



New housing arrangements for young people in Milan: the project Ospitalità Solidale

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Credit: Filippo Romano

Outline

- Introduction: state of the problem
- Overview of DAR=CASA
- Description of the project
- Concluding remarks

Introduction

The exacerbation of young people's housing problems in many countries has brought their housing experiences to become a contemporary global concern:

- The increasing *flexibilisation* of the labour market has led to more unstable and low-paid employments, and young generations are among those who face more job instability
- Job insecurity affects the access to home ownership
- Systems of social protection are not very attentive to the housing needs of the younger generations
- The increasing commodification and financialization of housing has brought prices and rents to skyrocket, especially in attractive metropolitan areas.

In these circumstances, the economic support of parents is of paramount importance to access housing, especially in Southern European countries where family is a fundamental actor in welfare provision.

→ Exacerbation of inequalities amongst young people

→ Influence on their transition into independent living

Young people, mainly those with scarce and volatile economic resources and weak parental support, are being confined to private tenure, which is often more expensive, selective, and low-quality, experiencing precarious and often undesired housing conditions.



These phenomena make access to affordable housing for youth more difficult and unequal, thus threatening their inclusion in society.

(Bricocoli and Sabatinelli 2016; Brokking *et al.* 2017; Housing Europe Observatory 2017; Mackie 2016; Mugnano *et al.* 2021)

Italy=a paradigmatic case in Europe as regards the housing condition of youth.

Italy, Milan

- Traditionally young Italians are among the last to leave their parental home in Europe, when they are 30,2 years old on average.
- In 2015 in Italy homeowners represented the 72,9% of the population compared to the 69,4% in the EU
- Italy has a residual public housing sector with less than 4% of the total housing stock in the country
- The policies aimed at encouraging youth transition to independent living have been scarce and mainly centered on the promotion of homeownership.

(Cognetti and Delera, 2017; Eurostat 2020; ISTAT 2021; Tosi 2016)

Italy, Milan

- Milan is the economic and financial capital where job and training opportunities concentrate
- This vitality has been attracting people, especially youth, from the rest of Italy and from abroad
- 50.000 students come from outside the region, however the 5 biggest universities in Milan only accommodate one out of every 17 of these students.
- Rents are expensive in comparison with those in other European metropolises although wages are still very low by European standards
- Social and public housing stock is around 10%, higher than the national average
- This supply is hardly accessible to young people, especially to those coming from outside the city and the region.


Italy, Milan

Social and public housing stock is owned for the most part by the Municipality and by Aler.

Other medium and large-scale landlords play an important role in the rental market of the city (e.g., other public institutions, foundations, cooperatives).

Some of them have been experimenting with projects specifically targeted to youth who benefit from affordable housing solutions in exchange for their community work.

(Costa 2017; Dodaro and Costarelli 2021; Mugnano *et al.* 2021)



Although the impact of these projects is moderate in numbers, it is interesting to look at them to outline possible solutions for addressing young people's housing needs.



DAR=CASA

- DAR = CASA is a not-for-profit housing co-operative founded in 1991.
- Mission=creating affordable housing for low- and medium-income citizens in Milan and surrounding areas.
- The cooperative's members are mainly migrants coming from at least 20 different countries.

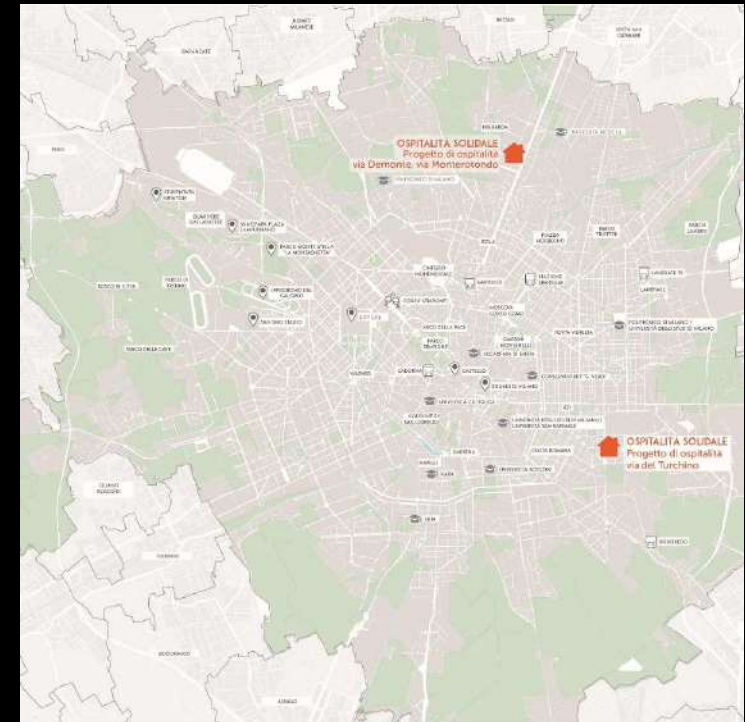
- We started renovating vacant or dismissed apartments owned by the City of Milan or other public institutions.
- We also engaged in urban regeneration programs, and we built about 60 apartments in three different contexts.
- Then we started to work with the City of Milan, the Region and with real estate funds.

DAR=CASA manages about 1000 flats.



Ospitalità Solidale

- A pilot project fostered by the Municipality of Milan and funded by the Central Government (430.000 €)
- In 2014 a partnership made up by two cooperatives, DAR=CASA and Comunità Progetto, won the tender and now manages the project
- Renovation and furnishing of 24 mini-flats (23 sq. each) scattered in different buildings owned by the Municipality
- Located in two low-income public housing neighborhoods in Milan's suburban area



- Target=single young persons (18-30 years old) who study or have a temporary job
- Short-term contract (from 6 months to 4 years) at 380 euros/month, expenses included
- Young residents benefit from a below the market rent, and, in turn, they must engage in community work for at least 10 hours per month.

We give a minimum of 10 hours of voluntary work to develop projects that aim at making the neighborhood more livable, at connecting with the people who live in the neighborhood. We try to create a dialogue in the neighborhood to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. (14, my translation)



Credit: Filippo Romano



- The project includes 2 shared spaces, one in each neighborhood. They are open to both the young inhabitants and the other residents. They host both informal and more structured activities (e.g., shared meals; cineclubs; after-school support for children; Italian classes for foreign women; second-hand market etc.)
- The partners have been intensely and actively supporting the young inhabitants in developing activities aimed at making them interact with the other residents
- They work with local organizations. This helps the project (e.g., the young tenants can join already established activities) and has benefits for the other organizations involved (e.g., they can use the common spaces for their activities).



Credit: Filippo Romano

- Out of a total of 98 young inhabitants, 31 are students (i.e., when they applied, their main activity was studying. Some of them have also started working during their staying)
- Usually, students have more time to engage in community work and manage to plan their time more easily
- Students of humanistic studies or those with previous volunteering experiences are often more interested and used to engage in informal relations with neighbors, based on proximity, care and knowledge (e.g., chatting in the courtyard, mutual help with daily matters and closer personal support).



Credit: Filippo Romano

To scale up the project, pay attention to



Initial investment
(non-repayable
fundings for
renovation)



Target
(age limits 18/20 –
30/35?)



Governance
(the role of the Public
Administration)

THANK YOU