

Abitare Solidale

Ester Stefanelli

Project Stage:

Growth

Website:

<http://www.auserfirenze.it> SHARE

- [Aging](#)
- [Citizen participation](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Volunteerism](#)

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

The project aims to spread cohabitations based on solidarity and mutual aid upon elders and people who show high risk of social exclusion or poverty

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

In recent years, the welfare and social protection systems are strongly challenged by the increase and diversification of demand as well as by the decrease of available resources. The combination of these elements makes the traditional policy approaches inadequate, as they are too "sectorial" and inflexible. The weakness of previous responses is represented by the following elements: Inappropriate housing policies, Inappropriate home care services provided at institutional level, Inappropriate social policies to protect unemployed people, ecc The project represents a solution to cope with the problem of isolation and social exclusion of older people. It allows older people to stay longer in their homes improving their active participation in society. The project improves older people's independent living and self-determination. It represents a solution to the decreasing availability of informal care givers (women, family networks); and represents an alternative to retirement homes, which are not sustainable in a long-term perspective for structural and environmental reasons. The project helps people in need to find affordable and decent accommodation allowing them to actively participate in society; The project offers an innovative solution to new causes of poverty and social exclusion: precarious jobs, migration, people not entitled to public protection schemes and/or to public care services. Through the idea of mutual aid, the project represents an alternative to the isolation and stigmatisation of people facing economical or personal difficulties. The results of analysis of the social situation made by AUSER in the province of Florence has led to the development of new interventions offering integrated solutions to different kinds of social needs. The project represents a solution for both of these target groups: they can have free housing in exchange for support. It is giving them a chance to have the basic right of decent and affordable accommodation, to be able to exercise other rights through an active participation in society (aspiration). Leaving the cohabitants to decide the conditions of cohabitation, the project not only provides answers to current problems, but it also builds the basis for a relationship of mutual support that, with the help of volunteers and professionals, is becoming more mature and sustainable (economically and socially).

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Abitare Solidale offers an innovative and sustainable solution to self-sufficient older people in need of help with household maintenance and housework to persons experiencing economic difficulties who are in need of an affordable and decent accommodation, as well as to women who are victims of domestic violence and in need of a temporary shelter. Specific innovative elements of Abitare Solidale New form of service: The project promotes the idea of cohabitation as a new form of service, providing an integrated response to different kinds of problems and needs and overcoming classical sectoral boundaries in social services. Governance: The service is provided by an innovative form of broad and integrated partnership involving public authorities, private actors, volunteer organisations and paid staff (social workers, consultants, psychologists, legal advisor). Resourcing: The project is financed by reciprocity resources (private and public resources to retrofit the apartments; public workers and volunteers working together to involve people in the project, and to support and monitor the cohabitation). Sustainability The project is highly sustainable because it implies the optimisation of the existing housing stock and it promotes social and urban mix. Leaving the cohabitants to decide the conditions of cohabitation, the project not only provides answers to current problems, but it also builds the basis for a relationship of mutual support that, with the help of volunteers and professionals, is becoming more mature and sustainable (economically and socially). The project is based on the idea of mutual aid and it represents: • an alternative solution to retirement homes for older people; • an affordable and decent housing solution for people at risk of poverty and exclusion or experiencing economic difficulties (families of migrants, students, unemployed persons); • a shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence. • It involves various and different target groups and stakeholders; • It provides the use of legal tools that have been created to legally formalise the cohabitation (the Housing Covenant, and the Free Use of Property).

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Through the use of our network and phoneline we identify the target groups. People willing to start cohabitation have preliminary meetings to get to know each other and exchange their ideas. A group of experts (psychologist, social workers and volunteers) supports, monitors and evaluates this process. The cohabitants start a "trial period" of cohabitation signing the Housing Covent (Patto Abitativo), which is a written agreement between

cohabitants containing reciprocal commitments. The cohabitants share responsibilities on the household maintenance and household errands according to their needs (it is important to underline that the cohabitation does not replace personal and care services but it is based on the idea of mutual aid). The cohabitation is officially recognised using an ad hoc legal tool: the Free Use of Property Covenant Comodato d'uso gratuito d'immobile), which is a new legal instrument, developed for the purposes of the project and registered with the local public authority, which officially recognises the cohabitation and guarantees the opportunity to stop living together in the case of a violation of the Housing Covenant

Sustainability

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

In our territory there is no project such as Abitare Solidale. There are a few similar initiatives regarding the housing problem but the traditional policy approaches are inadequate, as they are too "sectorial" and inflexible. From the Poverty Hostels or religious relief centres to mini-apartments, elders are not considered as a social resource and are not allowed to stay longer in their homes, with a huge waste of public resources. Any other project found is mission and effectiveness on the responsabilization between the parts, mutual aid, reciprocity. The University of Florence had tried cohabitation projects between students-elders without success due to different needs and the lack of supervision and tutoring

About You

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Implementer(s) and cooperation partners

Name

Auser

Type

Non profit/NGO/citizen sector organization

Country where main implementer is located

How long has the main implementer been operating?

15 years

Please provide a short description of the main implementer.

This project is carried on by volunteers, professionals, counsellors, psychologists from AUSER Association along with ARTEMISIA. Both associations cooperate with the social Welfare System of the partnering Communes and is supported by lawyers' consultants too.

Cooperation partner

Name

Artemisia

Type

Non-profit/NGO/citizen sector organisation

Website

How does this cooperation partner support the initiative? What competencies and resources does this partner bring to the initiative?

The ARTEMISIA social organization cooperates to the project by deploying and carrying on the following activities: communications, selection of candidates to house-sharing (including women who have been victims of violence), as well as support during the phases of new projects of co-habitation

Cooperation partner

Name

Type

Please select

Website

How does this cooperation partner support the initiative? Which competencies and resources does this partner bring to the initiative?

Approximately 50 words left (300 characters).

Cooperation partner

Name

Type

Please select

Website**How does this cooperation partner support the initiative? Which competencies and resources does this partner bring to the initiative?**

Approximately 50 words left (300 characters).

Cooperation partner

Name**Type**

Please select

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Approximately 50 words left (300 characters).

Problem and solution

Which of these fields of Active and Healthy Ageing are addressed by your initiative?

Assisted daily living, Independent living solutions, Social inclusion (intergenerational practice, work and volunteering), Age friendly buildings, environments, and communities.

If none of the above, answer here:**Please describe if and how your stakeholders (cooperation partners, funders, users, etc.) have been participating in defining the problem and developing the solution.**

The following stakeholders are involved in the project:

- AUSER: voluntary association working with older people
- ARTEMISIA: voluntary association working to protect women and children who are victims of violence
- Municipality of Florence, Bagno a Ripoli, Scandicci, Sesto Fiorentino, Cascina
- Housing Agency of the Municipality of Florence (public authority)
- Private architecture offices providing retrofitting services at favorable prices (because of certain agreements with the public authorities) (private actors)

The ARTEMISIA Association collaborates to produce effective procedures, in the extent to give shelter and safety to women undergoing domestic violence. ARTEMISIA also supplies psychological support all along all steps of the habitation plan. ARTEMISIA social volunteers collaborate with Welfare Social operators and coordinate the profiles and the planning for possible beneficiaries.

Has your solution been tested in trials, experimentations, or pilot projects? If yes, please describe the process and outcome.

The project has been tested for a year, in order to define and control the processes and identify possible difficulties. During this period, a number of 50 offers and requests have been looked over, 10 cohabitations were activated. The result shows the validity of the methods of selection of the candidates, the effectiveness of the cohabitation expressed both by "guests" and "hosts". At the end of the experimentation we shared all the positive results with all the stakeholders and partner to increase the project.

How long has your solution been in operation?

for 15 years

Please select the relationship between your solution and related solutions currently established in our society. Is your solution...

complementary (your solution is complementing existing solutions and compensating their weaknesses while not intending to substitute them)

What barriers might hinder the success of your initiative? How do you plan to overcome them?

There is just one possible crucial situation: a cohabitation -or more- might suddenly interrupt because of any reason. It would then become critical to find an alternative solution to such cases. Abitare Solidale makes a point to ward off, trying to solve relational problems that may turn up even after months. Abitare Solidale is also increasing the number of its franchisees and partners to spread a major offer of house-sharing. The more Communes and individuals subscribe and support Abitare Solidale Project, the wider the choice of a solution.

Organization and funding

Regularly paid employees

5

Volunteers

120

Trainees

3

External advisers and experts

8

Others (please specify)

ufficio comunicazione e grafica

What are the specific professional backgrounds and competencies your team brings to the initiative?

The team consists of: psychologists, legal advisors, communication specialists, counselors and social workers. The project benefits from the experience gained in the field by the volunteers.

Please describe your management or coordination structure in the initiative.

We have two sections of coordination and management: the technical team made of the project manager, partner's representatives which has the task of manage the strategies and improve the project; the executive team (made of three project operators and one Welfare Service officer for each Comune) carries out all operational activities which are weekly scheduled. The Team also provides training for new volunteers.

Please provide the total yearly budget in Euro that your initiative spends on implementing the solution.

25.000

National public funding

60%

European Union public funding

%

Economic return from own products/services

%

Foundations and philanthropy capital

%

Single donations from private individuals

%

Donations from private companies

30%

Crowdfunding platforms

%

Participation fees

10%

Other (please specify)

%

Target group, scale and impact**Which target group(s) do you want to reach with your solution?**

Older people living in apartments, which are too big or not adapted to their needs, who risk to lose their self-sufficiency and to be isolated from society. Older people's relatives in need of new care solutions more adapted to their needs and their life style. Disadvantaged people at risk of poverty and in need of decent and affordable housing. These are mostly represented by families of migrants, unemployed people and students. Women who are victims of domestic violence in need of a temporary shelter to start a new life.

Please estimate the number of persons within your target group (users, clients, etc.) that you currently reach directly with your solution.

250

In which local/regional/national area(s) is the solution currently implemented?

Toscana

What is the impact on your target group (users, clients) you want to generate?

The project represents a solution to cope with the problem of isolation and social exclusion of older people. It allows older people to stay longer in their homes improving their active participation in society; improves older people's independent living and self-determination; It represents a solution to the decreasing availability of informal care givers (women, family networks); It represents an alternative to retirement homes which are not sustainable in a long-term perspective for structural and environmental reasons.

What is the wider impact on society you want to generate?

the project it is environment-friendly: it is based on the optimisation of the existing housing stock and it represents an alternative to retirement homes which are not sustainable on a long-term basis for structural and environmental reasons.
social inclusion and integration: the project facilitates the creation of interpersonal relationships and promotes the value of solidarity between generations as a way to actively participate to society and combat isolation. Moreover, the project shows the added value of volunteering by, and for, older people to active ageing, solidarity, active citizenship

What are the impacts on your target group you already achieved?

The project helps people in need to find affordable accommodation allowing them to actively participate in society; offers an innovative solution to

new causes of poverty and social exclusion: precarious jobs, migration, people not entitled to public protection schemes and/or to public care services. Through the idea of mutual aid, the project represents an alternative to the isolation and stigmatisation of people facing economical or personal difficulties. The project improves the independent living and self-determination of older people and to participate in a mutual aid activity based on solidar

How has the impact of your initiative been assessed?

Experience-based self-assessment (you assessed the impacts based on your experiences with the target group), Feedback-based self-assessment (you assessed the impacts based on feedback from the target group without using specific methods), External evaluation of impacts based on qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, etc.).

Public information and strategy

What information on your initiative is publicly available?

Mission and strategy, Organisational structure, Activity report, Working method and 'theory of change'.

Please indicate webpage or contact for obtaining the respective information.

www.auserfirenze.it

What are your milestones for further developing, implementing, and establishing your initiative in the next three years? Please describe 1-3 milestones.

- development of welfare systems based on mutual aid that increase the social participation and the active citizenship among disadvantaged.
- reinforce the partner's network for a broad and integrated partnership involving public authorities, private actors, volunteer organisations and paid staff both economically and professionally
- hand over the project in other areas in order to reach a recognition as a good practice of the Region of Tuscany and its achievement in the social policy of the regional planning

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