



Porto Culture as pathway towards sociability

WEAVING A COLLABORATIVE CITY



Porto Culture is a network of stakeholders from the Manifattura delle Arti (literally, manufacturing of Arts) district in Bologna born thanks to the European Urban Regeneration Mix project.

The challenge

DAMSLab is a renovated area inside the Manifattura delle Arti district, an area of about 100 thousand square meters in the hearth of the historic center of Bologna. The area is characterized by a particularly elderly population and with social frailties. DAMSLab's goal is to enhance projects and foster synergies that find in cultural and artistic production and participation the key factor for territorial growth, and a focal point for contemporary and future citizenship. The challenge was to improve relations between stakeholders in the area and use culture as a lever for better social relationships between citizens.

The path

Thanks to the tools made available by URBACT through the Urban Regeneration Mix project, the stakeholders of the Manufacture of the Arts have found ways to confront each other in order to field joint co-designed and co-organized events. In particular, thanks to the periodic meetings (ULG), the stakeholders got to know each other better, compared each other, brought to light the potential and difficulties, opportunities and threats of the area in order to find new solutions for dialogue.

The solution

The solution found is "Porto Culture". "Porto Culture" is a network between different organizations placed and active in the same cultural district of Manifattura dell Arti, in collaboration with of the Metropolitan city of Bologna. "Porto" is harbour in Italian language because the area was an harbour in 17th

century, but It's also mean "to bring". "Culture" is the plural word of "cultura" in Italian language. As a part of Porto Culture, DAMSLab host the main stakeholders:

- ❖ Cassero LGBTI Center, one of the most important institutions for the Italian LGBT movement and history. Founded in 1982, it works to improve the quality of life of the LGBTIQ community: raising awareness on the need of social and political rights and tackling discrimination on national and international level.
- ❖ Mercato Ritrovato, a farmer's market which takes place every Saturday morning from 9am to 2pm (every Monday evening from 5.30pm to 9.30pm during the summer season). At Mercato Ritrovato you can buy farmers' products, taste their street food and take part in cooking classes, live concerts and many other initiatives. Kids' playground is also set up.
- ❖ Cantieri Meticci, a collective of artists from over twenty countries around the world. For years, it has been running workshops that mix very different arts and people.
- ❖ Porto15, the first entirely public cohousing initiative in Italy; it consists in the recovery of 18 accommodations inside a building close the Manifattura delle Arti district.
- ❖ DAS is the artistic production space in via del Porto 11/2 in Bologna; it was designed and structured to collect heterogeneity of the contemporary art scene and breaking down the boundaries between disciplines.

The network aims to show how culture can be the key element for urban regeneration; for this reason, it took place inside one of Bologna's factual representations of this strategy: the site of DAMSLab, the laboratory of the Department of Arts, Music and Entertainment of the University of Bologna.

Porto Culture as pathway towards sociability because culture is a vehicle of sociality and approval for people of all social classes and of all races. Strengthening culture and offering it to the best means improving our society and our cities in terms of mental but also physical public health.

The lesson for the Partners and the future

The solution adopted explains how dialogue, communication, the relationship with others is a fundamental element for improving one's daily work and expanding the ideas, projects and activities to be dedicated to one's public. A network of subjects is able to speak to different audiences, to obtain new and important opportunities for discussion but also for business. The subjects operating in your own territory are not competitors but are part of your own community. 1 + 1 does not always and inevitably 2 but can also do 3 or more. The dialogue leads to win win agreements if planned in the best possible way.

The secret of success is to make this dialogue stable, continuous and with well standardized but not plastered procedures. The future challenge for Porto Culture is precisely to improve its identity in the eyes of the stakeholders but above all outside it so that it can be identified as a sort of quality certification for the cultural events / activities of the city of Bologna. In this way all citizens, companies, city institutions will be able to find a strong and qualified interlocutor: citizens to benefit from increasingly interesting and involving events, companies to eventually finance the activities proposed by Porto Culture, institutions to possibly help or even favor the idea in other territories. In the future Porto Culture will have to go on without the resources and opportunities offered by the project, the stakeholders will have to find shared ways of confrontation as taught by the URBACT project.

“The roots of culture are bitter, but the fruits are sweet.” - Aristotle