

Communicating urban regeneration

THEMATIC PAPER #1



2ND CHANCE

WAKING UP THE SLEEPING GIANTS



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Cover picture: @Archipicchia, temporary use of the Ex- Military Hospital, communicating urban regeneration with a participative approach to the children.
Naples, May 2017

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Guideline Document for local authorities and stakeholders

The aim of the document is to provide useful tools to make communication a decisive aspect of all the steps of the urban regeneration strategies promoted in the framework of the 2ND CHANCE URBACT network. Tips and examples on how communicating urban regeneration are presented in the different sections of the document, focusing on innovative communication approaches currently discussed at local, national and global level.

Simone d'Antonio
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Naples, 31 July 2017

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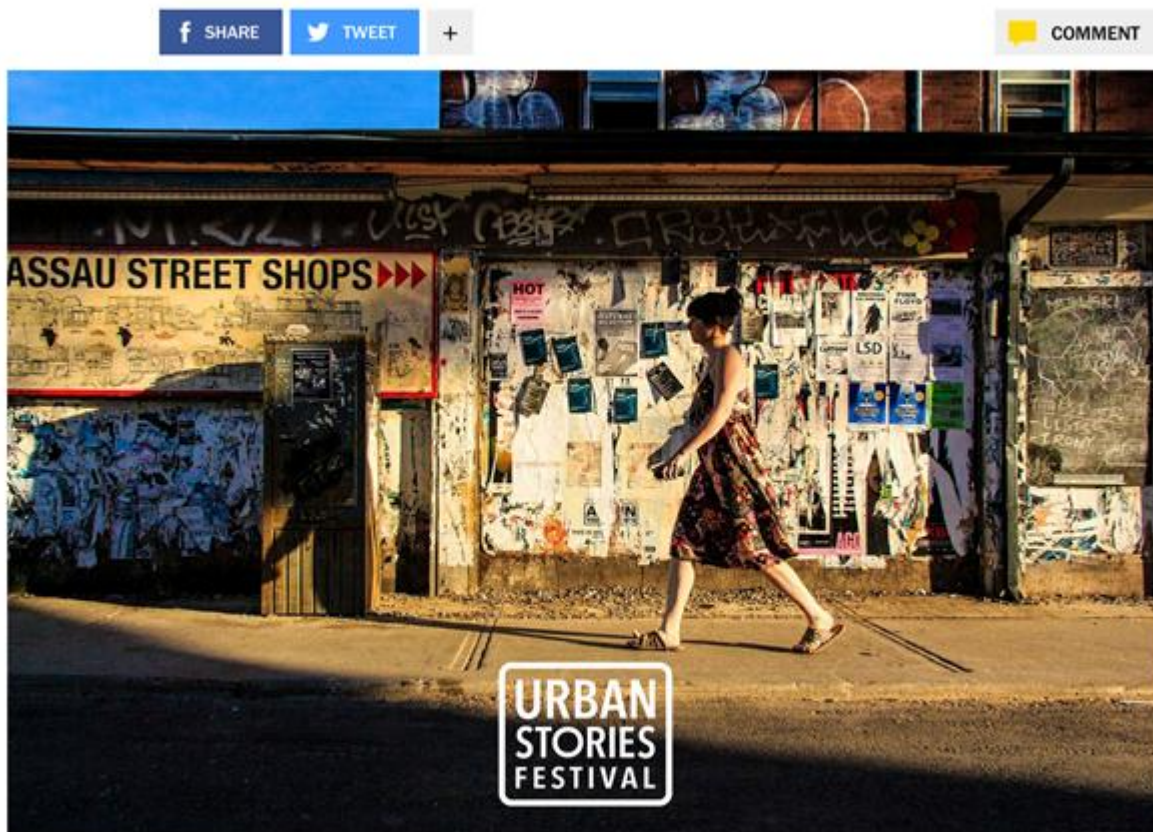
1 THE CHALLENGES OF URBAN COMMUNICATION

Showcasing urban solutions

Cities are the places where most of the challenges of our era are taking place, offering the ground for testing innovative solutions on different fields such as urban regeneration, energy transition and social inclusion. Communication is a decisive factor to support these changes and, in the case of urban regeneration, to ensure a wide participation of residents and stakeholders around a long-term vision on urban development. In the phase of definition and implementation of an integrated action plan, communication can foster the transparency of a process often misunderstood by the residents while contributing to make local authorities more accountable for their

action on urban regeneration. At the same time, communication can contribute to reduce conflicts and to foster the community spirit around sensitive topics, such as the reconversion of the so-called sleeping giants. Using a mix of different communication tools can contribute to make the transfer of information and know-how part of the innovation process involving all the different parts of the local community, making also the internal and external process of communication of local authorities more coordinated and coherent with the objectives identified by the local plans.

Many events and programs are promoting at European and global level the role of urban journalism and communication, such as the [Urban Stories Festival](#) in Amsterdam



3 THE ROLE OF MEDIA FOR URBAN REGENERATION

Informing public opinion on urban change

Involving media in an action of communication and storytelling on regeneration of unused structures and spaces can be challenging for different reasons. The phases of a process of rehabilitation are sometimes hard to be described according to the regular journalism standards, in most of the cases showcasing things happening in a precise historical moment, with defined actors, standard procedures and limited role of external stakeholders.

Making media part of the process through the involvement of media representatives in all the phases of the regeneration can be useful not only to make public opinion informed on the different aspects of the process (including social

and economic impact of the actions carried out by the city in collaboration with private and public stakeholders) but also to make media part of that **collaborative intelligence and shared knowledge** which are intangible heritage of the whole process. Inputs coming from journalists and editors who followed similar projects or the connection with media professionals in charge of covering urban regeneration processes at regional and national level can contribute to make the actions of regeneration more visible and tangible for local and national public opinion, with positive effects in terms of participation to the public choices of urban development.

Organizing a study tour is a good way to make journalists and bloggers part of ongoing projects



4 SOCIAL MEDIA FOR AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Storytelling in urban regeneration process

Social media can be a bridge between the traditional, one-directional communication and **an innovative strategy** based on the contribution of a variety of actors. The integration between these aspects can contribute to assign to social media an original role for what concerns the **storytelling of all the different steps** undertaken in a process of regeneration. From the phase of sharing of priorities and visions on the future use of the structures identified by the city and the stakeholders until a collaborative storytelling of the actions of refurbishment, social media can enhance participation while giving fresh information and adding interesting details and

multimedia contents, better if produced in a format coherent with the social media platform used (subtitled videos for Facebook, stories for Instagram or live tweeting sessions for Twitter). The choice of the platforms on which is more useful to open accounts and pages needs to be coherent with the type of audience that the city and the stakeholders want to reach at local level, ensuring a **coherent and integrated management** of these channels (coordinating the publication of the contents with the communication strategies already ongoing in a specific local context or on a specific topic) and an accurate planning of the contents to be published (stories, videos, pictures).

Social media can contribute to the [success of local campaigns](#), through hashtags and trending topics



5 SLEEPING GIANTS AS SOLUTION STORIES

Inspiring the public with effective urban solutions

In an evolving media landscape, where longreads, multimedia formats and in-depth analysis are gaining an unprecedented weight and consistence in the public debate, the narrative connected to the regeneration of the so-called sleeping giants can offer interesting elements for **a reflection on the future of cities and neighborhoods**. Presenting the action of re-activation of vacant buildings as [solution stories](#) can change the way in which these interventions are perceived by public opinion at different levels. At the same time, highlighting the success factors as well as the weak points can be **potentially inspiring** for decision makers

and readers from different backgrounds. An effective communication of all the different steps undertaken, even though most of them may seem ordinary and banal, and the presentation of ambitious actions and plans for the future use of these public spaces can be particularly relevant to make the storytelling the basis for the **replicability of the strategies** in different contexts. The collaborative method promoted along the whole process can be itself a part of this narrative, taking advantage of it to be spread as a regular method of interaction between the city and the stakeholders for the promotion of sustainable urban development.

Vacant buildings can be source of visions and reflections for different types of audience



NEXT CITY Inspiring Better Cities.

CELEBRATE BIG IDEAS FOR BETTER PLACES CITYWORKS OCTOBER 5-

Can Detroit's Vacant Factories Become Community Assets?

BY MATTHEW LEWIS | JULY 13, 2015

Facebook, Twitter, Email icons

Facebook, Twitter, Email icons



6 COMMUNICATING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Making public opinion part of the process

The promotion of the methods of participation to co-deciding the future of spaces and structures of the city has a decisive role to attract the attention of different parts of the population around the ongoing participatory planning process, and enable them to take part to its different phases. Including some specific communication measures in the phase of preparation of the integrated action plan is needed to ensure that the whole participatory planning process is effectively covered in terms of communication and promotion with dedicated contents. A recap of the past and current strategies of urban regeneration can be used as a framework of a communication action based on the collaborative storytelling of places

and structures at the core of the process, making the stakeholders and the different actors of the process part of the communication effort, based also on user generated contents, the use of social media and other information collected with a bottom-up approach. Highlighting the added value of the participation of residents and stakeholders to the decision-making and participation processes can contribute to make this narrative structural to any future development of the urban context, as well as to serve as basis to make the whole process generated by a specific project successful and effective under different points of view.

A news on the local newspaper can help in catching the attention of the residents about the actions carried out along the project



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Italian newspaper IL MATTINO.it. The navigation bar includes sections like SEZIONI, NAPOLI 33°, and OROSCOPO. Below the main navigation, there are regional links for NAPOLI, AVELLINO, BENEVENTO, SALERNO, CASERTA, and CALABRIA. A horizontal menu contains categories: HOME, PRIMO PIANO, ECONOMIA, CULTURA, SPETTACOLI, SPORT, and T. The main content area features a blue header for 'NAPOLI SMART' and a breadcrumb trail: 'Il Mattino > Napoli Smart > Cultura'. The headline of the article is 'Lo yoga? A Napoli serve anche a "risvegliare" i monumenti'. Below the headline is a photograph of a man shouting into a megaphone in front of a large, dilapidated building. A red banner across the bottom of the photo reads 'RISVEGLIAMO IL GIGANTE DORMIENTE' and 'INIZIATIVA DI RISVEGLIO DAL SONNO DEL COMPLESSO DELLA SS. TRINITÀ DELLE MONACHE (EX- OSPEDALE MILITARE) A CURA DELL'URBACT LOCAL GROUP'. The author's name, 'di Emanuela Sorrentino', is visible at the bottom left of the article.

7 COMMUNICATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIONS

Keeping urban regeneration actions under the spotlight

Defining communication actions on a medium and long term to give updated news to residents and experts about the implementation of the actions included in an integrated plan is an useful way to keep the attention of citizens, professionals and decision makers around the actions scheduled.

The connection between this communication strategy and the communication tools regularly used by the city to spread news on urban regeneration at different levels (in the different neighborhoods as well as national level, in favor of experts and academics) will contribute to make this specific angle of view an essential part of the city's communication strategy. The use of

newsletters and social media can help in making different types of residents constantly aware of what is going to happen, making easier the launch of new participatory models and actions. Giving news on the evolution of the public works, as well as on decisions assumed on the future use of vacant spaces and the so-called sleeping giants, is one of the communication keys to be adopted in a coherent strategy having local and national media, as well as technical influencers (urban planners, architects or representatives of the organization which are going to use the spaces regenerated) potential partners in informing people on the new steps undertaken.

Public events and open discussions can revive the participation of the public opinion along the implementation of the actions





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Guideline Document Involving communication stakeholders in the process of urban development

This publication aims at providing useful guidelines to include media and communication stakeholders in the process of urban development, with particular reference to the action of regeneration of the so-called *sleeping giants*, unused or underused buildings located in the city centres.



Media have a relevant role in fostering urban growth under different dimensions.

First of all, the positive role of media to promote a positive debate on social, economic and environmental dimensions of urban sustainability was highlighted by national governments and global institutions in the framework of the Habitat III process, resulting in the creation of the New Urban Agenda. A specific role to media was assigned within the activities of the General Assemblies of Partners, which is the main vehicle for civil society to advocate its interest in the Habitat III process.

Media are decisive actors in fostering local democracy, participation of residents and in transferring knowledge, ideas, solutions and visions among different levels. Making urban knowledge, data and analysis accessible to a greater public is the objective of an action of acknowledgement which is connecting in a two-way communication flow local and global levels, deprived and rich neighbourhoods, big media companies and small blogs.

The role of watchdog of implementation of global agreements, such as the New Urban Agenda, assigned to media in order to improve democratic control, collaborative monitoring action and participation on how huge urban changes are put in place at local level is clearly observable also at urban level. Through its active contribution to urban change through the action promotion and participation to the local debate, offering ideas and proposals for reuse of abandoned spaces and buildings or following residents' participation actions, media can regain a civic role in urban contexts providing useful elements to the action of local authorities and communities.

Media can be at the same time actors of urban change and receivers/multipliers of information, actions and solutions developed by local governments and stakeholders. These two roles are equally important to promote the right to the city from an uncommon point of view, with a positive impact on all the different parts of the local community involved in this framework.

These guidelines contain some indications and examples of media and communication involvement in the process of urban development on different scales, considering these factors as decisive to

promote public policies and public private partnerships close to the needs of residents. The adoption of this guidelines, or the inspirational elements which may come from these, can contribute to reduce distrust and criticism of local public opinion, as well as to make communication aspects closer to the action of urban regeneration fostered by the adoption and the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans.

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Naples,. 22 December 2017

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1 INVOLVING MEDIA AS STAKEHOLDERS ON URBAN REGENERATION

The active involvement of media in the process of urban regeneration can activate a connection with the shared knowledge on urban issues on a specific territorial dimension.

The involvement of media can ensure a continuous coverage of the process, the involvement of new stakeholders and can contribute to reduce criticism often due to the lack of knowledge of complex, integrated processes connected to urban regeneration.

The creation of symbolic roles, as media/communication partners and similar, or granting access to insight information on the topics of the urban regeneration action can be incentives for a deeper involvement of media on a medium and long-term.

The active role played by media can enhance visibility of the actions and accompany the implementation of the plans elaborated in collaboration with the residents.



Il Secolo XIX, the most known newspaper of Genoa, was involved in the Local Action Group of the URBACT II CityLogo Network, having the city of Genoa among the partners. Its presence was decisive to promote an urban debate on urban branding strategies and to promote the new logo of the city, emerged during the network activities.

2 CO-PRODUCING CONTENTS AND STORIES ON URBAN REGENERATION

Innovating the storytelling on cities

The active contribution of media and communication professionals to urban regeneration actions can drive to the production of multimedia contents and stories oriented to show the impact of urban regeneration to a wide public.

The co-production of these innovative media products ensure a wide involvement of local authorities and communities in a civic journalism aimed at proposing solutions and give knowledge tools to a wide range of

potential receivers. This action can be strongly connected to the different phases of a process of residents participation and to initiatives such as the introduction of participatory budget.

Innovating the storytelling of innovation reinforcing public journalism and connection between local authorities, communities and media can have a positive impact in the local public debate

 **URBAN CENTER BOLOGNA**
 22 November at 13:00 · 🌐

Il punto di vista di una webradio sul #bilanciopartecipativo. Ce lo racconta il nostro #labunder Boubacar Ndia. #immaginazionecivica



Intervista ad un giovane elettore – LabUNDER – Medium
 MEDIUM.COM

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

The City of Bologna involved through its Urban Center a group of bloggers/communication volunteers to co-produce innovative communication contents such as interviews to NGOs representatives and to other urban stakeholders. These interviews were broadcasted by local tv or radio station, as well as by webradio and other community media

3 INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE TOOLS FOR COLLABORATIVE URBAN PLANNING

The use of games to foster the involvement of different types of users and stakeholders around a process of urban regeneration can offer unexpected keys to translate concrete projects in original communication products. These games can completely change the way people interact with urban spaces and can be used to communicate urban changes and projects affecting everyday's lives of people. The dynamic of collaboration leading to the

creation of the games on urban development and redesign is an effective examples of collaboration among different skills, competencies and types of knowledge on ICT and urban planning.

The game dimension can also play a positive role in creating connections among different types of users, also as offering occasions for communication on public events connected to the topic.



The Dutch city planning initiative Play the City promoted by the Play the City Foundation is just one of the examples of a global trend which is promoting the use of popular gaming platforms (such as Minecraft, as fostered by UN-Habitat in different cities of the Global South) to foster engagement and communication of urban topics, with positive effect on the dialogue among different actors in local communities

4 PROMOTING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MEDIA AND URBAN RESIDENTS

The involvement of the media and communication sector in the process of urban regeneration can be a decisive occasions for journalists to understand the real challenges lived by residents in terms of use of urban spaces and quality of life.

This action of analysis is not necessarily connected to the flow of news and facts happening every day in a specific area, but it can be seen as a continuous, autonomous initiative carried out by editors of local and

national media to dialogue with residents and readers, and at the same time to engage them around the most relevant urban changes.

Organizing series of meetings and public debates, in which topics of common interest can be highlighted and a wide range of stakeholders can be involved, can be beneficial to all the parties in order to make this dialogue structural and substantial part of the civic role of the media



One of the first projects launched by Maurizio Molinari, editor in chief of the newspaper La Stampa, was a tour to Turin neighborhoods to meet readers and ask their impressions on the city and how is managed. These dialogues, particularly appreciated by the local public opinion, were considerably important to raise the attention on the current issues on urban development in Turin and to foster the interaction on the future of the city

5 INTRODUCING MEDIA AS BENEFICIARIES OF URBAN REGENERATION

As part of the cultural fabric of the city, media often play a role in the cultural and business landscape of the city. That is happening with specific events, such as city festivals attracting communities of readers from different locations, but also with their iconic premises, which are often regenerating ancient unused or underused structures.

The collaboration with prominent architects and urban planners has contributed along the years to assign a direct role to media in the process of urban regeneration, making media

and communication professionals actors of change with their work and city users able to revitalize areas and neighbourhood in crisis.

The New York Times building designed by Renzo Piano in New York, the Volkshotel in Amsterdam which transformed the former premises of the Volksrant in an hotel with art factory or the new premises of La Stampa in Turin, with a museum open to visitors and schools, are just some examples of the different possible functions of media structures in an urban context.



ITV Granada contributed to the regeneration of Manchester with the creation of MediaCityUK, a mixed-use project along the Manchester Canal where are located production facilities, service providers, apartments, a job incubator, shops and a public space open to residents.

6 USING GRAPHIC NOVELS TO MAKE PEOPLE CLOSER TO URBAN REGENERATION

Visual communication can be decisive in urban regeneration process to enhance the capacity of people to visualize the concrete effects of the urban changes.

Graphic novels and comics could be particularly useful tools for involving specific categories, such as students and young people, in order to involve them in an open exchange of ideas and vision on the future of public spaces.

At the same time, the dialogue with authors and designers can be important to clarify

messages and contents of city planning initiatives which are often hard to be visualized and communicated to people.

Successful initiatives involving local communities, such as the distribution of free copies of a graphic novel as happened in Chicago, can liaise different types of audience in the local context, reinforcing the community spirit and the sense of place towards a neighborhood or a specific area of the city.



The graphic novel "No Small Plans" was published by the Chicago Architecture Foundation and distributed to students of deprived neighborhood with the aim of making them familiar with the current debate on infrastructures and the effects of gentrification in Chicago: this action is contributing to make young residents aware of how the environment where they live contribute to their identities

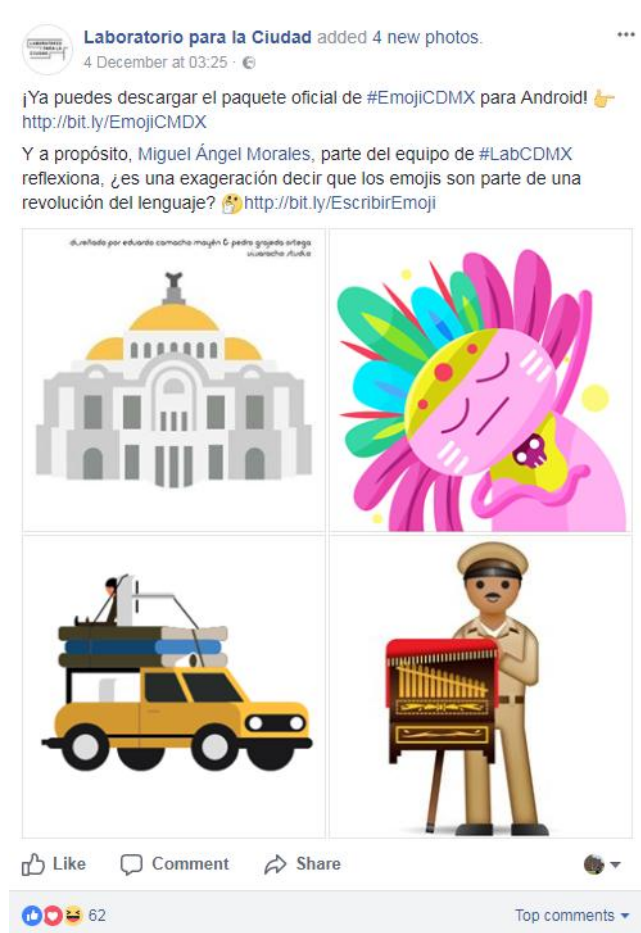
7 FUELLING INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATION ECOSYSTEMS

The creation of collaborative social media strategies can improve the way urban challenges are presented to residents, enhancing an active involvement of communities and social media users around urban regeneration.

The participation of strategists, influencers and other key players in the social media debate at local and national level can innovate the way a local authority govern all the different phases connected to urban renewal and create a collaborative framework for making social media not only a source of updated news and information but the real

basis for including feedbacks and suggestions from different categories of residents.

Launching campaigns or co-producing videos or innovative contents may help in activating the creation of communication materials generated by a community of users, experts and stakeholders active at local level, possibly with a key role played by media and relevant communication actors which can integrate their regular social media strategies to the needs emerged by a specific action of urban regeneration.



Can emojis be a way to foster social media engagement? In Mexico City Laboratorio para la Ciudad launched a package of emoji to revolutionize the language to communicate the city among social media users

8 COLLABORATIVE MAPPING FOR URBAN REGENERATION

The use of mapping and geotagging systems can foster the active participation of the residents to the different phases of a process of urban regeneration. At the same time local authorities and stakeholders can interact with a wide community of data experts and mappers who can support the creation of innovative communication materials to be also possibly used in collaboration with data journalists and civic hackers.

Collaborative maps and related communication products can contribute to make the entire process more visible and viral also on social media and integrate a wide range of other materials, such as video or audio podcast, pictures, etc, in the form of collaborative platforms with concrete effects in terms of online and offline communication.



In Ghent the Living Streets project contributed to foster the involvement of residents and stakeholders around places and initiatives for sustainable development to be shared and reinforced. The action of collaborative mapping was reinforced by the creation of innovative communication tools which made the impact of their action visible to residents and stakeholders

Links and contacts

Interactive Cities – URBACT Network

<http://urbact.eu/interactive-cities>

The URBACT Network on the use of social media to improve urban governance and foster the participation of residents

Tech Town – URBACT Network

<http://urbact.eu/techtown>

The URBACT Network on digital economy and the use of ICT platforms for urban regeneration and growth

CityLab

<https://www.citylab.com/>

Original reporting and visual storytelling on cities

Citiscope

<http://www.citiscope.org/>

An independent journalism platform on urban solutions

Guardian Cities

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities>

The Guardian section on cities and urban development

Cooperative City

<https://cooperativecity.org/>

An online magazine on city making processes and urban transformations in European cities

Solutions Journalism Network

<http://solutionsjournalism.org/>

A network of journalists and media professionals proposing solutions to social challenges

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