

# ID 1522 | SPACES FOR LOCAL WELFARE. HOW PLANNERS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE SOCIAL SERVICES MORE INCLUSIVE

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATION, ACTIVATION, LOCALIZATION

The combined effect of economic reorganization processes, the increasing precariousness in the job market and the shrinking of the national welfare systems, have progressively eroded traditional social protection measures and exacerbated the traits of social fragility in many European cities. The long phase of economic recession is linked both to the general worsening of the economic conditions of large parts of the population, and to the austerity policies and the drastic reduction of public expenditure on welfare. Devolution processes have played a significant role in reshaping the European welfare systems, underlining the relevance of the local dimension in the welfare policies and in the structure of social inequalities. The consequences are even more evident at the local scale, where local governments are facing the need of more adequate and effective welfare measures and policies with scarcer resources<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the ageing of the population, increasing migrations flows, the more frequent mobility of the individuals and the impoverishment of many families have generated new heterogeneous needs, mining the traditional welfare systems and the administrative treatment of the needs. Meanwhile, the number of actors involved in the governance of social policies has increased, highlighting at the same time the potential of innovation and the limits in responding to these new challenges (Bricocoli, Sabatinelli, 2016). This new panorama seems to orient the social policies towards three interrelated criteria: integration, activation, localization. These aspects, variously articulated, are addressing the social policies toward the interactions of different sectors (public, private, third sector) and subjects (social housing, new fee-paying or shared services, light forms of assistance and care, private company welfare services, etc.), promoting the autonomy of the recipients and the resources that can be activated at the local level (Kazepov, 2010). In addition, a renovated attention to the spatial dimension of social services and its generative power (Bifulco, Vitale 2003; de Leonardis, 2003), mainly referred to the territorial contexts in their material and tangible sense, often inspires and orientates ideas and resources for innovative projects (Bricocoli, Sabatinelli, 2016).

This contribution aims at analysing the contents and the outcomes of an experimentation led by the Municipality of Milan and currently under completion. The project deals with the reorganization of the access to social services in the city, with a particular focus on the home-based services. In this context, the Municipality is the leader of a partnership of 16 actors that includes the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, affiliation of the authors of this contribution, who have been directly involved in the design and implementation of the project.

### 1.2 WEMI: A KEY PROJECT IN THE PANORAMA OF THE REFORM OF WELFARE POLICIES

The welfare system in the city of Milan is organized in different sectors; competences, responsibilities and resources are strictly divided between Departments, Sectors and Central Directions. The social services and policies' provision has been traditionally organised in pillars on a category-based system, rigid and separated in its articulation. According to this structure, each category – which represents a sociodemographic profile or a specific need (e.g. the elderly, adults in difficulty, disabled, etc.) - corresponds to specialized municipal offices with distinct staff and targeting particular needs. This organizational model, quite common in local governments across the Country, has been put under

<sup>1</sup> The National Fund for Social Policies has reduced from 1,884 billion euros in 2004 to 344,17 billion in 2013, a reduction of the 80%. Since 2007 the financial resources of the Italian municipalities have decreased of almost 15,8 billion euros. (Anci Lombardia, 2015).

discussion and, starting from 2012, the Milano city government has been implementing a significant reform. A main objective of the reform was to better face the tensions between the new social needs, expressed or still unveiled, and the provided answers, often inadequate or inappropriate. This re-organisation has been developed thanks to the Welfare Development Plan of the city of Milan (i.e. Piano di sviluppo del welfare della città di Milano), a strategic instrument introduced by the Department of Social Policies<sup>1</sup> starting from 2011. Based on an extensive analysis of current and perspective sociodemographic trends and on the composition of public expenditure for social care and services, the document draws provisions and strategic orientations for the development of local welfare policies. Along with the implementation of the plan, the Central Direction for Social Policies has modified the category-based system, substituting the existing sectors with three new transversal areas, that correspond to the different articulation of the action of social services: residential, territorial and home-based (in Italian Residenza, Territorialità, Domiciliarità) (Ghetti, Dodi, 2014). The system has been structured in two different levels: a first level dedicated to basic and preliminary access, aimed at reaching out and welcome all the citizens who express a need into the different locations spread in the city, without any restriction of category; a second level where, if necessary, entitled citizens could be addressed and benefit from more specialized services and structures. (Bricocoli, Palazzo, Sabatinelli, 2016).

Within this reorganization process, in 2015 the Municipality of Milan was the project leader (in partnership of 16 partners including public, private and social enterprises and two university departments), of the project Welfare di Tutti (i.e. Welfare for all), which was successfully submitted to a competitive call - Welfare in azione (i.e. Welfare in Action) - promoted by a Bank Foundation (Fondazione Cariplo) funding innovative community based projects. The project, named WeMi (acronym for Welfare-Milan and We-Milan), aims at overcoming the fragmentation of local welfare and at innovating the responses to a more diverse demands and needs, that still struggle to be represented and satisfied by the existing canals. Within the field of providing home-based services, WeMi is structured in different actions, developed in parallel by various working groups, heterogeneous in terms of professional backgrounds and competences.

A general objective of the project is to favour and support an access to welfare services by a wide range of citizens, including those who may be wealthy (and therefore not entitled to social assistance) but still bearing difficulties and expressing needs. With the goal of improving accessibility to the of home-based services which are provided by public and non profit organisations under the head of the City, two main projects have been conceived. An online platform ([wemi.milano.it](http://wemi.milano.it)), which gathers the offer of home-based services provided by 58 cooperatives and associations and certified by the Municipality of Milan has been designed and implemented. Moreover, the project introduced the idea that new approach and reorganisation as well as a better accessibility to welfare services needed symbolic and concrete artefacts that witnessed the attempt of redefining the interaction between welfare services and the citizens. Three WeMi spaces (i.e. Spazi WeMi), located in different districts of the city (Municipio 8, Municipio 6, Municipio 5) were designed and organised with the aim of experimenting new solutions in the physical and organisational setting of social services. WeMi spaces are places where citizens are welcomed and oriented in the access to the services on the website, listened and supported in finding answers and solutions to their needs and where a specific emphasis is put on the promotion of new forms of shared services that could allow reducing costs through the aggregation of the demand. Laboratories for the creation of condominium-based, corporate and scholastic welfare services, have been developed in specific places (schools, condominiums, offices) with the purpose of better understanding emerging needs within the daily life of citizens.

The authors have been directly involved<sup>2</sup> in the different phases and actions of the project, with a particular reference to the conception and design of the WeMi Spaces; this has allowed a close observation of the intertwining between organizational change and the spatial organisation (at the urban and architectural scale) of local welfare services and has encouraged further reflections on the creation of more inclusive welfare policies.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2016, with the elections of the new Mayor, the Department has been named "Department of Social Policies, Health and Rights and the mandate confirmed to Pierfrancesco Majorino.

<sup>2</sup> The working group of the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies has involved Massimo Bricocoli and Stefania Sabatinelli (coordinators), Benedetta Marani, Lorenzo Consalez and Francesco Curci, who collaborated to a first phase of the works.

## 2 THE SPACE FOR SERVICES

### 2.1 A STARTING POINT: WHICH SPACES AND PLACES FOR WELFARE?

The topic of welfare services and urban public equipment is a central dimension within the history and the development of the urban planning practice. The Italian normative introducing urban planning standards, which played a key role in the whole planning discipline and in the design of welfare spaces, is about to celebrate the 50th anniversary. While the role of the space in the design, production and provision of social services is a topic of fundamental relevance, it is rather under-investigated by urban planning research (Pomilio, 2009; Munarin e Tosi, 2012; Caravaggi e Imbroglini, 2016). The physical features of the services, in terms of geographical collocation and accessibility, the dispositions of functions and activities (setting) and the furniture (artifacts) are essential elements in the generative power of an organization (Gagliardi, 1990; Bricocoli, 2003; Bifulco, de Leonardis, 2003;). This aspect is even more relevant in the context of the welfare reform introduced by the Municipality of Milan. The new Milanese welfare model brings along the idea of an extension of welfare services: both from the “bottom”, involving the most in need subjects that struggle to access the traditional services and structures, and from the “top”, addressing those citizens who are not entitled to social assistance but ask for care and express social needs. Therefore, the topic of the access, in a metaphoric and material sense, represents a key issue. In this direction, the project Welfare di Tutti laid the basis for a new reflection on the dimension of the virtual access (the web platform to access the services) and of the physical access, through the creation of the WeMi Spaces. During the spring 2015, a working group coordinated by Massimo Bricocoli and Stefania Sabatinelli organized the training course “Spaces and Places for Welfare”. The course, addressed to the operators that would be involved in the project, has been structured to deepen and exchange knowledge on the relations between the services, social work and the spatial dimension. Starting from the concrete reference to practices and programmes<sup>1</sup>, through the presentation of different contributions and explorations brought by the participants, a variety of spaces for services and the material contexts of welfare have been observed and analysed. From these confrontations, a critical panorama has emerged: most of the spaces for welfare appear inappropriate for their physical or functional features, unattractive for their neglected aesthetic, often located in structures owned by the Municipality, Third Sector cooperatives or Religious Institutions. These spaces contribute to increase the stigmatization of social services (and of their recipients), underlining their category-based access. Through examples and references to Italian and European contexts, the course has investigated different ways of rethinking the spaces for welfare both in terms of content (which functions and setting) and in terms of form (which furniture and artefacts). From this experience, in Autumn 2015, a laboratory of collective design was born to define the activities of the future WeMi Spaces and their spatial solutions.



Figure 1 – WeMi SanGottardo and RAB in Corso San Gottardo 41, Milan  
 Source: authors' archive 2016

<sup>1</sup> Some meaningful images of this experience will be presented during the AESOP Conference

## 2.2 THE WEMI SPACES

WeMi SanGottardo, WeMi Capuana, WeMi Trivulzio represent the spaces of the new Milanese welfare. The first, located in Corso San Gottardo 41, a central neighbourhood of the city, is a hybrid space in which the social operators work alongside a literary café. The second is located in a small square in the peripheric Quarto Oggiaro public housing estate and is an extension of an already existing office of third sector services. The third space is coexisting with “CuraMi”, an existing service dedicated to the research and the offer of caregivers located in Pio Albergo Trivulzio, a historic institution in the field of elderly assistance. These spaces, chosen for their representativeness or for the attractiveness of the location, are dedicated to the offer of social services, to the concrete meeting with the citizens and to the access to the home-based services provided by third sector bodies certified by the Municipality (Bricocoli, Sabatinelli, 2016).

WeMi SanGottardo is certainly the most emblematic case. As mentioned before, it is located in a former shop on a main commercial street located in an historic neighbourhood of the city, becoming increasingly attractive for students and young workers. Inside this space, the social cooperative BarAcca, dealing with the job reinsertion of people with mental disease, manages a literary café that coexists with the activity of the social services. Four social workers employed by different local cooperatives collaborate with a social assistant from the Municipality and with a junior academic researcher and manage the service four hours a day, in shifts.

The space of WeMi San\_Gottardo was designed by the studio Consalez Rossi Associates Architects in order to emphasize the double identity of bar and welfare service, through the creation of two distinct but communicating spaces (Figure 2,3,4). The choice of this distribution derives from two different factors: from the one hand the social operators expressed the need of an intimate room for the weekly meeting of the team or for the private talks with the citizens; from the other, the urban planning rules required a distinct calculation of the square metres dedicated to the commercial activity and to the social services. In fact, the configuration of such hybrid space had no previous reference in the land use regulation of the city and required a very intensive work with the department for urban planning that resulted in a pioneering solution, creating a precedent for further experimentations in Milan and in other cities. Another purpose of the design was to make the double identity of the WeMi space visible from the outside: the double showcase facing the street (Figure 1), allows a wide but distinct view on both the bar and the welfare service. This aspect has been emphasized also by the contribution of the Department of Communication Design of Politecnico di Milano that is among the 16 partners of the project and that is responsible for the communication and the image of the project. Elementary geometries and bright colours were chosen to grasp the attention of who is passing through, while an interactive wall encourages the clients of the bar to deepen the knowledge of the project. These graphic tools are likewise repeated in all the WeMi spaces, even if adapting to their own physical features.

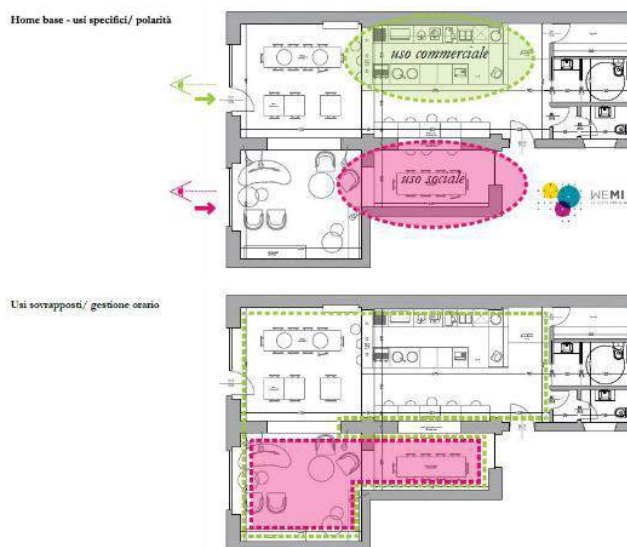


Figure 2 – The plan of Corso San Gottardo 41 and its multiple identity  
 Source: Consalez Rossi, Associate Architects

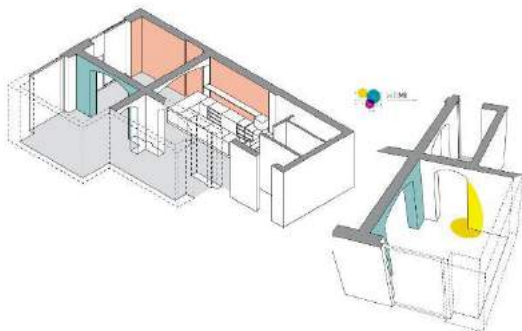


Figure 3 – Axonometries of Corso San Gottardo 41  
 Source: Consalez Rossi Associates Architects, 2016



Figure 4 – Section of WeMi San Gottardo with the insertion of the graphic intervention of the Department of Communication Design of Politecnico di Milano  
 Source: Consalez Rossi Associati, 2016



Figure 5 – Activities inside the space WeMi San Gottardo  
 Source: authors' archive, 2017



Figure 6 – Activities inside the space WeMi San Gottardo  
 Source: Authors' archive, 2017

The other two spaces are developed through the insertion of WeMi inside other already existent and consolidated realities. WeMi Capuana is located inside Spazio Agorà, a multifunctional centre active since the 90's in via Luigi Capuana, in Quarto Oggiaro (Municipio 8), a large neighbourhood characterized by a strong concentration of public housing and the presence of many fragile families. This space mostly provides services oriented to scholastic and parental support, with the help of the local cooperatives and associations and within the activities of Save the Children. Through the participation to WeMi, Agorà challenged itself in experimenting new ways of co-production and co-participation of services with those families who decide to shift from recipients to providers of the answers to their needs. Compared to WeMi San Gottardo, whose research of the location and design of the space required a strong process of concertation between the different actors of the project, WeMi Capuana is a reconfiguration of an already existent space. In particular, the project consisted in the redefinition of the reception desk and of the small adjacent office, with the purpose of making a more welcoming "first access". Similar considerations can be done for the third case, WeMi Trivulzio, located in the offices of the social cooperative Eureka. As in WeMi Capuana, the organization didn't provide a proper architectural project but a reorganization of the interiors and of the colours of an existing office.

### 3 A FIRST EXPERIMENTATION: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Even if it is premature to address the results and the outcomes of Welfare di Tutti on the long run, it is anyway relevant to underline some outstanding features of the project. As far as the process is concerned, the experience of cooperation and concertation between the municipality and the third sector bodies and other actors has been extraordinary, both in the creation of the online platform and in the design and definition of the new spaces of welfare. The governance asset in which the provision of services results from the action of a multitude of actors (public and private) led by the Municipality is made visible. While this overcomes the risk of pure externalization it also implies a proactive orientation of social services, that literally gained a showcase on the street, as a response to a diffused and consolidated reality

of inaccessible, unattractive and badly maintained offices. The WeMi spaces, in fact, are not only “showcases” for the homebased services but are developing into places of loose aggregation for citizens, where to express needs, set new relationships and create new solutions and services. The space in Corso San Gottardo, thanks to the presence of the bar and the strong influence of the managing social cooperative, has taken its first steps in this direction, becoming a major gathering point for most of the initiatives organized in the neighbourhood.

A beautiful, functional and welcoming space it's not only attractive for the citizens, that could reconsider the quality of the offer of public services, but also very meaningful for social workers, who are more willing to face the new challenges and to rethink their role and position in the community. Two are the main solicitations that seem relevant in perspective, with particular focus at the crossroads between welfare and urban planning policies: 1) the project has represented a precedent in the urban planning law, where the hybridization of the commercial and social uses have required a special agreement allowing further experimentations; 2) the Municipality of Milan is going to update and revise the Plan for Services (i.e. Piano dei Servizi) inside the more general local plan (Piano di Governo del Territorio). In the same period the procedures to develop the new Welfare Development Plan (i.e. Piano di Sviluppo del Welfare) would start. The experimentation of the WeMi project constitutes an important reference to challenge the possibility of integrating two different planning perspectives, until now operating in separate and dissociated ways. It is therefore evident that the extension and the possibility to repeat this innovative experience in the field of social policies is strictly bounded to the capacity of urban planning to receive and elaborate its solicitations, both to orient new policies based on diverse needs, and to provide the city with new and diverse places in which the local welfare is present and accessible.

#### 4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the 16 different partners involved in the project Welfare di Tutti for their contribution in understanding how the innovation on local welfare is challenging the role and the competences of the urban planning project. In particular, we would like to thank the coordinator of the project Doc. Cosimo Palazzo, his staff in the Municipality of Milan and the colleagues of the Department of Design of the Politecnico di Milano, coordinated by Valeria Bucchetti.

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## WEBSITES

WeMi, official website: <http://wemi.milano.it/>

# ID 1545 | SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES OF URBAN REGENERATION ON NEIGHBOURHOOD-SCALE: THE CASE OF SPANISH QUARTERS IN NAPLES

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social cohesion became a key issue for the European urban policies, supported by programmes aimed to the regeneration of deprived areas through a participatory approach (Fioretti, 2015). The social issue was definitely introduced into the debate about urban regeneration in the first half of 1990s, also because during the previous two decades, several urban areas across Europe experienced economic, social and environmental disadvantages (Wacquant, 2008; Cremaschi and Eckardt, 2011; et. al.). Within the urban regeneration policies and strategic planning cultural framework of the 1990s, «stakeholders involvements and civic participation in the public decision-making were often introduced by local governments as policy tools, through which to guide the urban transformation processes» (Saporito, 2016: 8). The trend was to convert participatory practices from episodic experiences to ordinary institutionalized practices in order to set up inclusive practices and collaborative tables among the complex network of stakeholders. Within this framework, the urban regeneration of those deprived urban areas looks at the social cohesion, in order to generate not only physical and urban transformations, but also to produce well-being, working on the improvement of local milieu and local resources, deterred by social exclusion processes that cross vulnerable neighbourhood. The attention to the participatory and inclusive practices paved the way for an combined policy framework between urban renewal and social cohesion, where the urban regeneration process can be defined through an area-based approach focused on the social issues, looking at the local welfare system (Andreotti et. al, 2012; Bifulco, 2015), that can be developed in order to generate well-being. According to these assumptions, the paper grounds its reflection on the implementation of the well-known European Community Initiative called URBAN (1st edition, 1994-1999) in a particular vulnerable urban area of Naples: the Spanish Quarters (in Italy known as Quartieri Spagnoli). According to the focal points of the Programme, URBAN at Spanish Quarters was aimed to regenerate a particular deprived urban area, located in the historical city centre. Although URBAN did not generate the expected results, its main strengths, in line with a local welfare approach (based on the combination of place-based and people-based initiatives), provides findings for a social perspective of urban regeneration on the micro neighbourhood-scale. According to these assumptions, the paper looks for the answers to the following research questions: how can we look at the social aspects of the urban regeneration process in a deprived neighbourhood? How important is the role of local milieu in this regeneration process? How the urban planners can work to include citizens' in an urban regeneration process? In this respect, the case of URBAN implementation on Spanish Quarters in Naples – an experience concluded two decades ago – provides some indications. The theoretical framework is an analytical bridge between the capability approach (Sen, 1992) and the territorialisation of local welfare policies (Kazepov, 2009; Clarke, 2008; Bifulco, 2015, 2016, 2017). The third chapter introduces URBAN Community Initiative, and the rest of the