

CATANIA

The object of the programme is the districts of the historic centre, i.e. Civita, S. Cristoforo, Antico Corso and Angeli Custodi (58,000 inhabitants, about one-sixth of the total population).

The area, where extremely rundown housing rubs shoulders with buildings of considerable architectural value, has been afflicted by considerable processes of environmental, urban planning and socio-economic decline following the shift of economic life in the '50s and '60s, to other urban districts.

The general condition of malaise of the population presents a number of specific characteristics: petty crime and mafia control of the territory; a non-EU population; and scholastic dispersion.

Publicising and participation

The participation of external actors in the administration has taken place through forms of publicising and calls for bids; publicising, which has assumed very comprehensive forms in the dissemination of information on the contributions to handicraft enterprises, has witnessed an alternation of television and radio spots, wall posters, folders and banners.

There have been innovative characteristics in the dissemination of the results of the structural part of the programme through the multimedia exhibition "The Catania to Come", which has acted as a stimulus to reflection on the ongoing changes in the city and on the need to make the citizen ever more a participant in these transformation processes.

Implementation

Measure 1-Start-up of new economic activities

The actions undertaken have been subdivided into two phases:

- a survey which has supplied a qualitative description of the area and of the priority needs of entrepreneurs, carried out by SDA Bocconi of Milan;
- the disbursement of contributions to investments for small handicraft and industrial enterprises in the target area, aimed at increasing their capacity to withstand market pressures and to comply with environmental, tax and labour regulations. The contributions to investments for enterprises have been directly managed by the municipality, which saw to the selection criteria for enterprises and to disbursements. The handicraft firms allowed the URBAN contribution number 150, of which 65% are newly established and 35% already operational.

Measure 2-Training, Employment and Social Services

The measure proposes two lines of intervention, the first one aimed at the creation of a Municipal Centre called "Local Employment Mission" (MILO), for information and guidance concerning work, and the second one for the carrying out of social-educational activities and assistance to persons exposed to the risk of being marginalised and excluded from the labour market.

1) MILO (Local Employment Mission)

Description of the measure:

Creation of a centre for information and consulting services on work, training and enterprises

Progress made:

A team of three experts on the labour market and guidance (a coordinator and two operators), selected by means of a public notice and evaluation of qualifications, backed by municipal personnel, is available to young persons five days a week

2) Training courses

Description of the measure:

Running of training courses to increase training opportunities for persons resident in the area, and to try out formative circuits for independent work.

Progress made:

The URBAN office has drawn up five training courses, management of which has been assigned, with a proper bid notice, to training centres: fish production experts; Linguistic-cultural mediators; Biological agricultural development agents; Social tourism operators; Student and youth tourism operators.

3) Social-educational and recreational activities for youngsters of school age

Description of the measure:

The measure foresees activities carried out in the schools of the URBAN area and recreational activities during the summer period.

Progress made:

The initiatives promoted are:

- the establishment, in 9 schools of the area, of 46 educational workshops which have been attended by 3,970 juveniles for the following activities: drama, information technology, journalism, ceramics, music, dance-therapy, image education;
- initiatives to counter juvenile malaise and dropping out from school, with “extra-curricula” educational projects”;
- educational-recreational activities during the summer holiday period.

4) Social-educational centre for juveniles and polyvalent centres of youth aggregation

Description of the measure:

The measure foresees the financing of three Juvenile Centres and three Centres for adolescents with the following aims: educational support, prevention of juvenile malaise, socialisation of young persons in the Centre and within the territory where they live, development of the integration process between school, social-assistance services and volunteer associations in the area.

Progress made:

The Centres are managed by private associations selected with public tenders.

The initiative, lasting 16 months, has proved particularly effective as it has acted as an alternative to normal schools, attended by particularly demotivated youngsters as an oppressive experience. Some of the latter, of particularly difficult type, have been recuperated and a climate of solidarity and mutual respect has been created.

5) Peoples House: Multiethnic service centre

Description of the measure:

Creating a Peoples House to improve conditions of life of non-EU immigrants and to foster integration into the city's social fabric.

Progress made:

An information office has been established for non-EU immigrants, providing information on residence permits, family reunification, workers' rights, and so on.

Language courses for foreigners have also been started, and a multiethnic library opened.

Measure 3- Infrastructures and environment

The objective of the measure is to contribute towards social integration and mobility within the districts affected by the URBAN project.

The measure foresees two typologies of measures, one for works mainly of an infrastructural nature, connected with the achievement of the objective pursued, and the other one relating to measures on urban mobility.

Description of the measures:

Restructuring of the following buildings:

- *Former cinemas "Concordia" and "Midulla" – Citizen service centres.*

The buildings will accommodate the Local Employment Measure, and act as the headquarters for coordination of activities for juveniles and adolescents resident in the districts concerned.

- *Building owned by the University, a former church (Chiesa della Purità)*

URBAN is co-financing the construction of an Auditorium and the restructuring of a number of premises to be used for recreational and cultural purposes for the inhabitants and legal assistance to the non-EU population.

- *Building owned by the University: "Multifunctional Linguistic Centre" in Via Dusmet*

The building is intended as a Laboratory for language training, to be attended mainly by immigrants not enrolled in the University.

- *Via Biblioteca*

Upgrading of an area jointly owned by the Municipality and the University, a public green area situated in a zone accessible to the public.

- *Purchase of ecological minibuses*

The purchase of seven electrical minibuses with which to carry out transport in favour of adolescents and the poorer members of the URBAN area.

Progress made:

Works are already in progress to restructure the buildings and to upgrade the green area.

The seven ecological minibuses have been purchased and a convention is being drawn up with the Municipal Transport Company for management of the service.

The services to be provided by the university are presently in part offered by the Peoples House and in part of the university.

Measure 4-Support for local decision-making power

With this measure it is intended to set up a district technical services centre

Description of the measure:

Creation of an information archive, Territorial Information System (TIS) and all network infrastructures present in the district

Progress made:

Supply of the instruments to set up the TIS has been awarded and local networks already established in the URBAN District offices.