

BOLOGNA ITALY

Let's do it together!

The regulation of collaboration between citizens and the city for the care and regeneration of urban commons

**BOLOGNA
ITALY
390,636 INHABITANTS
(2018)**



In the last 5 years, Bologna has successfully trialled an urban innovation model based on circular subsidiarity and civic collaboration, the 'collaborative city.' This means public administrations governing not only on behalf of citizens, but also with citizens, basing their policies on the two concepts of city as commons and citizens as a great source of energy, talent, resources, capabilities and ideas in support of urban regeneration.

Active citizens, social innovators, entrepreneurs, civil society organisations and institutions willing to work for the general interest can start a co-designed project with the city government leading to the signing of a collaboration pact for the care or regeneration of urban commons such as, for example, public spaces, urban green areas and abandoned buildings or areas.

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7) The scope of the interventions: integrate/improve management standards provided by the city or improve the liveability and the quality of the spaces; ensure the collective use of those spaces and buildings that are not registered in the municipal maintenance programmes (the municipal government periodically identifies the buildings in a state of partial or total disuse or decay which are suitable for care and regeneration interventions)

The case study's approach

The policy framework for managing all collaborative projects, from valorisation of cultural heritage to spontaneous street or building cleaning initiatives is the 'Regulation on collaboration between citizens and the city for the care and regeneration of urban commons'.

The regulation defines:

- 1) The meaning of Urban Commons: tangible, intangible and digital goods, that both citizens and the public administration recognise to be part of the collective wellbeing
- 2) The meaning of active citizens: all subjects, single or associated, however gathered, also entrepreneurs or those with a social vocation, who are active in the care and regeneration of urban commons
- 3) The degree and intensity of collaboration: from occasional to constant and continuous care, from shared management of public spaces and of private spaces for public use to regeneration of public spaces
- 4) The type of intervention: care, regeneration and shared management of public spaces and public buildings; promotion of social innovation and collaborative services and of creativity at urban level; digital innovation
- 5) The meaning of regeneration interventions: recovery, transformation and innovation interventions; co-design methods; social, economic, technological and environmental with participatory, broad and integrated processes
- 6) The meaning of public spaces: green areas, squares, streets, sidewalks and other public spaces or spaces open to the public, of public property or subject to public use

When a collaboration pact is signed, it defines:

- a) the goals and the action;
- b) the duration;
- c) the mode of action, commitments, limits of interventions;
- d) insurance coverage;
- e) guarantees in case of damages to the city or as a result of partial implementation of action;
- f) forms of support provided by the city and by the citizens (in-kind, financial, administrative facilitations – by the city; self-financing – by the citizens through fundraising);
- g) publication issues, periodic monitoring and accounting provisions;
- h) coaching by the PA, progress monitoring, management of disputes, eventual sanctions;
- i) causes of exclusion of citizens, ownerships, etc.; and
- j) procedures for modifying the agreed interventions.

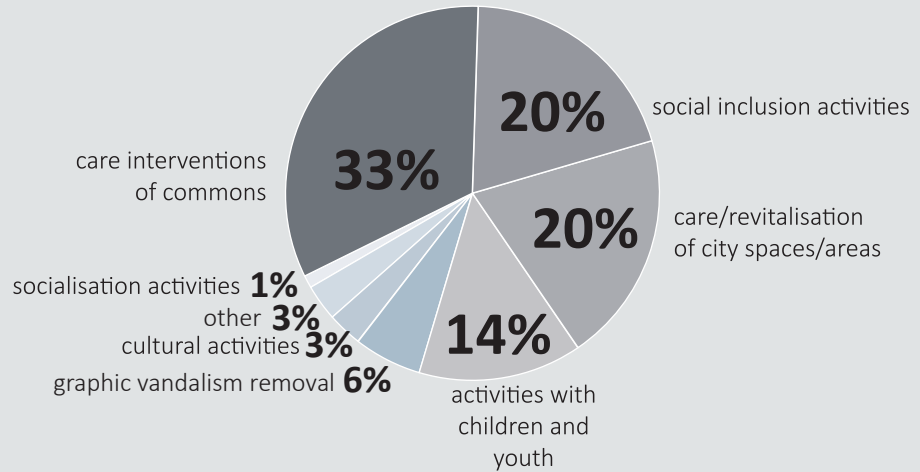
The regulation was officially adopted on 31 May 2014, setting up a reference framework so that managing urban commons together with citizens could become a structural, permanent and transversal public policy and alliance for the care of the city.

From that moment on, around 636 proposals have been presented and around 470 collaboration pacts have been signed; 191 Italian cities have adopted a similar tool for participative urban regeneration processes and for the care of urban commons, while 57 more cities are working at the moment on its adoption.

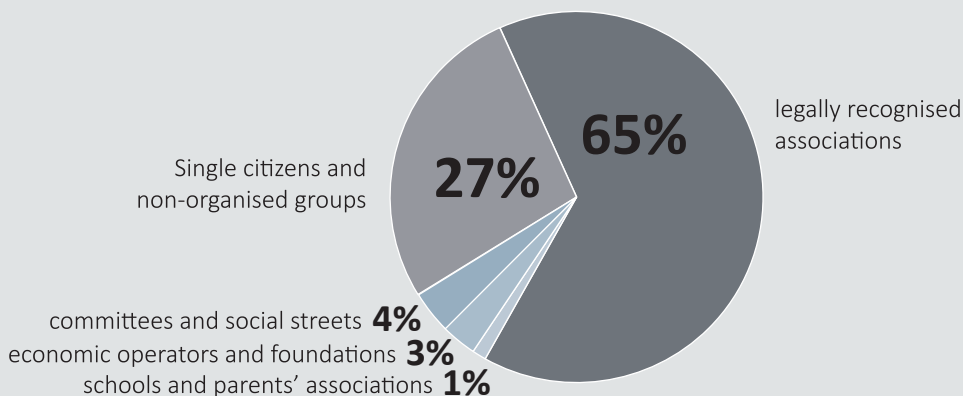
Impact and results

Data relating to the first three years of implementation of the regulation (2014-2017), when 357 collaboration pacts had been agreed,

Areas of the collaboration proposals



Who submitted the collaboration proposals?



found that:

The Comunità online portal¹ through which active citizens and other interest parties can submit collaboration proposals, counts about 28,000 subscribing citizens and more than 1,800 associations. The portal also collects valuable information on activities carried out within each Collaboration Pact, since all applicants have to submit periodical accounting of expenses and reports regarding implemented activities and results obtained, accompanied by video, photographs, multimedia materials.

The city is beginning to evaluate the impact of the ensemble of the activities carried out within all the Collaboration Pacts through specific reports since they differ in terms of interventions undertaken, size, actors involved (see section 'Useful links').

Examples of signed collaboration pacts range from graffiti removal, which has involved both economic operators, students and educational institutions, to

1. <http://comunita.comune.bologna.it/beni-comuni>

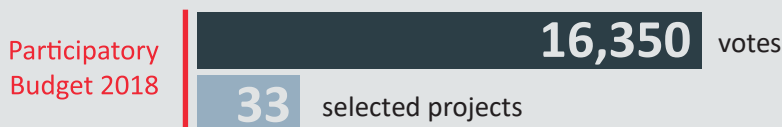
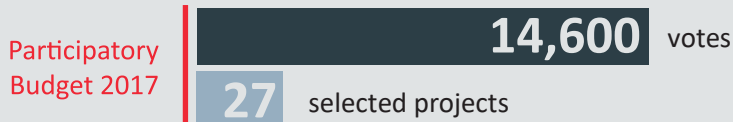
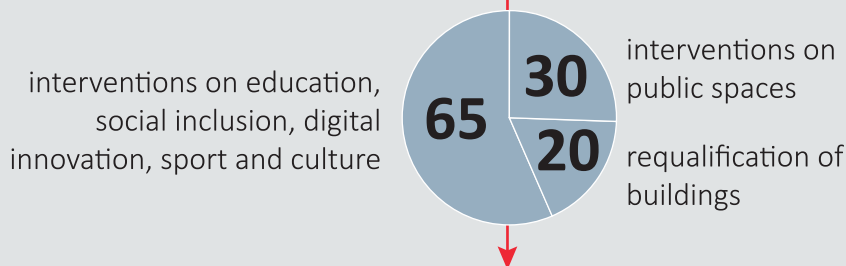
small cleaning interventions within parks, to cultural heritage valorisation activities, to the recovery of buildings for public enjoyment.

Within the administration, the introduction of the regulation has implied a profound change in terms of organisational culture and allowed the public administration to enter into relationships also with informal and private actors for the care of the city as a commons in a logic of shared responsibility.

Moreover, the experience of the Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons has resulted in the Participatory Budget, started in 2017 and for which €1 million of the whole City budget is allocated each year, with the objective to carry out interventions proposed by citizens, such

Between 2014 and 2018 Bologna has participated in 470 collaboration pacts involving 10,000 citizens

Participatory Budget 2017 **70** City Labs proposed



as extraordinary maintenance, requalification and reorganisation of spaces, public works, etc. in six specific areas of the city.

As an example, the first experimentation carried out during 2017 has foreseen 70 City Labs and has brought to 30 proposals on interventions on public spaces, 20 proposals on requalification of buildings and 65 proposals on education, social inclusion, digital innovation, sport and culture.

During City Labs participants have also drawn attention to 12 priorities, which represent the main

needs of the city from the point of view of citizens, and which have been reported in a public document (see the 'useful links' section).

In 2017, this process led to 27 projects considered sustainable and in line with the Regulation and a total of around 14,600 votes, numbers which increased in the second year of the Participatory Budget, ending with 33 feasible projects admitted and around 16,350 votes.



Transferability

It is not just introducing a regulation. The introduction of the concept of 'shared management' also requires an internal cultural change within the administration. Assigned staff had to be specifically trained.

The main dissemination channel is the Comunità online portal, where all Collaboration Pacts, together with all other collaborative projects and initiatives, are mapped, mainly along three themes:

- ▷ DO_TOGETHER - shared care of public spaces, underground mini-islands, recycling, street lighting, clean urban environment, work against vandalism etc.
- ▷ LIVE_TOGETHER - projects with an innovative approach on many issues (sustainable mobility, community well-being etc.)
- ▷ GROW_TOGETHER - projects in which public places become collaborative spaces and engines of economic development, as well as plans to provide the town with a digital infrastructure network, to promote Bologna as the City of Food and renew the relationship between the university and the city.

Comunità is not only a tool through which the collaborative projects of the city are mapped and reported. It has been conceived as a social media platform with civic goals, fostering active engagement and collaboration among citizens and other stakeholders. A section is, for example, devoted to projects looking for support. Those that subscribe to Comunità also have to sign a charter to share the values that underpin the online community.

Management level and partners

In 2012 Bologna set up the 'Administrative simplification and promotion of active citizenship' office, which follows the implementation of the regulation and the subscription of Collaboration Pacts. It employs eleven people – a team of five who make up the coordination office, and a team of six each of whom is assigned to one of Bologna's six districts. Moreover, at district level, two to three reference people evaluate collaboration proposals which have a direct impact on the district. While the municipality assigns about €150,000 from the municipal budget each year to support the pacts, citizens, associations and private partners contribute both with their voluntary work and with additional financial resources.

The municipal support can also take different forms of in-kind support such as exemptions in terms of fees and local taxes; access to and free temporary use of municipal spaces; provision of supplies and free loan of personal protective equipment; assignment of municipal employees; training; advertising, promotion and visibility actions; procedural support in case of permits or initiatives of promotion and self-financing (like crowd-funding).

The interest of private players in entering into Collaboration Pacts stems from the fact that the interventions carried out allow their work to be more profitable (for example, in case of portico cleaning for merchants), and assist them in exercising corporate social responsibility.

Budget and financing

Direct allocation from the city, 100% of the budget is municipal.

Contact person

Donato Di Memmo
donato.dimemmo@comune.bologna.it

Useful links

Collaboration Pacts homepage: <https://bit.ly/2kQ3q73>

The English version of the Regulation is available at: <https://bit.ly/2DNxWtR>

2017 Report on the promotion of active citizenship (referring to the period 2012 – 2017): <https://bit.ly/2lmWqzg>

Participatory Budget homepage: <https://bit.ly/2gctTzr>

Document on main needs of the city elaborated during city labs: <https://bit.ly/2GHIOWn>

