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Session G1: How to govern stakeholder cooperation for resilient city-region food systems

Resilient urban food systems: Two good practices from Milan's peri-urban areas

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Abstract:

The paper presents two good practices on resilient urban food systems located in peri-urban areas of Metropolitan area of Milan: the "Parco delle Risaie - Rice Fields Park" and the "BuonMercato" (local bio-food market) of Corsico Municipality. The "rice fields park" project aims to enhance the traditional rice production and local rural landscape habitat through the development of market networks, biodiversity improvement interventions, leisure and multifunctional activities in Rice field Park areas. The "BuonMercato" market provides a space for bio-food distribution and seeks to develop a new model of agricultural production by establishing partnerships between farmers and consumer. The paper introduces a general framework on Urban-Rural Partnerships in Metropolitan Areas (INTERREG IV C program). Good practices will be compared and the conclusions underline lessons learned, success factors and drivers/barriers to the implementation of initiatives aiming the improvement of peri-urban areas.

Keywords:

Crosscutting policies, Governance, Peri-urban Areas, Resilience, Urban-rural Partnerships

1. URMA INTERREG IVc program

Urban Rural partnerships in Metropolitan Areas is an INTEERG IV C program (period 1/2012 – 12/2014). The overall objective of URMA is to promote urban-rural partnerships as a tool to strengthen the potential for innovation in European metropolitan areas. Specific axes of interest of URMA are:

- Interregional exchange of experiences on urban-rural cooperation and partnerships;
- Identification of different types of urban-rural partnerships and innovation in regional governance systems;
- Improving the effectiveness of regional and local policies in the field of innovation generation within urban-rural partnerships.

The URMA project involves nine Partners: HafenCity University Hamburg (Lead Partner), State Ministry of Urban Development and Environment Hamburg (BSU), Twente region (Municipality of Borne and City of Enschede), Institute of Urban Development Krakow, Westpomeranian Voivodeship, Tuscany Region, Lombardy Region and Pleven Regional Administration. The three Pilot cases developed are: Hamburg Pilot (trans-national corridor Hamburg- Jutland Region), Twente Region Pilot (re-organisation of food chain and urban-rural integration) and Lombardy Region Pilot on Milano EXPO2015.

2. Lombardy region Pilot on Milano EXPO2015: focus on peri-urban areas

2.1 Pilot Milano EXPO2015: introduction

Lombardy Region develops the Pilot on “Milan EXPO2015”. The site is a part of Milano metropolitan area (including the EXPO2015 transformations areas - Figure 1 and 2) and stands as interesting case for the analysis and development of urban-agricultural relations and strategies. The site includes part of Milano City and urban centres of medium and big scale and it is characterised by landscape and environmental values (like natural rivers bodies, channels and irrigation system result of an historical evolution), by significant presence of historical and architectural values (historical centres and heritage buildings). Agricultural landscape and production system are a relevant aspect in the site that is included in the Agricultural Park of South of Milan (PASM) and it is characterised by a relevant agricultural production system (high percentage of agricultural areas, numerous farms and a differentiated agricultural production).

2.2 Pilot issues and challenges

The main aim of Lombardy Region PILOT is to investigate the “peri-urban areas” with an integrated approach able to underline mutual relationships between environmental/metabolic flows, cultural/social values and social/economical opportunities. The Pilot case aims to find innovative approaches to land management towards environmental protection, reduction of soil consumption and valorisation of metropolitan territories and preservation rural elements in peri-urban-areas.

The challenges of the Pilot are the activation of a dialogue among stakeholders, to understand and strengthen the multifaceted experiences, projects, proposals (acting on the EXPO 2015) to identify the strengths/opportunities aspects and to understand the planning instruments and governance framework, to find solution in terms of crosscutting polices/actions.

A specific focus is the development of a definition of “peri-urban areas” through the study of the site context (based on GIS and Regional Database) including analysis and comparison of territorial aspects, of existing planning framework, of institutional projects and guidelines and of transformation trends and bottom-up proposals/initiatives. To characterise the peri-urban areas a focus is dedicated to the analysis of bottom-up initiatives and good practices. The good practices identified are Parco delle Risaie and BuonMercato of Corsico Municipality.

3. Parco delle Risaie (Rice Field Park)

3.1 Rice Field Park

The area of the Parco delle Risaie is located south of the Milan metropolitan area between the historical channels Naviglio Grande and Naviglio Pavese (Figure 3). The Association of “Parco delle Risaie” (rice field Park) was founded in 2008 by citizens and farmers located in the area. In numerous initiatives were involved: institutions (Lombardy Region, Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, Milan Municipality) and associations (cultural, environmental associations and Agricultural associations; the municipality of Milan has considerable agricultural surfaces and agricultural production).

Since 2008, thanks to the local initiatives, this “area” started to have a name (Parco delle Risaie). Since 2009 the Association has promoted events (family days, local products distribution ...) involving citizens, local communities and other associations with the aim to communicate the values of Rice Field Park.

During all events (public meetings, agricultural products markets, photograph events/shows) the Association with all peoples and stakeholders has developed a shared strategic vision for the “Parco delle

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Risaie". The Association obtained financial support of CARIPLO bank foundation for the developments of two projects (one on local communities involvement and one on the strategic projects detailed definition). As a result of the recognition and visibility (identity) obtained through the involvement and communication process, the Parco delle Risaie has also been recognised by the Institutions (Lombardy Region, Provincial District and Municipality of Milan). Currently, the Parco delle Risaie is not a "instituted" park but it is recognised in planning instruments.

3.2 Parco delle Risaie strategic vision

The project is a dynamic process that combines different instances and suggestions. The main goals of the project are:

- enhance and promote open spaces in the city, giving value to the agricultural character with the aim to deliver environmental and landscape services that today are only partially developed;
- enhance traditional rice production, strengthening its presence to ensure the continuity of the role of farmers in landscape maintenance.

The main strategies and projects are:

- green and nature improvement (actions/projects proposed: green infrastructures, improvement of quality/quantity of vegetation, improvement of existing ecological values and natural habitat, naturalisation of water bodies ...);
- agricultural production valorisation and integration between agricultural and urban contexts (actions/projects proposed: development of market networks with distribution points in urban markets, integration of local rice products in networks of agricultural food purchase, brand of local rice production);
- enhancement of leisure and multifunctional activities compatible with rural activities and landscape (actions/projects proposed: paths for children, "rural playground", restaurants, educational activities as organisation of cooking courses and the "rice street" project that is a path with educational/information points describing the different phases of rice production);
- enhancement of pedestrian and bicycle accessibility (actions/projects proposed: new connections and improvement of accessibility points; bike sharing service and thematic paths).

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4. BuonMercato (local bio-food market) of Corsico Municipality

The “BuonMercato” project is a initiative proposed by DERS - Distretto di Economia Solidale Rurale (district of sustainable rural economy) of South Rural Park of Milan (PASM). The main goal of the District is preservation and re-development of the Park and its agriculture (in PASM Park are present 47.000 acres of fields, 61 Municipalities, almost a thousand agricultural holdings).

DESR Association was founded in 2008 and involves citizens and stakeholders interested in promoting a “fair economy” in the Milan context. DESR territorial network includes a rich large of actors (Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale -self-sustained networks for agricultural products purchase, farms, ethical banks, associations, fair trade shops, two Municipalities ...).

“Buon Mercato” is an Association founded in 2010 (main stakeholders are: citizens, farmers of PASM, DESR, slow food and environmental associations, GAS, municipality of Corsico). The “physical market” (point of bio-food distribution – figure 4) was opened in 2010. Buon Mercato is a service center for social and solidarity economic initiatives organised and supported by BuonMercato association.

BuonMercato aims to promote lifestyles and behaviours of local community more sustainable and eco-friendly. The market supports short chains and 'responsible' consumption and hosts meetings between citizen and actors interested in promoting local production, sustainability... One of the innovative aspect is the sharing of the cost of realisation of new agricultural production projects (shared both by farmers and consumers associated).

The “physical market” is localised in the Municipality of Corsico (Cabassina Park), but farmers/food production come from whole PASM park area (and also from other regions).

5. Lessons learned and innovation needs

The presented good practices stand as two successful “process” cases where partnership of citizen and farmers play a central role. Another point is the enhancement of cultural and economic value of the local agricultural production in metropolitan area of Milano. Both good practices suggest innovative instruments and solutions aiming at the enhancement of local food chain and rural environmental and landscape values (biodiversity, food quality, sustainable agricultural production ...).

The main points/aspects (lessons learned both positive/negative and both innovations responses and needs) emerged from the Pilot context research are below summarised.

1) Pro-active involvement of citizens and farmers (and related association/categories association) underlines the relevance of multi-stakeholders involvement during the whole process of definition/design,

implementation and management. Multi-stakeholders as public institution, associations, private entrepreneurs (social/business oriented) and richness of proposals/projects related to the peri-urban space improvement and innovation in peri-urban/rural management (from both bottom-up and top-down process) are two relevant factors of innovations and success for urban-rural partnerships.

2) The cultural and ethic values of the association (criteria for the products / farmers involvement....) that characterise the Buon Mercato (towards a behaviours change) demonstrate the need of an integrated approach in innovations process related to local food chain (integration of food planning, environmental issues, ecosystem services...). The need to include the topic of soil consumption reduction is an important aspect to be focused on within the pilot implementation. The Pilot shows a difficulty (due to institutional/comptences framework) to support/implement the crosscutting proposals and multi-issues projects.

3) The strategic vision and strategic design value of Parco delle Risaie case assumes relevance for the definition of an "identity" of peri-urban areas.

4) EXPO2015 plays a fundamental role in activation of initiatives and proposals on urban/rural partnerships (focussing on: local food chains, rural buildings use, multi-functionality, educational, etc.).

5) Complexity: a correct approach needs a multi-scale characterisation of phenomena and a multi-scale and multi-tools set of strategies of interventions able to be adapted to the "territorial local complexity". In particular, an integrated approach requires a integration of safeguard polices and "pro-actives" polices of "valorisation" of peri-urban areas (governance/responses guidelines).

6. PILOT guidelines development

Based on main results and needs coming from Pilot context, the Lombardy Region is developing two axis of works: one (1) more oriented to the peri-urban areas safeguard (to contain the urban sprawl) focussed on the elaboration of "Guidelines for the peri-urban areas management" which will be integrated in the planning/programs framework and another (2) oriented to the identification of pro-active projects and solution for the valorisation of peri-urban areas (in terms of governance instruments, functions and mutual services performed by peri-urban areas...) with the activation/stimulation of UR partnerships as mutual economic, social and environmental opportunities.

Both guidelines/criteria (including method, polices, instruments, addresses) will be included in the Regional Territorial Plan revision and in the Regional Landscape Plan revision (processes actually in progress).

(1) "Guidelines for the peri-urban areas management" will define a) criteria and methods for the identification/characterization of periurban areas ("spatialisation" of peri-urban areas as "translation" of

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juridical definition in to “spatial” entities based on Territorial geodata database); b) method for a”peri-urban municipality Map” and peri-urban areas evaluation procedure (values/vulnerabilities, safeguard priorities).

(2) Guidelines/criteria supporting the governance of peri-urban areas through the urban-rural partnerships will include a) multi-scale (from pilot to bioregion) strategies and actions on ecosystem services / services performed by PU areas; b) identification of services and criteria for local implementation of actions; c) criteria to identify the „values“ of services performed (in terms of benefit); d) Identification of possible governance instruments (both traditional and innovative).

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Web-site and recommended link

URMA - Urban-rural partnerships in metropolitan areas INTERREG IVC <http://www.urma-project.eu/>

Parco delle Risaie – Rice Field Park website (in Italian): <http://www.parcodellerisaie.it>

BuonMercato - local bio-food market of Corsico Municipality Website (in Italian):
<http://www.buonmercato.info>

REsilienceLAB is constituted as a network of people working on sustainability issues, adaptation, urban and territorial resilience with different looks and approaches. Documents and presentations (of workshop developed on rural/urban partnerships) are available on the website:

http://www.resiliencelab.eu/index_ENG.html

Documents, paper and references on Angela Colucci's research/consulting work:
<http://www.angelacolucci.eu/angela/HOME.html>

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Attachments:

Figure 1. Lombardy Region and Milano EXPO2015 Pilot Case Context (Authors: Angela Colucci and Chiara Cortinovis)

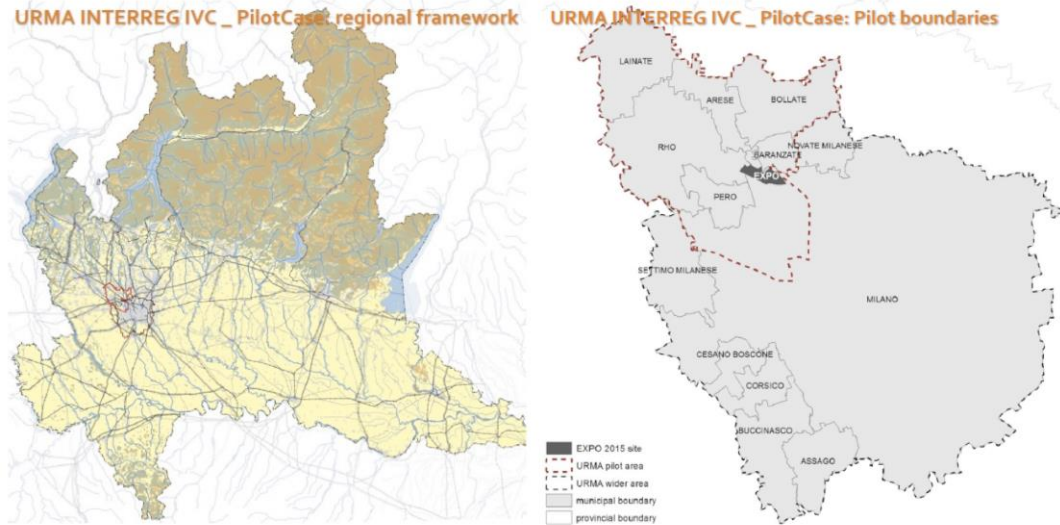
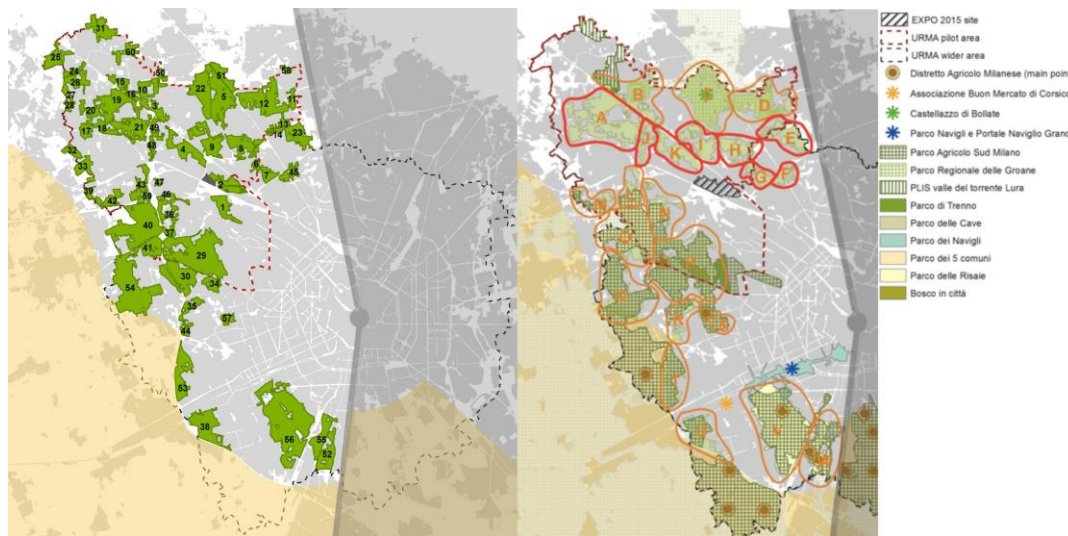


Figure 2. Milano EXPO2015 Pilot - Peri-urban characterisation. Two analysis maps: “peri-urban areas cluster identification map” and “peri-urban areas sub-systems map”. The second map shows good practices and natural/landscape guidelines acting on the Pilot site context and overlay to peri-urban areas sub-systems (Authors: Angela Colucci and Chiara Cortinovis)



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Figure 3. Parco delle Risaie (Rice Field Park): localisation in regional/provincial context and map of Strategic Project of Rice Field Park (elaboration by Angela Colucci, source of original map: Parco delle Risaie website)

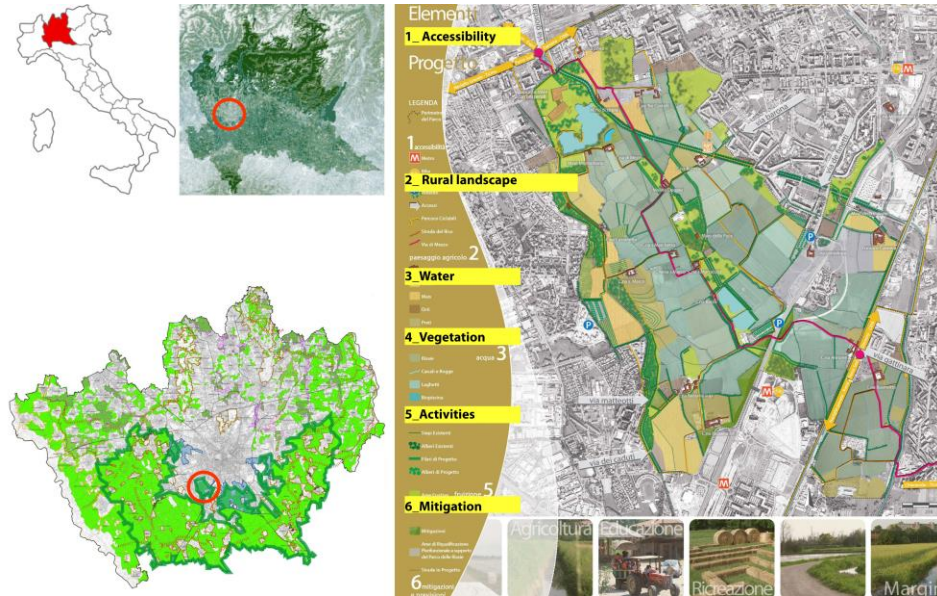
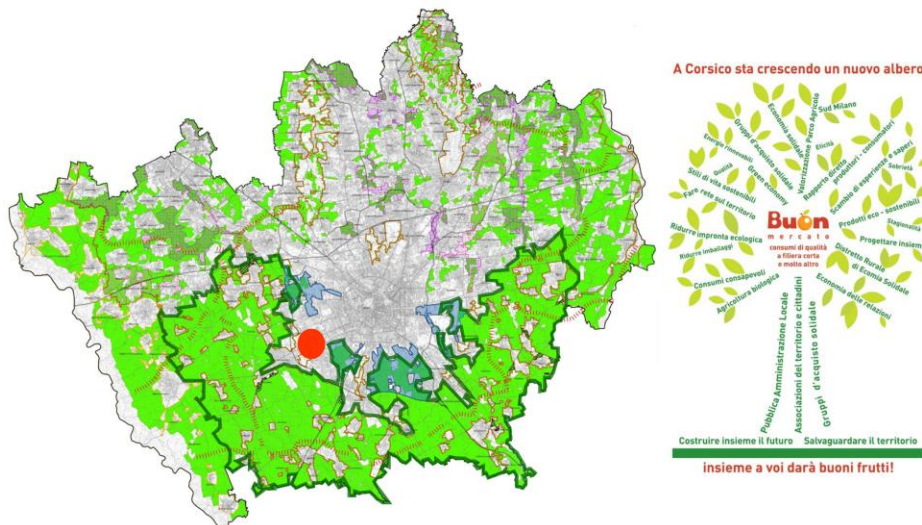


Figure 4. Buon Mercato (Local bio-food market) of Corsico Municipality: Milano Provincial district and Agricultural Park of South of Milan (light green: rural/open surface; dark green line: PASM boundary; red circle: BuonMercato location, Author: Angela Colucci) and the logo (tree of ideas) of BuonMercato (source: BuonMercato website)



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Figure 5. URMA Lombardy Region “Milano EXPO2015” Pilot framework (Author: Angela Colucci)



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