regenerate urban commons. In the Neighborhood Houses, city residents found accessible information regarding CO-CITY and its opportunities and they accessed support for drafting proposals of Pacts as well as the chance to meet other inhabitants to set up a cooperation. The Neighborhood Houses are the result of a long effort of the City of Turin, that started building the network in the nineties and is constantly investing in their growth and improvement. Other EU cities are investing efforts in building similar structures. The city of Riga is building (through the support of the URBACT program) an "NGO House" Set in a renovated school building, the NGO House offers resources for NGOs in terms of capacity building, access to information, experience and best practices, networking and leadership training. The availabilities of facilities is not a pre-requisite for building a strong support network for city residents. For example, the City of Reggio Emilia (Emilia Romagna, Italy) introduced he figure of the "neighborhood architect", a civil servant with skills of community organizing, service design, urban planning and analysis. The neighborhood architects contribute to organize and run the Neighborhood labs or other collaborative policies.

In the past decade, improving public-civic cooperation has been a shared aspiration in many European cities. With public facilities struggling with budget cuts in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis, municipalities across the EU have been working hard on engaging citizens and civil society organizations to participate in the provision of public services. In addition, the fading trust in democratic institutions and the growing polarization of European societies prompted cities to actively search for new ways to reach out to their civil society and exchange ideas and share resources and responsibilities with their citizens. In contrast with an antagonistic civil society, better structured public-civic cooperation offers space for NGOs, civic initiatives and informal groups to address their needs and realize their objectives with the help of the public administration. Turin's tools used in Co-City (the Pact of collaboration and Neighborhood Houses) provide a great methodology towards these objectives.

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[1] A detailed analysis of the new Turin Regulation for governing the urban commons was published in the Co-City Turin Zoom-in n.3, available here: https://www.uia-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2021-01/29.06.2020_Co-City%20zoom%20in%203.pdf.

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3. Challenges and next steps

The Co-City final evaluation report, as well as the empirical assessment of urban co-governance that the UIA expert carried out throughout the whole duration of the project highlighted several shortcomings, mainly related to the obstacles encountered in bringing systemic innovations within the city bureaucracy in a limited and fixed period of time. The timing was a critical factor also for the implementation of the pacts of collaboration. The phase of co-planning and approval of the pacts of collaboration was a long and burdensome process. On the one hand, administrative procedures caused considerable delays in carrying out project activities. On the other hand, Co-City tested new procedures, and this is a process that still needs time for standardization and evaluation in order to provide solutions and systemic changes. The length of this first phase of the process brought frustration

to both public officials and for civic actors involved.

In terms of the most important project challenge, it has been the use of a totally new legal tool (the pact of collaboration) that resulted in a collective learning effort by all the stakeholders involved. This relied on a solid local background and tradition of community engagement which is mainly represented by the local network of Neighborhood Houses.

The Neighborhood Houses were indeed a key actor structuring the urban communities' capacity to access the opportunities offered by the Co-City and the legal tool it adopts, the Regulation for Governing the Urban commons. Through the Neighborhood houses, city inhabitants found accessible information regarding the Co-City project and the opportunity it offers. There, they also accessed support for drafting proposals of pacts of collaboration as well as the opportunity to meet other city inhabitants interested in establishing a cooperation to take care or regenerate the same urban commons.

The Co-City project contributed indirectly also to the implementation of the fight against urban poverty and the urban welfare policies of the City of Turin. First, it enriched the capacity of Turin civil servants to collaborate with communities and enable them to be a proactive part of the creation and management of urban innovations. Then, the projects realized through the pacts of collaboration constitute platforms for city residents to be part of neighborhood networks based on solidarity and proximity, as well as being facilities where they can access resources and services that provide an answer to the needs of the neighborhoods involved, identified and co-designed by the city and the residents. With specific reference to city residents in condition of fragility (i.e. homelessness) the Co-City project tested a model of intervention where civil servants involved fragile city residents by involving them in the co-design activists, supporting their integration in different services, enabling the creation of solidarity networks and improving the interactions between social workers.

The next steps of the City of Turin will be oriented towards the capitalization of the lessons learnt through Co-City, supporting civic actors in building robust sustainability plans for the pacts of collaborations' projects and the bridging of Co-City with the EU policy landscape on counteracting climate change as well as promoting research and innovation. In fact, the pacts of collaboration signed by Cities and city residents can play a pivotal role in the EU policy framework tackling climate change and mission-oriented innovation. The JRC City Science Initiative considers public-community partnerships a cross-cutting policy tool to strengthen the involvement of researchers and an empirical approach in general by cities' administration to generate innovative solutions for pressing urban challenges that are able to impact on poverty reduction, such as broadband accessibility; urban sustainable mobility; mental health and urban health more broadly. The European Green Deal and the Horizon 2020 R&I program (especially through the European Green Deal Call available here) both stressed the importance of public-community cooperation. The Horizon Europe cities mission also foresees a climate neutral city contract as a tool to empower city residents and cities in the implementation of the Green Deal objectives[1].

[1] 100 Climate-neutral Cities by 2030 – by and for the Citizens
https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/sites/jrccties/files/100_climate_neutral_cities_report_.pdf.

Urban poverty

See on UIA website