

NAPLES

The target area covers the Quarteri Spagnoli and the Sanità district, both dating from the 17th century within the historic centre. The Quartieri (15,000 inhabitants), while retaining the original layout, have been transformed into a working-class settlement, undergoing a rapid densification process. Prostitution, micro-crime and widespread degradation characterise the area, against the presence of numerous small-scale commercial and handicraft activities.

The Sanità district (25,000 inhabitants) has always had the feature of being a peripheral area of the historic centre.

Both districts show an advanced degree of building degradation, extremely high unemployment levels and particularly low educational levels, as well as high rates of dependence on submerged labour and illegal jobs.

The search for integration

In the programme for Naples, integration has been conceived in various dimensions. From the standpoint of works carried out, the model adopted is one used also in other cities: the rehabilitation of an abandoned building has been accompanied by the start-up of new services implemented in a first phase using temporary premises and then transferred to the new headquarters in the upgraded building. Another nexus has been the combined measure of the physical renewal of roads and squares (with the remaking of the sub-services and attention paid to the decorum of public spaces) and the incentives offered to craftsmen and traders who have submitted a credible renewal project often foreseeing, together with the consolidation and/or upgrading of the firm, works to renovate and improve the premises.

The rehabilitation of urban spaces - as in various other Italian programmes - is guided by a basic methodological assumption: the pinpointing of roads and squares that can constitute circuits in renewed areas (sub-services, paving, urban furniture, new public lighting, renewal of the decorum of the "commercial hub"), so as to induce imitative effects by the owners of the buildings overlooking said roads, and to attract investments and/or the location of new social and economic actors, which - without arriving at actual social replacement - constitutes a useful means of urban renewal, by means of representing social diversification.

Forms of promotion of participation

The participation of the inhabitants and of intermediate actors has been brought about in two ways. To identify the actions to be foreseen, the heads of the administration have availed themselves of the indications given by experts, associations and groups operating in the territory concerned by the projects. For certain measures, it has been necessary to make a further check of the proposed action by a prolonged and in-depth survey of local parties.

For the actions foreseen in Measure 3, a large part being of periodic maintenance, it has been preferred to use mainly the professional resources available within the administration or to retrieve - as in the case of the work on the "Museum of Totò" - projects already drawn up and complying with the programme objectives, permitting savings to be made in terms of time and money.

State of progress and problems that have emerged

All the infrastructural and economic/social initiatives programmed have reached a good stage of progress. Also the renewal projects for (above all) handicraft and commercial enterprises have reached a good point and within the year all the benefits foreseen in the calls for bids will have been granted.

The services of innovative type provided within the framework of Measure 2 are all under way and offer the project areas an effective quantitative and qualitative improvement in the level of opportunity offered to the local population, apart from dozens of jobs for operators in no-profit enterprises involved in carrying out the activities.

Many of the physical works are already visible and the construction sites on the plots started at a later moment are in full activity. In the forthcoming months it will already be possible to observe the visual effect of the works, and the results in terms of liveability and the reactions of the population. At the end of the year the campaign of information and of making known the results through multimedia technologies will be started.

First indications of the effects of local development, urban improvement and social cohesion

Thanks to the urban renewal projects, to the initiatives offering new services and to the incentives for economic activities, the area has assuredly received a strong impetus for social cohesion and local development. Significance attaches to the investment made by a private party for the rehabilitation of a former convent in the Quartieri Spagnoli to be used for hotel purposes; said investment was made only after the road had been completely upgraded by the URBAN programme.

Assessment of the degree of involvement of the administrative structure

For the implementation of the programme in Naples a joint group of departments and services was mobilised, and looked after the carrying out of the programme. The municipality availed itself to a considerable extent of external consulting services and there was intense involvement and exchange of experiences with technicians and officials of the administrative structure. In spite of the size and subdivision of the municipal enterprise there are elements for stating that the implementation of the programme explicitly took on the value of an opportunity for the involvement of offices and sectors of the administration, revealing itself as a new experience even though it was not always possible to achieve a real integration of different functions, competencies, procedures and approaches.

Exchanges with other URBAN cities

The responsible officials and the technicians engaged in the carrying out of the programme took part in many meetings at national and international level, for an initial exchange of experiences. It is however singular that a programme promoted by the European Union provided the opportunity to make a positive encounter between the various administrations of the Italian cities which in conditions of ordinary management hardly ever manage to meet. Parallel with the activities foreseen by the sub-programme, the technicians of Naples participated also in the additional initiatives adopted by the Surveillance Committee (the "anti-violence" net, and the feasibility study of the proposed RSA model). Special interest attached to conference held in Dublin in September 1999, where the idea was first put forward of a pilot project between the cities of Dublin and Naples, to be proposed to the European Union for the purpose of working on common projects through a real exchange of the persons involved.

Creation of ad hoc structures with the role of interface between administration and project area

The whole programme has been built up on a number of basic assumptions: the effectiveness of the new urban policies with a view to renewal and local development requires technicians and promoters of local development to be mobilised and to assume interaction with the inhabitants as their specific mission. For both the social and the economic measures three offices have been organised (social, labour and enterprise) with the mobilisation of young graduates or other technicians with a highly pertinent professional profile, and with specific “relational” competencies, who manned the offices which act as a sort of permanent reference for local families, young people and economic operators who have to “intercept” the services. In its very first version the entire programme pivoted on putting structures of this type into operation, within the framework of experimentation by new local development agencies at district scale.