

CULTURAL TOOLS PROJECT TORINO FINAL REPORT

1. Summary of the cultural policy in Torino with special attention to Black and Ethnic Minorities.

The enhancement and promotion of culture is today central to the development policies of European cities. In Torino, culture and cultural activities, in traditional sectors and in those linked to interculture, represents one of the key components for the improvement of the population's quality of life, but is also a potential driver of economic development with a major impact on employment. A recent study by the European Commission has estimated that two fifths of employment growth in the European Union in the coming years will be produced by the culture industry.

Torino has a dynamic and diffuse cultural life, with many enterprises and NGOs linked to the sector and several actions are undertaken to trigger a fully-fledged growth sector and build a new image of the City: a great attraction for visitors, deeper integration between the city's museums, a stronger international season of theatre, music and cinema events, a new pole that encourages the development of young people's artistic and cultural work as well as a mayor attention paid for new forms of artistic expression such as ethnic music and intercultural events . The cultural strategy aims at ensuring a climate of pluralism and pay attention to the diversity of autonomous cultural proposals.

This report is particularly focused on a specific area of the City named Porta Palazzo where the UPP Project ended in December 2001 has been the trigger for developing more effective inclusive policies and antidiscrimination as well social inclusion actions and initiatives.

The *Porta Palazzo* area lies in the historical centre of Turin. In its centre, surrounding the *Piazza della Repubblica*, lies one of the largest markets in Europe with over 1,000 traders and over 200 permanent stalls and shops which are visited daily by up to 40,000 people. Acting as a meeting point for groups of foreign and local residents, the market with its lively ambience at weekends and regular antique fairs, attracts residents from all over Turin. The market also attracts large numbers of tourists. However, the area suffers from an

increasing unemployment problem caused by the closure of a number of small enterprises. There also exists a general state of urban degradation due to a lack of maintenance of buildings, poor waste management and an above average crime level. The situation is compounded by emigration and a declining population.

The U.P.P. "Gate" project, located in the Porta Palazzo area, is embedded in a wider regeneration effort which is aiming to reverse these negative trends in the area. It is based on a "social contract" signed in 1996 and is aiming to improve the general welfare of the neighbourhood. The overall objective is to enhance the area and encourage people not only to remain in the area, but also to participate and invest in the area's future.

A particular attention is paid to the ethnic minority groups and their integration in the social fabric of the area. Many initiatives have been taken in the last 5 years in order to assure a stronger participation of ethnic minorities representatives in the social and cultural life of this part of the city. In fact the Porta Palazzo area is one of the most evident "melting pot" of the City housing the higher concentration of people coming from all over the world and clearly characterised by social exclusion as well as by a lack of integration.

SOME STATISTICS ON THE CHOSEN AREA

Population¹

The city of Turin has been registering, for some years now, an overall reduction in the resident population, a reduction which within the area of the project appears to be more marked. The tendency for the Turin population to prefer the outlying areas of the city has in some zones in the centre been accentuated by progressive forms of accommodation and social decay which this project is specifically seeking to address. In addition, the overall balance confirms a propensity to ageing in our societies, with the number of deaths always greater than the number of births. To partially contrast this tendency the immigration flow has a contribution to make. Within the municipal context the difference between those who leave and those who arrive is to date tilted in favour of the former; at a disaggregated level, on the other hand, it is possible to note that in the central districts this ratio tends to balance out if not in fact move in the opposite direction, as is happening in the Porta

¹ Source: Turin Council Statistics Office, data elaborated by CSI Piemonte.

Palazzo zone. Starting from these considerations, the area of “The Gate” project can be seen as a situation specific to itself where a number of specific aspects deserve greater exploration.

Overall population and variations in comparison with the previous years

	Torino		Project area	
1995	922.754	=	11.409	=
1996	919.602	-0,34%	11.565	+1,37%
1997	914.818	-0,52%	11.737	+1,49%
1998	909.741	-0,55%	11.689	-0,41%
1999	904.171	-0,66%	11.683	-0,05%

	Pop. in 1/1	Natural flow		Migratory flow			pop. 31/12
		born	dead	emigrants	immigrants	balance	
Torino							
1996	922.754	5.830	7.771	24.832	23.621	-3.152	919.602
1997	919.602	5.981	7.838	23.273	20.876	-4.784	914.818
1998	914.818	6.172	8.073	23.336	20.672	-5.077	909.741
1999	909.741	6.084	8.170	25.488	22.004	-5.570	904.171
Project area							
1996	11.409	101	184	476	715	+156	11.565
1997	11.565	74	182	352	632	+172	11.737
1998	11.737	96	185	383	424	-48	11.689
1999	11.689	99	176	411	482	-6	11.683

2. Main features/ type of social exclusion you think can and do respond to cultural tools in the chosen area of the City

Cultural area in Porta Palazzo

Porta Palazzo has always had a central role in the way of life in Torino. As a neighbourhood, it has been interpreted as a suburb, but in reality it belongs, by right, to the historic nucleus of Torino. For newcomers who first visit Porta Palazzo the neighbourhood seems to be teeming with popular life, voices, smells, flavours, colours, within a context that recalls its historic tradition, the memory of daily life as it has been repeated day after day for decades.

However, for the people of Torino, Porta Palazzo is also a place to avoid, especially at night, a place to pass through quickly as they make their way home. In this way the wealth of the neighbourhood is lost, mixed in with a sense of degradation and fear. The Municipality is trying to work on this aspect, the links of the neighbourhood with the rest of the city: bringing back the people of Torino to visit and to live in the area. The Gate project wants to propose a structured and systematic re-launch of the neighbourhood as a theatre for artistic and cultural shows. The numerous interventions in building and urban regeneration, the commercial revival with the opening of numerous new activities, the interest that has been shown by the public and private sectors through their investments in the area have triggered a revival process that could re-awaken the attention of the cultural world for an area rich in resources and spaces that are suitable to be used and lived for these kinds of initiatives.

In fact in the last 5 years the City – by the means of the Gate project has been working so that the people of Torino return and live in Porta Palazzo rather than just pass through it. To recreate this link between the neighbourhood and the city, but also to overcome the limits of the city boundaries, culture and tourism are preferential tools to be used. Starting with the riches that the neighbourhood has to offer, in terms of history and traditions, but above all in spaces where culture can be developed, the project has been working to promote the neighbourhood as a cultural and then tourist resource for the city by continuing its initiatives valorising, connecting and supporting cultural development in a creative multi-ethnic environment in which leisure and free time find opportunity.

For instance The Gate Project is now working to organise routes through the streets of the area to make the most of the regeneration that has already been completed and to raise interest in that which is still underway. The proposal is addressed not only to professionals but also to the curious and tourists and one of its purposes is to valorise and increase the knowledge of the different cultural expressions in the area and to facilitate the exchange among different ethnic minority groups and the local inhabitants.

In order to better define the approach applied in the area several actions can be described.

Some of them are clusters of actions broadly addressed to all the inhabitants while the others can be considered most targeted as well as intercultural ones.

The most interesting cluster of actions is developed around the market area, named Balôn and it is the following:

The Balôn - a well of resources: to promote the promotional programme of initiatives and animation of the area.

There are many initiatives by cultural associations or the traders of the Borgo Dora area to promote the area of the Balôn through artistic-cultural shows. In order to support these initiatives logistic and organisational support to the associations, linking up the various inputs are offered, in order to create a common programme for the promotion of the area. The Municipality offers "Cultural spaces" i.e. the resources of the neighbourhood at the service of every form of culture with particular attention to the cultural expressions offered by self-organised groups of inhabitants and ethnic minorities associations.

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3. Description of the cultural tools selected

On the basis of the transnational methodology chosen and applied during the implementation of our UE project the Municipality of Torino decided to focus the analysis of the cultural tools that are described below.

A grid was first defined in order to simplify indicators and to give the other European partners the opportunity of better understanding the local tools.

Furthermore the use of the grid allowed everybody to show weaknesses and strengths in the cultural policies of every chosen area in the cities/towns.

3.1 The Grid

These events have been analysed and they are a sample of the intercultural policy of Torino Municipality. They are the following:

1. **The CousCousClan** which had its name changed in **Multikulti** after September the 11th 2001 because some representatives of the Islamic Communities the play upon words (Ku Klux Klan – CousCousClan) can be seen as a lack of respect as well as a negative way of representing the Islamic Community itself, which was not the purpose of those who started the project who wanted, on the contrary, to defuse the general sense of separation characterising the above mentioned community by using a typical food and an association (the Clan) for publicising food and culture by the means of different events such as the one described in the grid.
2. **Italian-Arabian Centre Dar Al Hikma**. The centre was inaugurated two years ago in a Municipal building which previously hosted public baths closed for lack of users a decade ago. The Municipality loaned in commodatum free of charge to the Association proposing the project of the Cultural Centre. This political choice was not an easy one, because of the opposition of groups of inhabitants who thought that such a intercultural centre could become a meeting point for illegal people (i.e. migrants who did not have the permit to stay – sans papiers) increasing the sense of insecurity of the area. Nevertheless the decision showed the importance of paving the way for new good practices and the Centre, after one year from its opening has become a reference point for many cultural initiatives.
3. **The game of Romeo e Juliet** (see the annexed video). It has been a very important experience involving students of the Primary and Secondary Schools of the area as well as young people coming from ethnic minority groups and working in the market of Porta Palazzo. The idea of the performance is based on the idea that the problems of integration and mutual acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversities could be overcome by a common work of diverse people living, studying and working in the area. The basis was Shakespeare's story of Romeo and Juliet and the opposed love of two young people adapted to the local context of the market area. The original title of the performance which came from a open debate among all the actors (professional and unprofessional ones), the students and the other involved people, was Fathma and Francesco and its plot focused on the love story between a young Muslim woman and

an Italian boy. A strong reaction of the Islamic religion representatives who considered offensive and discriminating the idea of dealing with their religion in a light way made the group of people working on it to maintain the original name but not changing the original idea of using a nowadays love story between culturally diverse young people as a way of denouncing all forms of fundamentalism, discrimination and social exclusion. So, step by step the performance took shape with the direct contribution not only of the professionals but of the students, and the inhabitants.

4. **ZutArt.** The experiment issued from the need of a group of young artists that wanted to use particular public meeting places such as laundrettes to present their works of art. It has to be said that in Italy the majority of people using laundrettes is coming from ethnic minority groups, elderly and poor people, namely all those citizens who do not own a washing machine at home. So the main objective of this initiative was to involve these people doing the washing in giving their preferences and comments, so that, at the end of every exhibition, a list of the top classified as well as of all the comments became a way for discussing with people about culture, especially a non-institutional one and to make them closer to art and culture in a unusual way. This initiative, a bottom up one, was really successful as many people visited all the exhibitions hosted in different laundrettes and the most part, who never approached to art could feel protagonists.

The above described initiatives were classified as follows:

Local event indicators

	Nrs		Description
1		Name of the event	CousCousClan now Multikulti (after September the 11th) - TURISTI PER CASA (Tourists at home)
2		Type of cultural tool	Gastronomy and different type of foods presented through several itineraries organised by the association whose legs are hosted on ethnic shops, ethnic restaurants, etc.
3		Which excluded groups are involved	Ethnic minorities and elderly people, above all.
4		Which area (territory)	Porta Palazzo
5		Number of participants	150 different shops included in the gastronomic itineraries + 20x2groups of visitors each Saturday (60)

6		Locality of the event	The market area around Porta Palazzo
7		Impact (a). local (b). wider	<p>a) many visitors (especially Italians) participated in the initiatives coming from all over the city.</p> <p>b) At Italian level the initiative achieved a wide success and publicisation. People coming from other Regions are now participating</p> <p>c) Several teachers from primary schools “used” the itineraries in order to learn different approaches to culture of their students through the food</p>
9		Partnerships	Chamber of Commerce, Turin City Council, Bank Associations , Region of Piedmont, Local Press The Gate UPP Project

	Nrs		Description
1		Name of the event	ZutArt
2		Type of cultural tool	Painting, sculpture, theatre performances around the theme of the laundry as a meeting point of different cultures
3		Which excluded groups are involved	Ethnic minorities, young people, elderly people
4		Which area (territory)	Porta Palazzo and other districts within the network of those chain of laundries
5		Number of participants	500
6		Locality of the event	4 laundries (self-service ones) x 4

			exhibitions in each of them
7		Impact (a). local (b). wider	a)many people of the districts visited the laundries and then they vote their favourite artistic work
8		Level of involvement in design, organisation and participation	The experiment was planned by a group of young artists, discussed with the local participation forum and then proposed to the inhabitants with the aim of involving local people when visiting laundries which are normally used by people coming from ethnic minorities. Each
9		Partnerships	The Gate UPP Project, local artists associations, the laundries networks ethnic minorities associations

	Nrs		Description
1		Name of the event	Italian-Arabian Centre Dar Al Hikma
2		Type of cultural tool	Cultural Integration through: multicultural library, exhibitions, conferences, debates, Hammam, Moroccan restaurant, Arabian language courses
3		Which excluded groups are involved	Ethnic minorities, elderly, young people
4		Which area (territory)	The biggest open area market in Torino in the central area of the City (see district profile)
5		Number of participants	Every week, according to the programmes of the Centre about 500 people
6		Locality of the event	An ancient public bath now restored in Arabian style
7		Impact (a). local (b). wider	a) After a first strong opposition of the most part of local

			<p>people the Center is now accepted as a meeting point as well as a cultural reference point for everybody</p> <p>b) Many people coming from other districts and from outside the City are participating in the proposed events</p>
8		Level of involvement in design, organisation and participation	Some representatives of local ethnic minority communities were directly involved in the creation of the Centre. Nowadays the restaurant is managed by a mixed association both of Italian and Moroccan people, the Turkish Bath is run by a NGO composed by Moroccan and Algerian workers and the Intercultural Library as well as intercultural initiative such as photo exhibition, Arabian language courses and showing of films are organised by a group composed by some representatives of ethnic communities,
9		Partnerships	Turin City Council, The Gate UPP Project, Ethnic Minorities Associations

	Nrs		Description
1		Name of the event	Il gioco di Romeo e Giulietta (The game of Romeo and Juliet)
2		Type of cultural tool	Theatre Performance – Intercultural mediation
3		Which excluded groups are involved	Ethnic minorities, elderly people, excluded young people (both Italian and immigrants)
4		Which area (territory)	The biggest open area market in Torino in the central area of the City (see district profile)
5		Number of participants	600 among students, actors, students

			of the National art school (DAMS), shop owners, citizens living in the area
6		Locality of the event	The courtyard of a secondary school in the neighbourhood
7		Impact (a). local (b). wider	<p>c) local impact very strong the performance was planned for one evening (free entry) and then they performed the show for a week</p> <p>d) a similar experiment has been proposed in other districts of the City and in other towns of the Region</p>
8		Level of involvement in design, organisation and participation	100%. During the preparation of the performance the local press and a National Literary Award published the writings (stories, poetries, songs) on the theme of different ethnic groups way of living and cohesion
9		Partnerships	Theatre companies, Turin City Council, The Gate UPP Project, Trade Associations, Secondary schools.

According to the transnational methodology that all the European partners agreed during the implementation of the Cultural Tools project the following indicators and events were analysed and compared.

These indicators applied to the chosen cultural activity in every city had two different excellent and concrete outcomes as they gave the opportunity of looking at these activities and initiatives both at local and transnational level.

At local level they gave the possibility of analysing in a more neutral and scientific way each initiatives taking into consideration all the indicators and comparing them on the basis of the number of people involved, on the level of engagement and commitment of the target groups and the role that the Local Authority concretely played in fighting against social exclusion in the area.

This last aspect was a very interesting one and the main learning for all the people involved in the project (public servants, NGOs representatives, the Gate participation Forum) was the fact that when dealing with deep problems such as social exclusion and discrimination there is not only a sole culture but a variegated mix of different cultures – or better forms of culture – which can really be a powerful trigger for starting an involvement process of the excluded citizens.

Especially in the case of ethnic minorities it was clear that the exchange among different cultures and the positive mutual influence of different forms of cultural expression

allowed a deeper knowledge of diversities and a genuine contamination among different people and traditions.

At transnational level the opportunity of exchanging know how and information was a further concrete tool for analysing the local initiatives from a wider and deeper point of view.

Furthermore every partner had the opportunity of concretely seeing what the other European cities were doing and experimenting. This was another powerful way of better understanding the concrete outcomes, as well as the differences, strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches. This know how also fed the local reflections and in a virtuous, circular way went back to the transnational level for nourishing the transnational reading of the use of culture(s) in fighting against social exclusion.

Strengths

It was evident the use of cultural tools was particularly successful when the involvement of the communities is assured from the very beginning, namely from the design phase of a particular event up to the concrete realisation of it. For Torino it was particularly evident with the performance “The game of Romeo and Juliet” which, even at national level, is considered one of the most interesting and successful examples of a holistic approach to the problems of exclusion by the means of a bottom up form of culture – which at the end of the experience becomes a real intercultural expression.

The involvement of citizens is fundamental for breaking the sense of exclusion that marginalised target groups often feel. The participation in the cultural life is a way for breaking these barriers and to start feeling being part of a wider and more visible part of a place.

Weaknesses

Culture usually has low investments in terms of resources (not only financial, but human ones) and generally the strategy of the City on that are more focused on an “institutional” culture whose success indicators are based on “big events” which are usually very expensive both in their organisation and in the price that public has to pay for attending them.

Culture is seen as show off and it often becomes a tool only for a small minority of citizens who can afford high prices for élite performances. In this context intercultural or a bottom up approach to different forms of culture face many problems in establishing themselves and, for this reason too, the Cultural Tool Project has been an important step for paving the way of a new way of thinking and living culture for all the European partners who participated in it.

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