

CATANZARO

The target area is the historic centre, with the districts of Fondachello, Coculi, Pianicello and Gracia (about 14 sq.km), which has undergone a slow process of depopulation (at present approximately 10,000 inhabitants).

The situation of the area is critical because of its progressive decline in terms of town planning, environment, and social and economic factors, which has caused accentuated conditions of marginalisation, of economic, political (being subordinate to other areas), social (lack of services) and cultural type (loss of a cultural identity).

The potentials consist in the joint presence of considerable public assets and a private building fabric which, in spite of the accentuated decline, can still form an appreciable basis for relaunching the city's historical and cultural tradition.

Implementation

As far as the various measures are concerned, more progress has been made with the infrastructures, some of which have been completed. The other activities, such as the disbursement of grants to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) operating in the historic centre, and the activities of the Socio-cultural and Economic Centres, started in the second half of 1999, are now in the implementation stage.

None of the measures under way constitutes a risk to the success of the project. In fact, even the measures aimed at a number of beneficiaries (e.g. SME and handicraft firms) are going ahead at a good pace. The Municipality is constantly monitoring the course of expenditures, so as to be able to adjust the priority ranking promptly if need be.

Integration of measures of a physical nature and those of a socio-economic nature

A high degree of integration among the various measures is a feature of the project : in fact, the central part foresees the carrying out of restructuring and upgrading works in which Municipal Centres have been set up to serve the population. These centres are managed by personnel taken on by the Municipality for a fixed period. Led by a Centre Head acting as coordinator, in their two years of activity they are conducting in the field actions to update and form specific competencies in the sector of reference.

The strategic objective is the revitalisation of the historic centre, which is attractive architecturally speaking but constantly undergoing slow socio-environmental erosion. The municipal administration has decided to take up the innovative approach proposed by URBAN, promoting the recuperation of the historic centre centred on the creation of a cultural and social fabric able to induce a multiplying effect on investments in public and private structures.

The degree of interconnection of the activities is considerable, and indeed in the whole project set-up there is not a single measure that is not synergetic with the others in terms of social or economic impact. Very probably, the fact of having identified a not very extensive portion of the city, with fairly homogeneous infrastructural and service needs, as the project area, has facilitated the possibility of connecting the various measures.

By way of example, there is the Piazza Fontana Vecchia area where, with a series of measures that have affected all the Urban axes, work is going ahead on restructuring a complex of architectural interest (formerly AMAC), on transferring there a centre of social “animation”, managed by human resources trained by the project, on shifting out an activity causing pollution, and on starting urban reorganisation.

The induced effects

The historic centre now has a better organised and more qualified urban planning aspect than in the past. The ensemble of URBAN structural measures has had a clearly visible effect for the population’s quality of life: in particular, turning a number of squares and streets into pedestrian precincts; the rehabilitation of San Giovanni, now the hub of service activities for the population; and the works on Via Bellavista and the shifting of a number of polluting activities, are giving back to the city centre its original aspect.

These infrastructural works have quite certainly had the result of increasing the property values in the historic centre. The effects of the measures not of a town-planning nature will become fully appreciated within two years. Reference is made to the service activities addressed to the local population, aimed on the one hand at enlivening the area with a series of measures of attraction (excursions, exhibitions, shows and displays, and information seminars for firms), and on the other hand at offering professional-type support for the categories most at risk (the young, the old, families in straitened circumstances).

In the same way, the incentives granted to more than 50 small firms, to open or strengthen corporate activities in keeping with the Municipality’s development strategy, have had a dynamic effect on the business fabric, but in the short term will have to achieve an even more appreciable effect on the employment market. In fact, special attention has been given, in selecting the beneficiary firms, to the concrete possibilities the firms have of generating new jobs. In this case, too, the Municipality is constantly monitoring the situation, to avoid any substantial differences between the forecasts and the actual situations in terms of fresh employment. Should any serious risk factors become evident for a number of firms in this sense, the first thing envisaged is the stepping up of the assistance service by the URBAN Centre for services to enterprises, followed, if necessary, by the cancelling of the contributions and therefore an adjustment of the access ranking.

The Special URBAN Office

The project has had a positive impact on the organisation of the Municipality. First and foremost, at the level of its structure and its functions, as its management has been entrusted to a Special URBAN Office for Catanzaro. This office, which comes under the Public Works sector, is of an intersectoral character and works for the coordination of the various measures which involve also the Economic and Productive Activities, Social Services, and Culture sectors.

Furthermore, the necessity of concerted action in the implementation phase is the second factor of impact on the organisation of the administration, as it has often required the pinpointing and the application of working methods and procedures approved by a number of municipal sectors and offices. In this sense, URBAN’s Special Office has taken on the task of making proposals for the coordination of the requisite information flows and reaching

agreement, and on a number of occasions has succeeded in integrating intersectoral work groups.

Six population service centres come under this office. The creation of these was financed with URBAN, from both the structural and the intangible angle: premises, equipment, professional qualification of the work units and management of activities.

The objective is to create conditions of use such that when the project ends the activities carried out by these Centres will be strongly requested by their respective target groups. Under these conditions, the administration will decide whether to opt for a management contract or the absorption of the Centres into the municipal services.

Financial participation by private parties

The financial participation of private parties has taken place only for the granting of incentives to Small and Medium Enterprises and to craftsmen. Although it is not as yet possible to quantify exactly the contributions made by private parties in economic terms, a private disbursement equal to around 10% of the total of the measures co-financed by the ERDF may be foreseen.

