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The Urban Lab of Europe !

The MAC Project Journal N°2

Project led by the City of Pozzuoli



**URBAN
POVERTY**



The MAC Project

The MAC project seeks to reduce urban poverty in the neighbourhood of Monterusciello, where poverty is understood in the social and economic sense and within the physical environment. Monterusciello is a new public housing district with over 22,000 residents struggling with low income and a high level of unemployment, spatially characterised by large unused spaces.

The proposal is designed to trigger a process of economic, entrepreneurial, and social development, together with the improving of the urban environment. The project will create a new agro-urban landscape which will radically transform the character of the neighbourhood: a landscape made of urban areas and agricultural land connected by a productive thread; the agriculture providing work opportunities, training and produce to the city; the city benefiting from the agricultural areas as gardens, thanks to the innovative techniques which will also increase the vegetation.

Thirty hectares of Municipal open areas will be transformed into farmland, developed through innovative techniques of permaculture, in order to spearhead an economic process and urban growth as a means to combat poverty. The project will have three pillars: 1) implementation of agriculture through innovative permaculture; 2) improvement of the urban environment; and 3) encouragement of entrepreneurship and employment.

The content of this journal does not reflect the official opinion of the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the journal lies entirely with the author.

Partnership:

- Comune di Pozzuoli
- Università degli Studi di Salerno - University
- Coldiretti Napoli - National Association
- Confagricoltura Napoli - National Association
- Agrocoltura - Private Company
- L'iniziativa - Associazione di promozione sociale - NGO
- Fondazione FORMIT - Research Center.

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1. Executive Summary

The Monterusciello Agro-City (MAC Pozzuoli) Urban Innovative Action works towards an ambitious goal of redeveloping the urban environment and fighting poverty in the Monterusciello district through the creation of a new, sustainable and productive agro-urban landscape. The partnership is in full implementation of the proposed workplan, and while it has successfully managed to overcome a considerable array of implementation challenges outlined in the first MAC Journal, as the project progresses, new demanding obstacles surface in the implementation process.

The second MAC Pozzuoli Journal covers the implementation and policy-related challenges which the consortia has faced in the six months following the submission of the first Expert Journal (October 2017), contextualizing management, communication, content, administrative and financial decisions taken by the MUA¹ Pozzuoli and its partners to ensure sound project progress and achievement of the period's goals: 1) establishment and activation of the „Agro Urban Center”, 2) the launch of the „Consulta Agro Urbana”, 3) the structuring and planning of the MAC three training paths; 4) internal and external cohesion and better management and communication actions.

A heartfelt thanks to the entire MAC partnership for promptly providing content about their ongoing specific activities and to Ph.Dc Sabina Leopa for proofreading the content of this 2nd Journal.

While considerable improvement from the first period is evident in all actions and results carried out by the MAC Partnership, the Journal uncovers and singles out three remaining open implementation challenges: the need to further improve administrative and operational context, to stimulate greater community involvement, and finally to reconcile proposal-stage ambitions with real implementation hurdles.

The MAC project is on an ambitious path towards launching the Piazza De Curtis and pilot agricultural sites regeneration, and at this key moment, the already-successful steps of developing governance (Consulta Agro Urbana), administrative, communication, training,

¹ Main Urban Authority

design/procurement and preliminary physical frameworks (Agro Urban Center in its temporary location) are laying a solid foundation to the next period's activities.

The overall success of the initiative hinges on the capacity of the partners to own the process: ownership of both successes and challenges, of individual tasks but also transversal actions. The need for a greater synergy has been understood and is to be expected in the third period.

2. Progress of the MAC Project

In the previous (first) issue of this Journal, the relevant dimensions and aspects of Urban Poverty in Monterusciello have been highlighted, as well as the peculiar genesis of this new town, which in its contemporaneity is perceived just as a peripheral spot of the vast metropolitan area of Napoli, but nonetheless one which in its initial conception had major ambitions.

- What is **changing** in Monterusciello?
- What kind of **leverages have been moved** by the Urban Innovative Action MAC (Monterusciello Agro City)?
- Which are the **new realistic ambitions** and how to get there?

The following chapters will provide us with inputs to be able to start formulating the first answers to these open questions. Clearly, at this stage of the project, we cannot have exhaustive

answers, but only begin to understand the contexts in which the definitive responses will be placed, which we will find only towards the end of the project.

Last summer (2017), the project had an acceleration and the partners started to coordinate their actions towards the MAC objectives fulfilment. To implement such a sui generis and inspired project requires to win different kind of inertias, especially in a weak territory, for long years plagued by multiple deprivation: To have the MAC project on the move is already a great sign of hope for Monterusciello's community. The first events have been held, a wider group of stakeholders has been mobilized and it is co-working with the official partners. Finally, the MUA has started to prepare the appropriate management structures both in terms of personnel and suitable spaces.

2.1. Faced challenges

The MAC project actually had somewhat of a slow start, but since August 2017, its engines have begun to roll. In the last six months many steps have been taken, even if the project has not yet acquired the rhythms and mechanisms to achieve the expectations expressed in the proposal phase. In other words, the MAC project has not yet reached the speed of implementation adequate to achieve all its objectives, but has acquired a step that allows us to detect the first progress.

After the 1st Expert on Site Visit (summer 2017), a list of actions to be completed has been provided to the MAC team. At that time, the following points were the open challenges to face in order to overcome the initial stasis phases and begin to coordinate the activities towards the achievement of project objectives:

- Create a **team** that supports the Project Manager in day by day management
- Establish and equip a **head office** for the management team
- Establish a venue for **training activities**
- Define the contents of the **training courses**
- Reclaim and prepare a first ground to start **farming activities**
- Optimize and share the **databases** related to the projects to be implemented among the partners.

In all these activities there has been clear progress, as at the time of the 2nd expert visit (December 2017) great progress has been done by the MAC team:

- With regard to the aspects relating to day by day management, the results are

encouraging. Excellent choice of management office (Agro Urban Center) for its central location and proximity to the place where the weekly market of Monterusciello is held

- Very clear is also the definition of the target for the training activities, in favour of the youth segment which reflects that age group close to the entry into the work context
- The first MAC event ([Il Tesoro di Monterusciello](#)) was well organized and saw the integrated action of local associations, the schools of Monterusciello together with the partners closely linked to the issues of urban agriculture
- Collection and sharing of data, for the project and generated by the project, are managed professionally through use of ad hoc data management tools and shared among partners.

The still open questions in December 2017 were that:

- Of creating synergy between the project partners and the definition of a second level partnership, that is moving from a form of involvement that looks more like a mobilization from the top of local actors, to a real participatory planning path, where it is possible to grasp the spontaneity and ideas of the local communities, of the citizens of Monterusciello
- Of harmonizing the times of the bureaucratic processes (public procurement) to use the land, with the necessary activities to be carried out on the land (especially the qualitative analysis of the land for the different foreseen agricultural purposes based on application of permaculture principles). On this point there is a problem in the MAC that is constantly open and not easy to solve, i.e. to synchronize the natural times of agricultural activities with the artificial times of the public administration.





Avvisi e Bandi

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MAC work and training related opportunities – [easily accessible online](#)

2.2. State of play

In the first three months of this year, the acceleration that characterized the MAC project in the second half of 2017 has become more substantial. Many activities have been started and collaboration within the partnership is being refined. The necessary mechanisms for effective interaction are spontaneously being defined, precisely because of the fact that dialogue must take place around the realization of concrete activities. Many of these activities requires the integrated work, at the same time, of more partners. This is a key moment for the success of the MAC project, as the interaction logics have been created: 1) among partners, 2) between partners and the wider group of stakeholders, and lastly 3) through the enlarged partnership, with the local community.

Progress is visible in the different component of the MAC structuring logical frame, specifically in:

- **Management and addressing of key challenge** (e.g. design and definition of the management guidelines and project control tools, the development of a shared participation format, with the aim of exposing the central themes of the project: the “MAC_lab”, publication of the first public tenders concerning essential services to set the MAC in motion, identification and realization of a first temporary headquarters for the Agro Urban Center, definition of the Consulta Agro Urbana).
- **Consolidation of the framework for communication** (e.g. numerous activities and strategies have been designed to promote and disseminate the activities of the MAC and generate a solid engagement lasting over time through the MAC generated social networks, moreover, local social networks were also analyzed in order to expand the dissemination activities of the MAC; development of the second major release of the website www.macpozzuoli.eu, creation of promotional materials, contacts with the media and subjects of interest, dissemination and coverage of multimedia material).
- **Structuring of the training activities** (e.g. planning of the three training paths, presentation of training activities to local schools, analysis and discussion with the Municipality on social and administrative priorities, definition of the profile of the students on the basis of the territorial data and the priorities and needs highlighted by the schools, the offices for the job and the partnership, definition of the didactic program through collaboration with managers and teachers of the local institutes, definition of the criteria for the allocation of benefits and related public and transparent tender processes).
- **Research and meeting with experts on innovative techniques for permaculture-based agriculture** (e.g. preparation of study programs for training/research in permaculture, ethical production and rural marketing; setting up of the permacultural Laboratory and of the laboratory of ethical production and rural marketing, promoting meetings on innovative and precision agriculture, organising workshops on ancient fruit plants and spontaneous herbs harvesting)
- **Research on the historical assets of the area** (e.g. identification, classification, valorisation of the archaeological heritage present in Monterusciello's areas)
- **Design of the works to be built or redeveloped**



Regarding the state of advancement of the

2.3. Open challenges

There are still many open challenges to face in the MAC project, and some of them have yet to be framed and understood as obstacles to a common path, which must be tackled by the partnership through the creation of true and appropriate synergies.

In fact, too often, the partners of the MAC project are not yet able to look outside their field of expertise and their activities. **Challenges are not yet fully “common challenges”, but they are “personalized”, or better “partnerized”.** It is necessary in the MAC project to move from “partnerized” to **partnered challenges**.

However, challenges can be resumed considering the following three main arguments connected to the MAC project’s implementation pathway:

- The **operational and administrative context**: overall management and public procurement related issues up to the MUA, clashes with partners, the local community’s temporal expectations (the need to get out from a bureaucratic and administrative impasse that had a great impact on the start of the project and which also created difficulty in the coordination between partners)
- A **greater involvement of the local population**, as well as a **stronger collaboration among all the partners** in the

design phases of urban regeneration works in Monterusciello, very significant and expressive is the photo that represents the councillor for urban planning of Pozzuoli, Prof. Roberto Gerundo, observing the plastic simulation for the regeneration project of Piazza de Curtis where the Agro Urban Center will be located.

participated management of the MAC, without delegating always to the MUA the responsibility that belongs to the partnership itself. The district of Monterusciello has been for years on the margins of the social and political life of the city, leading to a strong incidence of crime and urban poverty which made difficult all the actions of material and cultural regeneration

- Lastly, the **correspondence between the activities envisaged by the various Work Packages**, as conceived in proposal phase, and **their actual feasibility**.

The positive point is that the partnership is fully aware of this fact and is addressing these open issues by putting in place both the right attitude, but above all local planning tools suitable to successfully face these challenges.

The partnership is learning how to relativize their own development and opportunities related to the path within the project, with the key-path leading to the actual realization of the MAC’s objectives. The latter is only reachable through a constructive dialogue between the different partners. This dialogue can only take place if the partners learn to look beyond their field of expertise, and to adapt their knowledge and needs towards the path that leads to the achievement of objectives. This has happened partially due to the fact that:

- the MUA did not have well organized structures and spaces for day to day management yet
- the partnership was created around an innovative, creative, captivating and full of potential idea, but none of the partners had

ever collaborated before, together, in the problematic territory of Monterusciello

- the local community and a wider group of stakeholders had not been fully involved in the Monterusciello regeneration process.

3. First key achievements

As stated, from August 2017 until the end of March 2018, many results have been achieved in the MAC project. Some of these results are the first steps, which structure complex paths, while others are fundamental achievements. In particular, the two key results on which to base all future actions and projects are:

1. The establishment and activation of the [“Agro Urban Center”](#)
2. And the launch and formalization of the [“Consulta Agro Urbana”](#).

These two results mark a clear dividing line between what has so far been ambition, intention and the implementation of concrete and sustainable roadmaps to achieve the objectives that the MAC has set itself.

The **constitution of a Consulta Agro Urbana** (conceived in the spirit of having a permanent [“popular assembly”](#)), composed of citizens, representatives of the third sector and other stakeholders, **aimed at proposing support indications for participatory activities**. In particular, the objectives of the Consulta Agro Urbana are included in the following areas:

- Produce supporting indications for participatory research-action activities envisaged by the MAC project
- Representing the project stakeholders, in particular the residents of Monterusciello
- Supporting the MAC Partnership in the identification and management of the Second Level Partnership

- Supervise and publicise the expressions of interest put in place by the municipal administration, with the collaboration of the MAC Partnership, for the assignment of specific activities to institutions, local associations, groups of citizens and ensure maximum participation in the notices of specific territorial stakeholders
- In a most advanced phase of the project, on those soils identified as areas available for the implementation of the MAC remaining free, to facilitate the use of public soils for carrying out further agricultural-related development activities.

The MAC partnership, through the establishment of the Consulta Agro Urbana, can implement a communication strategy to be implemented through moments of active listening of the residents. Transversal activities to support the project activities. These actions, providing for the involvement of residents of the district, local associations, target groups, will be able to provide information about the needs and expectations of stakeholders and local communities. These indications will be of fundamental importance to outline the future strategy that will strengthen the social, economic and urban transformations already implemented with the implementation of the MAC, and to allow any changes and, or additions during the implementation.

The second relevant achievement is the institution, even if currently still in temporary

premises, of the Agro Urban Center. The Agro Urban Center is:

- A physical space to regenerate, and an accessible place to link the MAC project to the local community
- The result of the work of the partnership together with other local actors which are joining the project
- The operational brunch for the implementation of the MAC project both in

terms of day by day and content management.

The Agro Urban Center is currently established in a temporary space close to the place where weekly the local market is organized. Already, in this initial phase, the Agro Urban Center is looking for direct interaction with citizens in order to hold a constant dialogue useful to better set up the design and the implementation of the MAC initiatives and foreseen activities.



Visiting the temporary seat of the [Agro Urban Center](#)

The final location of the Agro Urban Center is the abandoned central square of Monterusciello under regeneration (Piazza De Curtis, see the chapter above). The main characteristics of the centre can be resumed as follows:

- As an **amplifier**: explaining how the MAC project is transforming Monterusciello and relating on new initiatives/projects generated/inspired by the MAC experience
- As a **receiver**: getting and elaborating suggestions coming from local community actors and citizens
- As a **permanent city-workshop**: organizing public debates on planning choices and promoting the dialogue between citizens'

issues and political decision making (shortcutting the territorial demand and the political offer, focus urban agriculture and promotion of km 0 products)

- It is going to work as an agro-urban factory: incubating innovative proposals and ideas coming from the community and from other practices, inventing just in time services, facilities and utilities for Monterusciello.

Finally, The Agro Urban Center is going to host the MAC Labs. The MAC Labs are opportunities for comparison with the various target groups supporting the dissemination of the project and its results.



MacLab#3, Festa del mandarino flegreo

MAC Labs are occasions of dissemination of design activities, including situations of participated research-action in order to communicate and sensitize the community on the aims of the project. Of course, the

participatory planning actions will be declined in a different way for content aspects depending on the target group to which they are addressed.

4. The way to go: next steps

The next steps to be taken in the MAC must take into account two aspects that still have much room for improvement in this phase of the implementation, namely:

- improving the dialogue and operational synergies within the partnership
- the streamlining and simplification of administrative-bureaucratic aspects.

As previously laid out, the MAC project has been advancing at a slow pace, with some amendments to the work plan and to formal requirements. Such kind of changes, or required evolutions, of the operational and administrative context, posed a main challenge to the implementation of the activities. While

the external environment proved to be interested and positively inclined towards the project's promised practical outputs, the administrative and formal challenges clashed sometimes with such expectations.

In addition to the administrative aspects, a priority will surely be to continue to improve the cooperation mechanisms within the project partnership, above all in view of the need to accelerate the actions proposed in the project. While partners seem to be ready and generally aware of the implementation needs, there is still work to do to make the cooperation effective. This process will be even a testing field for the

currently operating and innovative tools, namely the Consulta and the Agro Urban Center.

Furthermore, a key-challenge of the coming months will be to definitively involve the local community in the virtuous process of regeneration of the neighborhood, achieving planning actions to share with citizens, showing and spreading the important and positive actions of the MAC project. Certainly, the start of the activities on the land will facilitate this task, building a real perception of the envisaged transformation.

Another challenging, unusual and interesting aspect for the incoming period is represented by the will of the Municipality to proceed to the realization of the works through “lavori in economia”, thus avoiding the risks and the costs of realizing a single big contract. Lavori in economia means that below certain financial figures, works can be performed with direct

management by the public body. In this case, the institution replaces the company, taking charge of all the management activities necessary for the construction of the work: definitively a very good exercise and assumption of responsibility operated by the MUA.

Finally, from the strictly agricultural viewpoint, the aim will be to create integration between the moments of production that will give rise to the birth of innovative start-ups and generate virtuous relationships among all social actors. The MUA will initiate the apprenticeship scheme of 13 young workers, (7 direct farmers, 3 industrial experts and 3 economists respectively) which will constitute the first productive cell of the MAC BIOFABBRICA. They will be guided by experienced trainers that will transfer the principles of permaculture and the attitude of „learning by doing”.



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