

Project Review: Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini (Sustainable cities for girls and boys)

1) Basic Data

Project Title: Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini (Sustainable cities for girls and boys)

Country: Italy

Initiators of the project: Ministero dell’Ambiente, Italia (Ministry of the Environment, Italy); Istituto degli Innocenti (*Institute of the Innocents*); Comitato Italiano per l’UNICEF (Italian National Committee for UNICEF)

Project focus:

Focus areas	emphasis	
	low	high
Situation Analysis		●
Child and Youth Participation		●
Cross-Sectoral Approaches		●
Strategic Partnerships		●
Attention to Disadvant. Groups		●
Linkages with CFC Networks		●
Advocacy Strategies		●
Resource Mobilisation	●	
Institutional and Legal Reforms		●
Capacity Building		●
Monitoring & Evaluation		●

Target group: The children and adolescents of Italy.

Starting and ending date: 1996 - this is an ongoing activity.

2) Background

The situation of the target group

Since the beginning of the 1990s, an enormous and ever-increasing interest has arisen in Italy around the concept of child friendly cities. This interest has found tangible form in socio-political-institutional programmes that were initiated at governmental level in the second half of the decade. In response to this extensive new area of research and concern, the Italian Government, the regional governments and local administrations have approved laws, developed policies and allocated specific funding for bettering the lives of children living in an urban environment. At the same time, there has been increasing interest in these concepts from local authorities, the academic world, mass media, society at large, and from children themselves. The reasons for this interest and the initiatives that have been undertaken are

many and varied and some even predate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

Three factors characterized the evolution of this interest in Italy:

1. the affirmation of a new culture of childhood that calls for immediate remedial action;
2. the emergence of a new culture of the city, a sustainable city in which participation is encouraged;
3. attention to a new relationship between the child and the urban environment.

The reasons for the new interest in the public arena in Italy concerning children's issues were based on: international awareness of environmental degradation, an attention deficit in developing countries about the consequences of pollution through unchecked development, and the high social cost of poor urban planning.

These general principles of interest in children's welfare were given applicability through the delineation of further international instruments:

- the *Green Book on the Urban Environment*, 1990, by the European Union sought, for the first time, to give a comprehensive description of territorial and urban action that could assist sustainable development.
- the *Barcelona Charter on the Educative City*, 1991, delineated a complex system of constantly evolving parameters that express, according to diverse modalities, the absolute priority of cultural growth and on-going formation possibilities for the well-being of citizens.
- the European Union commissioned research on a city without cars in 1991 to see if it was technically possible and economically feasible to model a city in which mobility was assured through a combination of means other than automobiles. The study analysed two things: urban structures and modalities for juxtaposing commercial centres and people.
- *Agenda 21 Rio de Janeiro*, 1992, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) discussed the environmental problems of the planet and their links to social and economic development. Participants from 150 countries gathered to examine climate change and the worldwide protection of biodiversity; an important outcome was a sense of environmental stewardship which would take the form of sustainable development, particularly of the management and conservation of forests. Other significant issues dealt with in this Conference were: the social and economic dimensions of poverty, health, demographic change, production problems; the reinforcement of the highly significant role of groups that work for the rights of women, children, NGOs, peasants and agricultural labourers, local councils; reopening of the debate concerning just financing and the role of world finance organizations.
- The *Charter of Aalborg*, 1994, elaborated the concept of sustainability within the European context by devolving responsibility to local administrations for elaborating plans of action to achieve permanent, sustainable city development. The objectives were social justice, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability that would ensure the conservation of an area's natural capital, prohibit poisonous emissions into the atmosphere above the capacity of the air and soil to transform them, and to conserve local biodiversity.
- *World Conference on Human Settlements Habitat II, Istanbul*, 1996, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, was the second United Nations conference on the environment and development and dealt with the theme of human habitation, an urgent problem, because at the time, around half of the 600 million citizens who lived in

difficult and dangerous urban situations were children. The Habitat Agenda was formulated and a Declaration made in which guidelines were expounded. These guidelines could be followed by governments to facilitate fully the human right to adequate housing. UNICEF launched the Child Friendly Cities Initiative at Habitat II and so linked children's rights to environmental issues to underscore the undeniable right of all children to a healthy and friendly environment. Since 1996, the Child Friendly Cities partners have met in Accra, Ghana, for the International Workshop on Africa's Urban Poor Child; in 1997 for the Towards African Child friendly Cities meeting; and there have been major forums in Italy in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000.

- UNICEF seized the initiative given by the World Summit on the Child, New York 1991, to launch the Sindaci difensori dei bambini (Mayors as Defenders of Children) initiative that was to give a voice to children by welcoming their involvement in local authority policy development. Legal instruments that build on this start are the Dakar Declaration 1992, and the New Vision for Urban Children and Families prepared by the Meeting of Mayors, Urban Planners and Policy Makers, Florence 1992. The Second International Colloquium of Mayors as Defenders of Children was held in Mexico City, 5-6 July 1993.
- The World Health Organization commenced its Healthy Cities programme in 1987 in order to implement the United Nations "Health for all by 2000" strategy. Working directly with local governments through a network of committed cities, the programme aims to assist cities in dealing with health related issues such as poverty and social exclusion, social support, urban planning and transport, and the special needs of vulnerable groups.

It was on this basis that "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) became the focus of Italian government attention.

Political context

In Italy, policies concerning childhood have been maturing over a long period of time. From the end of the Second World War to the beginning of the 1990s, the rights of children did not figure in the national political agenda because children were seen only in their capacity as future adult citizens. Throughout this period, however slowly, concepts concerning childhood were being significantly transformed in sociological and educational academic circles. Subsequent to 1950, educational and cultural experiments were carried out with particular attention to the needs and rights of the child; these innovations towards active educational practices influenced the reforms of public schools and the more general assumption that the educative process can be an instrument for creating cultural paradigms. The objective of these experiments was not only to reform the social science of education, but also to create a new relationship between the child and the surrounding complex social context, including of course, the urban context.

The Italian economic boom of the nineteen-sixties coincided with economic and governmental policies that contributed to a degradation of urban and peripheral city areas: together these two forces had negative impacts on the urban landscape and the social fabric of life lived within that landscape. From this time onwards, the movements raising ecological questions came to the fore and consequently the debate concerning economic and urban development in Italy was given life. The fruit of this social change was critical reflection on what constituted the dominant policies of urban growth.

In 1992, the Italian National Committee for UNICEF launched the Sindaci Difensori dell'Infanzia (Mayors as Defenders of Children) initiative to facilitate an international network

through which municipal authorities might share their expertise in developing programmes of assistance to poor women and children.

At this time the main national ecological associations were formed: Italia Nostra (*Our Italy*)¹, WWF (World Wildlife Fund), Legambiente. Each had its own sphere of influence. These organizations subsequently influenced the development of the notion of child friendly cities. Professional and academic interest in ecological disciplines increased and this, in turn, gave rise to strategies and projects that focused on a participative approach to solving urban problems. From the earliest stages, children were encouraged to participate in initiatives that empowered them within their urban context. Organizations, professional operatives and local entities all involved children and adolescents in new educative projects for the betterment of their living conditions in cities. All these factors assisted in the sustained development of a new cultural appreciation of childhood.

Justification of the Initiative

The evolution in Italy of new political policies concerning childhood was sustained by a new cultural appreciation of the significance of childhood as a precious time of real awareness, and not simply as a time of seclusion until real life begins as an adult; these new policies were reinforced by means of the implementation of programmes throughout the country. For most of the twentieth century, experts (parents, educators, government administrators) interpreted “childhood” with reference to educational, sociological and psychological theories. These theories were based on the predominant concepts of growth and development. On this basis, initiatives to assist children were occupied primarily with assistance, education and protection of the child and secondarily with encouraging play and socialization.

During the 1990s, ideas about childhood were reinvigorated by an important change in the theory underlining them. In the aftermath of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, the notion of children as citizens capable of social participation who have rights of their own, transformed the preconceptions held by experts and sustained new areas of study.

In the new vision of childhood, children are considered to be competent social actors who can provide their own personal contributions to the general social well-being and who are capable of demanding their own rights and place in society through the intelligent decisions they make. The idea of the child as a developing person whose fulfilment lies in a future prospect, has largely been replaced by that of the child as an active person, a protagonist in society with present relevance. The child has become, in the theoretical sphere, a person considered to be valuable for his/her social competence at understanding the world around them and capable of forming autonomous plans of action. If this is the case, then children deserve attention because they are overwhelmed by the worst disadvantages of living in degraded cities in which they are deprived of real possibilities to meet and socialize with other people in an unself-conscious way.

Although cities have long been considered to be environments offering cultural rebirth and in which rich opportunities are found for the personal and civil expression of human needs and passions, this is not the reality for all urban populations (certainly not for large numbers of citizens in developing countries). In both the industrialized and developing countries, children are always those most adversely affected by marginalization, poverty and pollution. Children are the hidden and silent victims of adverse social currents. The plight of children who live in

¹ Note on translation from Italian into English throughout this document: When there exists a known English version of an Italian phrase, whether the phrase covers an organisation or an idea, then the English equivalent appears immediately in brackets after the Italian phrase; however, when the Italian phrase has been literally translated into English and there is no certainty that that would have been the preferred rendering, then the literal English translation appears in italics immediately after the Italian phrase or word.

degraded urban situations is particularly pitiful because the new theories and practices have shown that, when they are consulted, children have solutions to their own environmental problems and points of view regarding the societies of which they are vital protagonists.

The paradigm of the child friendly city uses the child as its parameter. The motive for this choice is that children normally do not defend their own interests and tend to make innovative and disinterested proposals that would benefit all the citizens of a city. This model does not propose better services for children, but rather a more general change. The idea fundamentally consists in giving priority to the competence of the child in being able to change society for the better through active participation.

At the same time as the theoretical basis for child friendly cities was being laid, a wider appreciation in the international arena was being formulated of the holistic health of a city. The World Health Organization launched the Healthy Cities programme in 1987. From the point of view of the child, an unhealthy city leads to boredom, unchecked traffic leads to urban and social chaos, poorly designed urban areas do not provide places to explore and play, and the guiding principles for social change come from adults and motorists.

Since health and education are fundamental supports for the child's well-being, another major international advance for children was made in 1990 when the International Association of Educative Cities promulgated its Charter in Barcelona, Spain. The Association comprises one-hundred and fifty cities around the world. From the perspective of these educative cities, education is defined as being a learning process from birth to death that takes into account the identity and culture of those who live in the city.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, recognition was given to the problems of urban ecology, the prevention of disease was seen to be linked to improved environmental quality, and due value was given to the importance of self-help, inter-sectoral collaboration and the participation of the community in the implementation and management of programmes.

The general principles that articulate a child friendly city are in large measure the same as those which describe a healthy city. In the face of the groundswell of evidence about urban breakdown, the Italian government took decisive action.

3) Description of the Initiative

Main goal of the initiative

The project "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) aims to contribute to a new mode of thinking about, developing and managing cities by attending to the many common points and possible synergies in policies that affect the needs and rights of children, together with the new and urgent problems that pertain to sustainable cities.

Objectives of the initiative

The main objectives of the project "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) are to:

- Place the issue of a city adapted for children centrally on the agenda of local administrations.
- Retrain the technical staff of local authorities to ensure their competence and efficiency.
- Open the processes that favour participative urban projects.

Roles played by stakeholders

The roles played by the various stakeholders are as follows:

- Ministero dell’Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment) initiated the project, ensures funding for participating cities, and directs and coordinates the initiatives relating to the “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project.
- Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) provided the major financial contribution for the initiation of the project and provides a link between the Child friendly Cities (CFC) Secretariat and activities supported by the Italian government in developing countries.
- Istituto degli Innocenti (*Institute of the Innocents*), Florence, is a major collaborator with the Ministero dell’Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment) and provides technical expertise and analytical skills that enrich and deepen the nature of the project.
- Comitato italiano per l’UNICEF (Italian National Committee for UNICEF) in a strategic alliance with the Ministero dell’Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment), investigates and researches the improvements being made in the international sphere to the methodologies and practices of intervention that characterise other national projects. In addition, it facilitates the consolidation of the Italian Child friendly Cities (CFC) initiative through its foundation work with the Sindaci difensori dei bambini (Mayors, Defenders of Children) programme which it has promoted since 1991. It further contributes towards the development of an international network of Child friendly Cities and organizes the Annual International Forum on Child friendly Cities.
- UN-HABITAT has maintained a long-standing partnership with UNICEF on the commitment to create urban environments that respect the rights of women and children. UN-HABITAT has developed child-centred strategies to be used at local authority level as decentralising tools for implementing children’s rights. The Child friendly Cities (CFC) Secretariat liaises with UN-HABITAT to share data collection and information systems on initiatives in favour of women and children.
- ANCI, Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (National Association of Italian City Councils), represents nationally the interests of local authorities. It seeks to deepen the understanding of problems faced by municipal governments. As the voice of local government at the national level, ANCI is instrumental in guiding local authorities to adopt child friendly policies for implementation in a local environment.

Please refer also to Section 4, Strategic Partnerships, for an explanation of the role played by representatives of Il Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti (*The National Council of Architects*) and environmental groups.

Time-frame and planning cycles

The “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project was initiated by the Ministero dell’Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment) in 1996 and Legge 285/97 (Italian Law no. 285 of 1997) defined the cultural, political and legislative boundaries of the project. A plan of action was drawn up at the national level to encourage local authorities to develop policies and programmes for which prizes would be awarded. The Ministry of the Environment has supported the project from this time forward.

These awards for excellence in promoting sustainable spaces for children are made on an annual basis and are based on parameters of measurable sustainability that refer directly to childhood. They were originally devised by a technical committee whose members were drawn from experts in the Ministry of the Environment, the Comitato Italiano per l’UNICEF (Italian National Committee for UNICEF) and the Comune di Roma (Rome City Council). The objectives constantly under consideration are to rethink services for children, to

coordinate all the spaces dedicated to education, to organize systematically all areas of play, to institute children's participation, to rethink functional aspects of the city in order to meet the needs of children, to assign financial resources to fund child friendly projects and to push forward renewal of squares, streets and public spaces to facilitate children's socialization.

4) Strategies

Situation Analysis

An analysis of the principles underlying the Italian sustainable cities project shows that there are three areas of city life which require fundamental attention in order to implement the requirements of the project; they are cultural, institutional and environmental.

In the cultural area:

- the social participation of children should be promoted, particularly through workshops;
- services of the kind that provide play and socialization opportunities should be provided for children and adolescents;
- the promotion of children's and adolescents' gatherings in their own neighbourhoods;
- sensitise people to the idea of citizenship, particularly children.

In the institutional area:

- a new system of governing cities is needed;
- networks need to be created;
- lower levels of rigidity should be tolerated;
- technical training must be ensured.

In the environmental area:

- the interactions between children and the environment should be changed;
- urban mobility should be promoted;
- plans for the regulation of traffic and for reduction in the levels of pollution must be implemented;
- green areas should be maximized together with recreational urban spaces;
- ecologically sound management of waste should be the norm;
- architectural barriers should be demolished.

Based on the above principles, national policies were formulated for implementation at the local level. The Italian government provided a form of mixed financing to encourage local administrations to enter into the project and provided two incentives: a Riconoscimento (an award of recognition entitled: "Miglior progetto per una città sostenibile delle bambine e dei bambini" ("Best project for a child friendly city")) and a Premio (a prize for: "Iniziativa più significativa per migliorare l'ambiente urbano con e per i bambini" (Most significant initiative aiming at improving the urban environment for and with children)). The Riconoscimento was first awarded in 1998 and the Premio was introduced in 1999. The awards were last made in 2001. In parallel with these awards, Ministero dell'Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment) promoted the foundation of a series of initiatives to sustain projects.

- A data base was created to record the many diverse examples of sustainable city programmes. It is constantly updated and the experiences are evaluated to maximize its usefulness. The data base is available for consultation, only in the Italian language, within the sustainable cities website: <http://www.cittasostenibili.minori.it>

- An information office was opened to gather information on initiatives and projects by local authorities that centre on the relationship between the child and the city. The office serves citizens, practitioners within the services' sector, institutions and associations that request information and documentation on legislation, projects, events, and national and international organizations working in the field. The office supports a website which may be consulted at: <http://www.sostenibili.minori.it>
- A service agency was founded to assist towns and cities wanting to adopt the practices of "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable cities for girls and boys).
- "La guida alle città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (The Guide to Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys), 1998, was produced; it contains information relating to experiences, discussion of the themes underlining project development, methodologies, rules for implementation and legal information.
- Naples hosted the first Forum entitled "Verso le città amiche delle bambine e dei bambini" (*Towards friendly cities for girls and boys*) in 1997; a second international Forum of the same title was organized in Turin in 1998. Molfetta hosted the third Forum in November, 1999; a fourth Forum in November, 2000 was held in Firenze (Florence) and Scandicci.
- A permanent secretariat was established by the Italian National Committee for UNICEF for these international Forums, "Verso le città amiche delle bambine e dei bambini" (*Towards friendly cities for girls and boys*), to invite Italian cities, and others at large, to discuss the rights of the child and policies for sustainable cities.

Children's and Youth's Participation

Children's participation is an aspect of the project, "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable cities for girls and boys). After the initial implementation of the project, analysis began to define the "best practices" amongst the many attempts to ameliorate the living conditions of children in cities. A register has been kept of these good examples. The criteria for selection according to the governmental decree that underpins the project is that the city initiative must be in the environmental area and must be carried out with the direct participation of children. Those experiences that are nominated as best practices carry with them appropriate methodologies that lend themselves to replicability.

Cross-sectoral approaches

The philosophy underlying the concept of a sustainable city for girls and boys necessarily incorporates cross-sectoral approaches because it is concerned with the child's quality of life: their health, safety, educative possibilities and socialization. Both children and adults benefit from society's comprehension and understanding of children's ideas and from acceptance of their aspirations and hopes. Since the realization of this philosophy lies in the details, it is at the level of the Italian local authority that cross-fertilization of individual administrative sectors transforms the quality of life at the township level.

Children's councils have offered children in towns and cities across Italy the chance to intervene in local politics without the need to "ask permission" from adults. A programme of voting in schools based on electoral manifestos by the child candidates resulted in the election of representatives to attend a children's assembly to work on chosen projects and selected thematic problems. The assembly members were allocated a budget to realize their programmes of action. These assemblies are part of a network of children's councils operating throughout Europe.

Strategic partnerships

Two partnerships of great significance have been formed with the Ministero dell'Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment).

In the course of 1999, Il Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti (*The National Council of Architects*) signed a Protocollo d'Intesa (*Protocol of understanding*) with the Ministry of the Environment. The result was as follows: Il Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti (*The National Council of Architects*) was to promote the penetration of the project into the professional arena of architecture. Emphasis was, therefore, given to the value of architectural practices that were sustainable, environmentally friendly, and that promoted the liveability of built spaces, particularly with respect to girls and boys. A travelling exhibition was mounted under the auspices of Il Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti (*The National Council of Architects*) to communicate information concerning the project and to sensitise technical practitioners and local authority personnel to the need to involve the population in urban planning.

An Agreement was also established between the Ministry of the Environment and the major environmental organizations that advocate sustainable development: WWF (World Wildlife Fund), Legambiente, Italia Nostra (*Our Italy*), Agesci - Associazione Guide e Scout Cattolici Italiani (*Italian Catholic Association of Guides and Scouts*), Arciragazzi, Cts - Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile (*Centre for Student and Youth Tourism*) and Democrazia in erba (*Grassroots Democracy*). The text of the Agreement expresses the awareness that "non-governmental organizations, particularly environmental organizations, have a central role to play in the formation of sustainable cities for girls and boys, for in addition to being effective at the local level, they are free to create pilot projects using innovative and experimental modalities for intervention and modification of urban processes." The fruit of this collaboration between government and non-governmental organizations has been seen in the way that children have participated in projects with real awareness and understanding of the environment. The goal that the Ministry and these environmental organizations is working towards is to guarantee autonomy, equal opportunity, and participation of all children in the life of a healthy city, to ensure children's socialization and their formation as active citizens, and to contribute to sustainable development.

Linkages with CFC networks

Since the "Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini" (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project is the work of the Ministry of the Environment its linkages to Child friendly Cities (CFC) networks are on the level of liaison.

To facilitate this international liaison, UNICEF established an International Secretariat for Child friendly Cities to sustain and expand, to document and propagate the Child friendly Cities (CFC) ethics internationally.

Special attention to disadvantaged groups

Attention has been given to multicultural issues and the problems of immigrants. It often takes time and reflection on the part of a community to recognise that a special section of its social body has been neglected for historical and cultural reasons. It is only after acknowledgment, that action can be formulated. The following examples in four localities show the nature of that special attention:

- The city council of Ostuni organized the Week of Children of the Mediterranean as an annual event for encouraging a culture of hospitality in the region.
- Pesaro hosted an intercultural festival with international stands and has become a twin-city with Keita (Niger).

- The city council of Belluno has established a migrant information service that promotes educational initiatives on multiculturalism, such as a multiethnic calendar, and it supports intercultural mediation to assist migrant children and their families.
- Turin has an Intercultural Centre and a Hospitality Centre; it has produced a CD-ROM on intercultural themes for use in schools, by associations and for the use of practitioners; it organises festivals and demonstrations; it initiates bilingual projects and is working to integrate Roma and Sinti children into the schooling system.

Advocacy and awareness-raising strategies

The project now has a history of seven years experience following on from its establishment by the Italian Government and the annual prize allocation has grown in prestige and importance. At this point in time, therefore, the project has its own momentum and its energies are focused rather on broadening and deepening the project.

Institutional and Legal Reforms

The “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project was launched in June, 1996, by the Italian Government to systematise the many initiatives that had been made in the early 1990s by various parties interested in acting upon the tide of enthusiasm and information flooding from the Habitat 2 Istanbul Conference.

Two laws have been promulgated to give initial shape to the project: “285/97 Disposizioni per la promozione di diritti e di opportunità per l’infanzia e l’adolescenza” (“285/97 *Regulations for the promotion of rights and opportunities for children and adolescents*”), “344/97 Disposizioni per lo sviluppo e la qualificazione degli interventi e dell’occupazione in campo ambientale” (“344/97 *Regulations for the development and qualification of interventions and activities relating to the environment*”), together with a Decree of 3 August, 1998, “Istituzione del Riconoscimento “Città Sostenibili delle Bambine e dei Bambini” da assegnarsi ai comuni italiani” (“*The institution of the award of recognition for “Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys” to be assigned to Italian local authorities*”). The Decree gives quality control indicators for sustainable cities. The laws were put in place to promote rights and opportunities for children and adolescents, and the decree of the Ministry of the Environment instituted prizes in recognition of those cities that had become sustainable cities for children and adolescents through the programmes of action (environmental, cultural and institutional) that they had implemented.

The first awards were made in 1998; there has since been an annual governmental allocation of funding for these prizes. The evaluation of the entries is carried out according to a complex technical process in which cities and towns are graded by population and assigned points for compliance with environmental, cultural and institutional indicators.

The institution was for “Best project for a child friendly city” with 2 categories, cities and towns above and below 50,000 inhabitants, and “Most significant initiative aiming at improving the urban environment for and with children” opens to communities smaller than 15,000 inhabitants.

The objective of awarding prizes was not to delineate good and bad projects, but rather to highlight excellence in achieving levels of sustainability for the well-being of urban children.

See Appendix I for a list of the prize-winning city councils for the period 1998-2001.

Resource mobilisation

The allocation of funding to a city council for its involvement in the project is made when the judicial Commissione (Commission) of the Ministry of the Environment approves the funding. The Commission is composed of representatives from the Ministry of the Environment and nominated parties from: Dipartimento Affari Sociali della Presidenza del Consiglio die

Ministri (*Department of Social Affairs in the office of the President of the Council of Ministers*), Conferenza Stato-Città (City-State Conference), Comitato Italiano per l'UNICEF (Italian Committee for UNICEF), ANPA - Consiglio Nazionale degli Architetti – (*National Council of Architects*), Coordinamento delle associazioni ambientaliste Agesci (Coordinator of the environmental associations Agesci) - (Associazione Guide e Scout Cattolici Italiani (*Italian Catholic Association of Guides and Scouts*)), Arciragazzi, Cts - Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile (*Centre for Student and Youth Tourism*)), Democrazia in erba (*Grassroots Democracy*), Legambiente, Italia Nostra (Our Italy), Uisp, WWF (World Wildlife Fund).

Allocation is made on the basis of positive evidence of initiatives that are relative to specific environmental areas of concern, that accord with the legal framework laid down in directives, and that show technical competence.

Capacity building activities and methods

The EASW (European Awareness Scenario Workshop) methodology originated in Denmark and has been found to be efficacious as a tool for stimulating social participation in finding solutions to the problems that characterize urban centres. Its two strengths are in generating participative projects and as a path of growth and understanding for children.

- For adults, the workshops have twenty-four to twenty-eight participants drawn broadly from local communities, who meet together for about four days to define and explore about five areas of interest. The workshops must be run with highly qualified staff: a facilitator, four session leaders, four assistants, a local organiser, and a national monitor.
- The children's workshops differ from those for adults in that they must be conducted over a longer period of time and must allow for flexibility of form.

The “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project has been influential in many areas of Italian public life. Two examples of flow-on activities that have evolved since the project's inception are that universities now conduct courses in town planning and some of the participants might then be involved in “stages” to give them practical experience, and professional institutes, like the Bioarchitettura Istituto Nazionale (*National Bioarchitecture Institute*), offer courses on the themes of healthy environments and land regeneration. In addition, the Institute offers retraining to construction site workers.

Capacity building initiatives are essential to the long-term success of this project. All local and regional administrators, schools and cultural institutions, educational and voluntary associations, professional bodies, corporations, companies and individuals must “share the knowledge acquired within their own fields of activity” in order to improve their capacity for action and coordination.

Monitoring and evaluation

The efforts of those towns and cities entering into completion for prizes awarded by the government for participation in the “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project are monitored and evaluated through the official, annual, selection process for those prizes.

The prizes awarded are a quantifiable evaluation of the genuine and committed efforts of cities and towns in Italy; the intuitive evaluation that the initiators and facilitators of the project look for is the response of the children who contribute actively to the programmes and who benefit from the recycling and greening of their urban spaces.

5) Activities and Tools

In order to redesign cities through the eyes of children as the “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) project aims to do, activities have been undertaken in all major areas of urban administration: town planning, urban mobility, protection of local natural systems, noise, air and electromagnetic pollution. These projects have been established and carried through to completion because of the activities of the principal partners: the Istituto degli Innocenti (*Institute of the Innocents*), Comitato italiano per l’UNICEF (Italian National Committee per UNICEF), and the office of the Ministry of the Environment. The activities include:

- An information office which provides resource backup to citizens, students, local administrations, associations and all who ask for documentation on sustainable cities. Apply to: Information Centre of the Ministero dell’Ambiente presso Istituto degli Innocenti (*the office of the Ministry of the Environment at Istituto degli Innocenti (Institute of the Innocents)*), piazza SS. Annunciata, 12, 50122, Florence, Italy. E-mail: cittasostenibili@minori.it
- A website has been created to give information about the sustainable cities project, to notify about upcoming events, campaigns and activities (nationally and internationally), and to be a meeting point for discussions and debate. It is also a resource holding examples of those projects that are considered exemplary and therefore desirable to replicate. At this website the methodology for sustainable city project development can be found. Website: www.cittasostenibili.minori.it
- A database of collected experiences is accessible through the website. Of particular interest are the projects carried out by municipalities that have been specifically recognized and awarded for their child-friendliness.
- The award for “Miglior progetto per una città sostenibile delle bambine e dei bambini” (“Best project for a child friendly city”) 1998-2001, and the prize for “Iniziativa più significativa per migliorare l’ambiente urban con e per i bambini” (“Most significant initiative aiming at improving the urban environment for and with children”) 1999-2001 were the result of collaborative efforts by the Istituto degli Innocenti (*Institute of the Innocents*), Comitato italiano per l’UNICEF (Italian National Committee per UNICEF) and the office of The Ministry of the Environment. The projects of all these cities are included in the database.

The following indicators are tools to use when sustainable city projects are being designed. The indicators selected by the technical committee were contained in the technical annex to the decree of 3 August 1998 by which The Ministry of the Environment established the recognition award given to worthy Italian cities.

To obtain the award, it is essential to have carried out actions in the environmental area. These specific fields of intervention have been identified (sub-areas):

- the reduction of air and noise pollution;
- the access to, and practical use of, common spaces;
- the eco-management of waste;
- the elimination of architectural barriers;
- the reinforcement of green areas;
- environmental education programmes, especially in relation to waste recycling;
- mobility.

The importance given to the cultural and institutional areas is to assess the existence of an effective global, integrated strategy to be employed coherently to realize environmentally relevant interventions. Furthermore, these initiatives have to show that they meet the following prerequisites:

- direct involvement of children in assessing the initiatives being carried out or underway;
- innovative approach must characterise the projects (e.g. an integrated approach to urban environmental problems or the use of new technologies or management systems);
- planning that demonstrates original thinking (an initiative to experiment with advanced, not routine, solutions);
- the potential for dissemination (a local initiative, that can be reproduced in all cities);
- the capacity to dialogue with the city, the characteristic of general participation (actively involving different local organizations, businesses, associations);
- positive effects on professional and labour relationships and training that can be documented quantitatively;
- financial commitment and the actual political will of the administration to proceed with the initiative.

In the institutional areas, new indicators have been introduced in the following sub-areas:

- commitment to the issues of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- adhesion to national or international “charters” or programmes;
- participation;
- workshops on participatory planning;
- examples of direct management of spaces by children;
- representative realizations with the contribution of children;
- training;
- number of studies on relevant issues.

The sub-area "monitoring and evaluation" has been renamed "administrative organization" to give greater clarity about its meaning and includes some new indicators:

- establishment of an inter-sectoral coordination;
- municipal funds earmarked each year for activities in favour of children;
- the use of funds according to Italian Law 285/97.

6) Conclusions

Highlighting of good practices and opportunities for replicability

The database of experiences concerning sustainable cities for girls and boys gathers, organizes and catalogues documentation. The database has been structured as four archives: projects, activities, documents and entities. The database of experiences is consultable in Italian in the pages of the website: www.cittasostenibile.minori.it.

The experiences are ranked in terms of excellence through the process of the annual awards; the best practices are drawn from those city councils that have developed their own initiatives but have incorporated the wisdom of other communities, that experientially engage children to explore and respond to their environment. Through the medium of the database, those practices evaluated to be of maximum interest become available for analysis and adoption by other city councils, organizations, and educational groups. The incorporation of practices, known to be effective, into future projects, campaigns, and experiences ensures that what is replicated from the wealth of experience now available, is what is most in tune with children's desires for their environment.

Future challenges and problems

A project as ambitious as “Città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini” (Sustainable cities for girls and boys) is by its nature a learning process for those trying to implement the recommendations and goals that underlie it. It is impossible to foresee, by theoretical means, the strength of interest that will be shown by local people towards participation in local initiatives. The education of its citizens depends on the political competence of those in government and the choices made, for the good of all, rest in their hands. The following are problems, defined through experience of this project, that require thoughtful resolution in order to achieve the deep political, social and educational change that this project works towards.

- Though local authorities show goodwill towards the ideas expressed through the project, in reality, few have adhered stringently to the exact nature of the recommendations.
- Though children’s councils are currently in place and functioning, their status often remains as “projects” and it is difficult to have them integrated into the management processes of governance.
- The frequent change in administrative personnel in local governments impedes the consolidation of the instruments for citizen participation; this results in frustration and demoralization of the citizens involved in participative processes.
- Even if citizen participation is theoretically in place, those citizens involved still lack the methodological competence and the breadth of experience possessed by the majority of the administrative staff.
- The professional structure of consultancy in this area is small and diffuse; although the professional backup for citizens participation is a growth area, it is still in the early stages of development and remains secondary in economic relevance.
- For the professionals who draw their livelihood from these areas of social service, the economic rewards are inadequate to encourage them to include participative components in the projects they design and implement.
- The procedure of awarding contracts to the lowest bidder, common in cultural and educational building enterprises, carries with it an economic penalty and an increase in time allocation to innovate and incorporate advanced methodologies of citizen participation. This is an obstacle to the diffusion of these sophisticated methodologies.
- The long gestation periods that serious processes of participation need for their growth and nurturing are often incompatible with the usual practices of government projects. Consequently, when the involvement of citizens is foreseen, it is often the case that oversimplified and banal practices of participation are adopted which debase the contribution of communities and of children.
- It is very often the case that the propositions put forward by the children go against the rigid bureaucracy and the fragmented decision making processes typical of public administration.

7) Consulted Documentation

La guida alle città sostenibili delle bambine e dei bambini, 1998, Ministero dell’Ambiente, Italia.

Le bambine e i bambini trasformano le città: progetti e buone pratiche per la sostenibilità ambientale nei comuni italiani, 2000, Ministero dell’Ambiente, Italia.

I bambini trasformano la città: metodologie e buone prassi della progettazione partecipata con i bambini, 2001, Ministero dell' Ambiente, Italia.

Child friendly cities in Italy, Paper presented at the International Forum, Florence, 2000.

Website: <http://www.cittasostenibili.minori.it>

Appendix I

Prize-winning city councils and commended entries throughout the period 1998-2001.

Wherever possible, a city council's website has been incorporated.

The exact location of the data base within the project website is:

<http://www.cittasostenibili.minori.it/bancadati/>

1998

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI FANO www.comune.fano.ps.it

Commendations:

COMUNE DI FERRARA www.comune.ferrara.it

COMUNE DI MODENA www.comune.modena.it

COMUNE DI TORINO www.comune.torino.it

COMUNE DI PESARO www.comune.pesaro.ps.it

COMUNE DI RIVOLI www.comune.rivoli.to.it

COMUNE DI MOLFETTA www.comune.molfetta.ba.it

COMUNE DI BOLZANO www.comune.bolzano.it

COMUNE DI PISTOIA www.comune.pistoia.it

COMUNE DI CINISELLO BALSAMO www.comune.cinisello-balsamo.mi.it

COMUNE DI PADOVA www.padovanet.it

COMUNE DI EMPOLI www.comune.empoli.fi

COMUNE DI RAVENNA www.comune.ra.it

COMUNE DI S.LAZZARO DI SAVENA www.comune.sanlazzaro.bologna.it

COMUNE DI CUNEO www.comune.cuneo.it

1999

Above 50.000 inhabitants

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI CREMONA www.rccr.cremona.it

Commendations:

COMUNE DI LA SPEZIA www.comune.sp.it
COMUNE DI ASTI www.comune.asti.it
COMUNE DI SCANDICCI www.comune.scandicci.fi.it
COMUNE DI COSENZA www.comune.cosenza.it
COMUNE DI PIACENZA www.comune.piacenza.it

1999

Under 50.000 inhabitants

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI NOVELLARA www.rcs.re.it/novellara

Commendations:

COMUNE DI ATRIPALDA www.comune.atripalda.av.it
COMUNE DI MANTOVA www.comune.mantova.it
COMUNE DI BELLUNO www.comune.belluno.it
COMUNE DI MELEGNANO www.comune.melegnano.mi.it
COMUNE DI CASSINA DÈ PECCHI
COMUNE DI GUASTALLA
COMUNE DI PERGINE VALSUGANA www.comune.pergine.tn.it
COMUNE DI VALDERICE
COMUNE DI CASAGIOVE www.comune.casagiove.ce.it
COMUNE DI CORMANO www.comune.cormano.mi.it
COMUNE DI SONDRIO
COMUNE DI MUGGIA
COMUNE DI ALFONSINE

1999

Best Initiative

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI CAVRIAGO www.comune.cavriago.re.it

2000

Above 50.000 inhabitants

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI MODENA www.comune.mo.it

Commendations:

COMUNE DI FANO www.comune.fano.ps.it
COMUNE DI TORINO www.comune.torino.it/citedu
COMUNE DI VIAREGGIO www.comune.viareggio.it
COMUNE DI CARPI www.carpidiem.it
COMUNE DI ASTI www.comune.asti.it
COMUNE DI LA SPEZIA www.comune.sp.it
COMUNE DI CINISELLO BALSAMO www.comune.cinisello-balsamo.mi.it
COMUNE DI FAENZA www.comune.faenza.ra.it
COMUNE DI SIENA www.comune.siena.it

COMUNE DI BOLOGNA www.comune.bologna.it
COMUNE DI PESARO www.comune.pesaro.ps.it
COMUNE DI BOLZANO www.comune.bolzano.it
COMUNE DI RAVENNA www.comune.ra.it
COMUNE DI MOLFETTA www.comune.molfetta.ba.it
COMUNE DI PISTOIA www.comune.pistoia.it
COMUNE DI PADOVA www.padovanet.it
COMUNE DI COSENZA
COMUNE DI VICENZA www.comune.vicenza.it
COMUNE DI PIACENZA www.comune.piacenza.it
COMUNE DI RIVOLI www.comune.rivoli.to.it
COMUNE DI FORLI' www.delfo.forli-cesena.it/cofo
COMUNE DI CUNEO www.comune.cuneo.it
COMUNE DI ASTI www.comune.asti.it

2000

Under 50.000 inhabitants

Winning Entries:

COMUNE DI GUASTALLA www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/urp/comuni/guastalla.htm
COMUNE DI OSTUNI www.ostuni.com

Commendations:

COMUNE DI NOVELLARA www.comune.novellara.re.it
COMUNE DI SAN GIULIANO MILANESE www.sangiulianonline.it
COMUNE DI ZOLA PREDOSA www.provincia.bo.it/zola
COMUNE DI ROZZANO www.comune.rozzano.mi.it
COMUNE DI POMIGLIANO D'ARCO www.netgroup.it/pomigliano
COMUNE DI PIOLTELLO www.comune.pioltello.mi.it
COMUNE DI BELLUNO www.comune.belluno.it
COMUNE DI COLLEGNO www.comune.collegno.to.it
COMUNE DI FOSSANO www.comune.fossano.cn.it
COMUNE DI IVREA www.comune.ivrea.to.it
COMUNE DI COLOGNO MONZESE www.comune.colognomonze.se.mi.it
COMUNE DI SONDRIO www.comune.sondrio.it
COMUNE DI MANTOVA www.comune.mantova.it
COMUNE DI COMISO www.comune.comiso.rg.it
COMUNE DI CANDELO
COMUNE DI LODI www.comune.lodi.it
COMUNE DI MONTALE www.comune.montale.pt.it
COMUNE DI CASTEL SAN PIETRO TERME www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/comsanp/
COMUNE DI CORIGLIANO CALABRO www.comune.corigliano.it
COMUNE DI ATRIPALDA www.comune.atripalda.av.it
COMUNE DI VALDERICE
COMUNE DI ALFONSINE
COMUNE DI RUVO DI PUGLIA www.comuneruvodipuglia.it
COMUNE DI MONTORO INFERIORE www.montoroinferiore.it

2000

Best Initiative

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI GUSPINI

Special Mentions:

COMUNE DI CARAVAGGIO

COMUNE DI PACIANO

2001

Above 50.000 inhabitants

Winning Entries:

COMUNE DI TORINO www.comune.torino.it/citedu

COMUNE DI GENOVA www.comune.genova.it

COMUNE DI FERRARA www.comune.fe.it

2001

Under 50.000 inhabitants

Winning Entries:

COMUNE DI IVREA www.comune.ivrea.to.it

COMUNE DI POMIGLIANO D'ARCO www.netgoup.it/pomigliano

COMUNE DI SAN GIULIANO MILANESE

2001

Best Initiative

Winning Entry:

COMUNE DI SANT'ILARIO D'ENZA

Special Mentions:

COMUNE DI EMPOLI www.comune.empoli.fi.it

COMUNE DI FAENZA

COMUNE DI MONTALE www.comune.montale.pt.it

COMUNE DI NAPOLI www.comune.napoli.it

COMUNE DI VICENZA www.comune.vicenza.it

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