

REPORT CONCEPT OF PILOT ACTION

PARMA

D.T3.1.1

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KEY FACTS

Project partner	Municipality of Parma
City, Country	Parma, Italy
Contact person (for pilot action)	Katya Lucà k.luca@comune.parma.it Michela Musile Tanzi m.tanzi@comune.parma.it
Name of pilot (as in application form)	Social Caretakers
Focus of the pilot (as in application form)	<input type="checkbox"/> Labour market integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social integration and cohesion <input type="checkbox"/> Both
Planned duration of pilot	Start date: November 2020 End date: September 2021
Short summary of the concept (max. 500 characters)	<p>The pilot project in Parma concerns the experimentation of the "Social Caretaker". The Municipality of Parma makes some apartments available to refugees who, in turn, carry out social concierge duties in condominiums and in the neighborhood where they live. The project aims to build positive relationships between natives and foreign citizens. Through the project activities it is possible to achieve beneficial effects for both parties: local citizens can come into contact with refugees, dispel the prejudice against them and count on effective support in your neighborhood; refugees rebuild their social network and expand the opportunities for successful socio-economic integration.</p>

CONTENT

1. Description of the existing situation / Contextualization of the process (max. 2000 characters)

- What is the existing situation?
- Which problem, challenge, and observation does the pilot react to?
- Is the pilot a new project/service or implemented with an already existing project/service? If implemented: What is the added value?

In the local context, refugees face **many challenges**: difficulties and discrimination in finding a home, socio-economic problems, lack of a stable job, risk of exploitation and shortage of social networks.

On the other hand, the local population is the victim of prejudices towards refugees, often triggered by media speeches, and implements defensive and sometimes discriminatory dynamics towards foreign citizens.

It is necessary to create as much as possible opportunities for exchange and environments in which the establishment of relations between these two parts is possible and generative for the social cohesion.

In particular, in the district chosen for the implementation of the pilot project, which has several characteristic criticalities, including:

- a high presence of foreign citizens and asylum seekers of different nationalities;
- a high presence of elderly people, often alone or with poor social and family ties;
- increase in recent years of degradation and delinquency phenomena in which foreign citizens in conditions of social marginalization are often involved;
- phenomena of intergenerational frictions.

The pilot project represents an **innovation** for the city of Parma: although the best practices that are implemented in the area are different and that aim at similar objectives and follow the same approach, it is the first time that a real service of " social caretaker ". Refugees can be a point of reference in the neighborhood and not someone to fear or keep at a distance. By living free of charge in an apartment of the Municipality for the duration of the pilot, the refugees will put their time and their skills at the disposal of the inhabitants of the neighborhood, who will be able to enjoy constant support, particularly useful for those people who often live in solitude. or with poor family ties.

2. Definition of the target group(s) (max. 1500 characters)

- Who does the pilot want to reach (e.g. refugees, locals, as well as other stakeholders)?
- What are the special needs of the target group?
- How can a diversity of stakeholders be involved?
- How are the target group(s) reached?

The pilot project aims mainly at:

- refugees;
- inhabitants of the neighborhood, local citizens (elderly, adolescents, families, etc. ..).

Both groups are carriers of specific needs (Papadopoulus, 2002; Perino, Eve, 2020; Bakker et al., 2017; Pitch, 2008).

Refugees:

- need for emplacement
- need of protection and safety
- need for social orientation and contact with local community
- need of social networks / relations

Neighborhood inhabitants:

- need to perceive safety in one's neighborhood
- need for reference points in the neighborhood
- need for social contact

The project will also involve additional target groups:

- NGOs, which will contribute to the involvement of refugees in activities of social utility and their insertion in the main contexts of the neighborhood. They will also perform the function of "sentinel" for reporting the needs of the inhabitants and planning the activities of social caretakers.
- Local authorities, both the Municipality and the Housing Authority benefit from an experiment that can have positive effects in terms of social cohesion, conflict reduction and increased perception of safety and well-being within a neighborhood. The pilot project could encourage local authorities to replicate the experience gained with the pilot and adopt it as a stable strategy.

It is very important that all the target groups are involved in the pilot project right from the start.

Meetings were conducted between the cooperative chosen (through a public tender procedure) to support the pilot project, the Municipality of Parma, the main associations of the district and the "CCV" (Neighborhood Volunteer Citizen Council).

It was carried out a mapping of the main projects active in the neighborhood and which can find a connection with the objectives of the pilot project.

Meetings have been arranged between the refugees who will take part in the project and the Housing Authority, in order to get to know each other, identify mutual needs and shared goals.

The next steps:

- information material will be prepared to inform the inhabitants of the condominiums and the neighborhood about the presence of social caretakers and the objectives of the pilot project (flyers, emails, etc ...). The Housing Authority will support us in informing all the inhabitants;
- telephone numbers of social caretakers will be made available to the inhabitants;

- a chat with WhatsApp will be created to stay connected and promptly act on requests or activities to be organized;

- meetings will be organized between the inhabitants of the neighborhood and the refugees (taking into account the social distancing due to COVID 19) to identify and co-construct the activities envisaged by the pilot project.

The Municipality of Parma undertakes to give public prominence to the pilot project throughout its process, through press releases and other initiatives. Furthermore, during the course of the project, information clips will be published on social channels to tell the various phases of the project. These dissemination and promotional materials will be made in several languages.

3. Description of the pilot (max. 2000 characters)

- Which kind of pilot action was chosen?
- How is the agency of refugees respected?
- How refugees are concretely involved and made protagonists? How is the access to resources and the voice of refugees enabled?

The pilot project we have chosen is called "Social Caretakers" and concerns the creation of a social concierge open to the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

At the heart of the choice to carry out this type of pilot project is the conviction that the local community and the social relations that develop within it are precious levers to favor the processes of social cohesion. The approach we follow is that of Community based protection (UNHCR) where the skills, agency, rights and dignity of the people concerned, local inhabitants and foreign citizens, are at the center of the programming.

The preparatory activities of the pilot project involved around 18 refugees in a training course. The four "social caretakers" who will actually take part in the project have been chosen because they have shown great adherence to the project objectives and saw in it an opportunity to improve their condition.

After the selection, in-depth interviews were carried out with the refugees in order to highlight the specific skills of each one, actively involve them in the co-creation of the process, explore the way in which they build and live relationships, etc.

During the project process, interviews and focus groups will be carried out with refugees with the aim of understanding the progress of the project, their feelings and any changes to be agreed.

The social caretakers will be supported throughout the project by a Cooperative, but the goal is to gradually give refugees greater autonomy to choose how to establish relationships with the inhabitants of the neighborhood and carry out the planned activities.

4. Goals of the pilot (max. 1500 characters)

- What are the goals of the pilot?

The pilot project is a way to:

- enhance the chances of success of the integration pathways for refugees;
- increase social cohesion in the neighborhoods and create opportunities for exchange between the different targets;
- unhinge the prejudice towards refugees and foreign citizens and change the narrative about them;
- enhance previous experiences based on Community-based protection;
- define a methodology for involving the local population, asylum seekers and refugees (or people who live for a short period in the area) in the social, economic and cultural life of the area;
- disseminate knowledge of the different best practices through networking, promoting mutual learning at the local level;
- spreading the value of the service design method.

5. Measures and activities (max. 2000 characters)

- What measures are taken to achieve the goals?
- What are success indicators, key figures, milestones? How can the results of the pilot be measured?
- Which sequence of steps are to be taken?

Success indicators: attended quantitative and qualitative results for each step thanks to the dissemination of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, both among the local population and among refugees.

Quantitative indicators:

- No. of interventions carried out by Social Caretakers;
- No. of citizens who contact the service;
- No. of associations and citizens involved in the pilot project;
- No. of neighborhood projects / activities that involved Social Caretakers;

Qualitative indicators:

- evaluation of the approval of the initiative among the local population;
- evaluation of the service by the inhabitants of the neighborhood;
- evaluation of the changes generated by the presence of Social Caretakers;
- evaluation of the impact of the experience in the integration process of the refugees involved.

Key figures:

- Project managers: Municipality of Parma, Cooperativa Connessioni
- Housing Agency

- CIAC - Immigration, Asylum and International Cooperation Center
- Neighborhood associations and volunteers (Community Point, The Extra Room, etc ...)
- Neighborhood Pablo Volunteer City Council

During the implementation of the pilot project, other key figures may be involved, useful both for the success of the project and for the dissemination of the results obtained (e.g. Headmasters of schools, university teachers, etc ...)

Preparatory phase:

Public notice for the selection of a third sector body to collaborate with the Municipality of Parma and Ciac in training activities, selection of refugees to be included in the pilot project, monitoring and communication about the project (including the creation of a short film).

Phase 1:

In this phase, the activities that were organized concerned on the one hand the actual participants, on the other hand the preparation of the apartments that will welcome the social caretakers.

- **Activities involving refugees:**
 - **Information and communication activities for the recruitment of refugees** interested in taking part in the Pilot Project:
 - **Training**
 - **Selection of candidates**
 - **Establishment of an evaluation commission** (Municipality of Parma, Ciac, Coop Connessioni) for the selection of 4 aspiring social caretakers
 - The working group has chosen to prioritize **social inclusion** in the pilot project. Among the refugees selected are:
 - ❖ A person with disability
 - ❖ A family (mom, dad and little girl)
 - **Accompaniment of refugees to housing practices (by Connessioni)**
- **Activities about the apartments:**
 - **Locating the apartments:**
 - ❖ The selection of the apartments was made in collaboration with ACER (Public Housing Authority)
 - ❖ Optimal sized apartments have been chosen to accommodate 2 people each (in two different condominiums)
 - **Renovation of the apartments**

Phase 2:

- Entrance of social caretakers in the apartments and start of activities;
- Production of information material for the inhabitants of the neighborhood (with the support of the Housing Body);
- Meetings for mutual knowledge between social caretakers and the inhabitants of the neighborhood and condominiums to establish contact, identify needs and activities to be carried out;
- Meetings between social caretakers and local associations for mutual involvement;
- Creation of a chat that allows everyone to communicate quickly and stay connected.
- Beginning of the documentary activities of the project through video, interviews, etc ...

Phase 3:

- continuation of training with social caretakers. It includes a training module on how to draw up curricula and access employment services (dedicated to the autonomy of social caretakers)
- Monitoring and support of the project, including through home meetings.

Phase 4:

- Creation of a short film on the pilot project and promotion of events dedicated to the communication of the project (all subjects will be involved)
- Conclusion of the pilot project

6. Timeline

Include a schedule of the pilot (including milestones)

1. **Preparatory phase:** July 2020 - October 2020
2. **Phase 1:** November 2020 – March 2021
3. **Phase 2:** April 2021 – May 2021
4. **Phase 3:** May 2021 – September 2021
5. **Phase 4:** September 2021 October 2021

7. Definition of responsible actors (max. 1500 characters)

- Which actors are responsible for the pilot?
- Who will implement the pilot?
- Are there cooperation partners?

- **Municipality of Parma** is the manager of the pilot project.
- **Cooperativa Connessioni** is the body selected by the Municipality of Parma, through a public tender procedure, for the implementation and monitoring and for the implementation of the activities envisaged by the pilot project.
- **CIAC, the Asylum and Cooperation Immigration Center**, is a project partner of the Municipality of Parma and will support the initiative across the board.
- **ACER, Public Body for Home**, has selected the apartments and supports in the activities of information and involvement of the inhabitants of the condominiums.

Partners of our actions are:

- **Community Point:** it is a free space open to all citizens in difficulty or in need of support. It works thanks to the commitment of volunteers. It will play a valuable role in supporting and involving social caretakers in the activities of the Community Point. Furthermore, they can act as "sponsors" to foster the relationship between refugees and the inhabitants of the neighborhood.
- **CCV, Voluntary City Council of Quartier:** it is a council group that talks with the Municipality about the critical issues of the district, projects to be activated, etc ... It will support the initiative by favoring the inclusion of refugees in neighborhood activities and by divulging the experience in other districts of the city.
- **Neighborhood associations:** in the Pablo neighborhood there are various associations with different purposes. Their involvement is a priority for the good progress of the project and for the inclusion of refugees in participatory paths already started.

8. Possible problems or difficulties (max. 1500 characters)

- Which problems or difficulties are possible when implementing the pilot?
- How does COVID-19 affect the pilot? Is a Plan B necessary?

Difficulties encountered:

- The duration of the pilot project is too short and not attractive for many refugees (some participants preferred to stay in the current housing conditions for fear of not finding another accommodation at the end of the project).
- The extra costs related to utilities, as well as personal expenses without any form of contribution represented a limit for some participants who withdrew because they are not working at the moment.

- The training was difficult: due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the lessons were held remotely. This has created difficulties, especially for those who have major problems with the Italian language. Furthermore, the laboratory part of the training has been suspended and will resume once the social caretakers enter the apartment.
- The SIforREF project did not foresee the costs related to the purchase of crockery and furnishings necessary for daily life. This puts the refugees involved in the project in difficulty. The Municipality of Parma involved associations of the city for the partial free procurement of new and ready-to-use crockery.
- The most critical aspect is that it was not possible to develop the pilot project in private market apartments. In fact, we had to find two apartments from the Public Building. This forces the social caretakers to leave the houses at the end of the project, which must be readmitted in the real estate assets of the Public Housing Authority. Consequently, there cannot be a continuation of the project outside of SIforREF, even if the refugees have achieved optimal autonomy.

9. Sustainability (max. 1500 characters)

- What is the sustainability of the pilot?
- How can the pilot or the methods be used after the end of the pilot or the project?

The methodology underlying the realization of the pilot contributes to creating a collaborative path in which each phase, tool, criticality or solution is shared with the entire working group. This allows you to find solutions to the problems that arise during the process and can ensure greater success of the objectives.

The pilot project is sustainable because it is characterized by the strong involvement of many local associations that actively contribute to creating inclusion paths for social caretakers and, in general, for the success of the project.

The involvement of many third sector entities is also positive because it represents the possibility of replicating similar experiences in other project contexts.

For each phase, the team will share the results of the mapping phase with stakeholders and local authorities, and will provide them with a useful tool to develop future activities in the field of social inclusion and cultural integration.

The Municipality of Parma undertakes to promptly communicate to ACER (Public Housing Authority) the benefits generated by the project towards the inhabitants of the condominiums. Highlighting the solutions reached through the pilot project can stimulate ACER in the choice of reproducing the experience or adopting it as a stable strategy in the housing sectors of its competence.

10. Transferability (max. 1500 characters)

- How can the results or the experiences of the pilot be transferred to policymakers, general public like citizens, experts, etc.?

All the steps and tools built during the process by the team will be shared with European partners, local institutions and local NGOs.

The video will be made to represent the entire process as much as possible.

Interviews will be carried out with the various participants (inhabitants, associations, volunteers, refugees, etc.) involved in the project to testify the impact of the experimentation.

At the end of the project, a final report will be produced, including all the information, interviews, images, infographics and strategies adopted throughout the process. This product can be distributed both in paper and digital form.

The Municipality of Parma will hold a final press conference to disseminate the results of the project as much as possible. Through the involvement of the Emilia Romagna Region we could involve the other cities of the Region in a conference in which to witness the experience, share materials and strategies and stimulate the implementation of further similar experiences in other cities.

11. Short film (video) (max. 1500 characters)

- Which steps are planned to create the short film of the pilot?

The short film is a way to tell the process from the beginning to the end of the pilot project. It will be a valuable tool to underline the importance of social innovation to overcome problems related to social cohesion and the risk of marginalization.

Furthermore, it will be a useful tool both for dissemination and for comparison with other partners who have activated pilot projects within the SIforREF project.

For the realization of the short film we have identified salient moments: entry of social caretakers, meetings with the inhabitants, meetings with associations, etc ...

The communication product will include the interviews and voices of those who took part in the project, but also of the local authorities, which can tell the project from an institutional point of view.

Duration: about 10 minutes

Finished product: October 2021

People involved: refugees, Connessioni cooperative, Ciac, ACER, Municipality of Parma, inhabitants of the Pablo neighborhood, associations, community point volunteers, other.