

04. LOCAL FRAMEWORK SCENARIOS

The COMENSI method, engagement methods and techniques have been developed, trialled and refined within the following five local contexts:







NEIGHBOURHOOD OF REFERENCE
LISBON, AJUDA

4Change will work with disadvantaged adults from the neighbourhood of Ajuda, in partnership with this local municipality of the city of Lisbon.

FOCUS AREA

The territory of **Ajuda** is a social, economic, cultural and demographically very diverse neighbourhood in the Lisbon area. Geographically, the territory has a difficult configuration on a hillside, with streams and gaps or barriers dividing the space - but this division has been negatively reinforced throughout time by urban desorganisation: the palace built after the 18th century earthquake is just one of the 'obstacles' of Ajuda, composed by half a dozen military and police quarters, churches and military hospitals – Ajuda's circulation and accessibility is difficult.

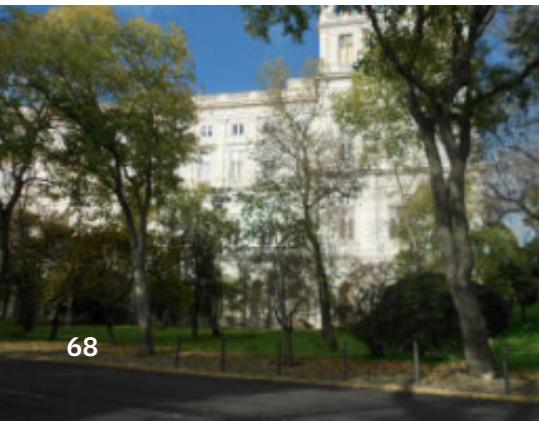
Ajuda is bordered on one side by the 'posh' area of Restelo/Belém and three neighbourhoods classified by Lisbon's municipality as BIP – priority intervention zones sit on other sides. Two are social housing blocks with several social re-settlements – Casalinho and 2 de Maio – and the third, Rio Seco is an aged and urbanistically chaotic neighbourhood. Gentrification, pressed by real estate speculation and tourism is threatening the popular, low-income population and the relative demographic renovation of the last decade, as young people are no longer able to find a house here (prices, degradation and short-term rentals).

Historically it was a popular and traditional neighbourhood but always neglected by local and social policies. Among its diverse population there is high number of disadvantaged adults 23-59 and over (seniors with very low income); a high percentage of NEET young people 18-22 years old; and unemployed women.

LOCAL ISSUES

The main inclusion issues faced by the Ajuda population are:

- » De-structured families; one-parent families, especially mothers;
- » A significant number of children with one of their parents in prison;
- » Lack of support resulting in school failure and abandonment;
- » Long-term unemployment and dependence on welfare;
- » Precarious jobs, tough working hours, hard to manage family life;
- » Bad quality nutrition and high number of mental health problems;
- » Low education level (Low Hard Skills) and difficulties with basic competences (Low Soft Skills);
- » Informal economy, including non-legal activities (drugs and guns);



- » Ethnic specific issues (2nd PT percentage of Roma): school abandonment (girls at 12, boys at 16) and teen marriage and maternity.
- » gentrification: the popular, low-income population and the relative demographic renovation of the last decade are pressed by real estate speculation and tourism

CURRENT POSITION

4Change has in its mission and in its values, **an ambition to contribute to change and development in the local neighbourhood** where part of its staff are located and Ajuda is a very neglected neighbourhood. 4Change has been developing projects and actions in Ajuda since 2014 - starting with an emancipatory and participatory diagnosis of the territory: main **practice of community engagement** called 'O Meu Bairro' / 'My neighbourhood' – has used participatory image methodologies (Photovoice and Participatory Video) as well as group dynamics, informal mapping and other practices.

The local municipality of Ajuda (Junta de Freguesia da Ajuda) is the **associated partner** of COMENSI - a cooperative and complementarity strategy will foster a mutually beneficial relationship when co-working on projects, actions and local social services e.g. Employment network and capacity building (Ajuda Emprega); Youth space (Academia Juventude Ajuda) for 10-20 years old, with school support and training and activities; Culture and Well-being house (Casa da Cultura).

Other **relevant stakeholders** considered for COMENSI are: Lisbon's Municipality; Fundação Liga, training for challenged people, other traditional, cultural and sports associations; the Ajuda Palace (for hosting events); the recent CUSCA, communitarian theatre and LU.CA, children's theatre.





NEIGHBOURHOOD OF REFERENCE

PALERMO, CAPO MONTE DI PIETÀ

The neighbourhood "Capo - Monte di pietà" is the test area in which Bond of Union will put in place the work for COMENSI. The district is in the municipal area of the old city centre of Palermo (Circoscrizione I, Palermo).

Despite its state of social and economical decadence, the neighbourhood remains one of the most historically, religious and culturally rich. Its boundary is defined by the Cathedral of Palermo, the Teatro Massimo, the court of justice and Quattro Canti (4 corners) the central point of the old town. The neighbourhood is also crossed by the famous market "Capo" one of the most used and visited within the entire city.

The total population of this neighbourhood is 6,422 of whom 1,449 are migrants and/or with migrant background (22.6% of the population mostly coming from Bangladesh). Most of the population (70.1%) is within an age range of 15-64.



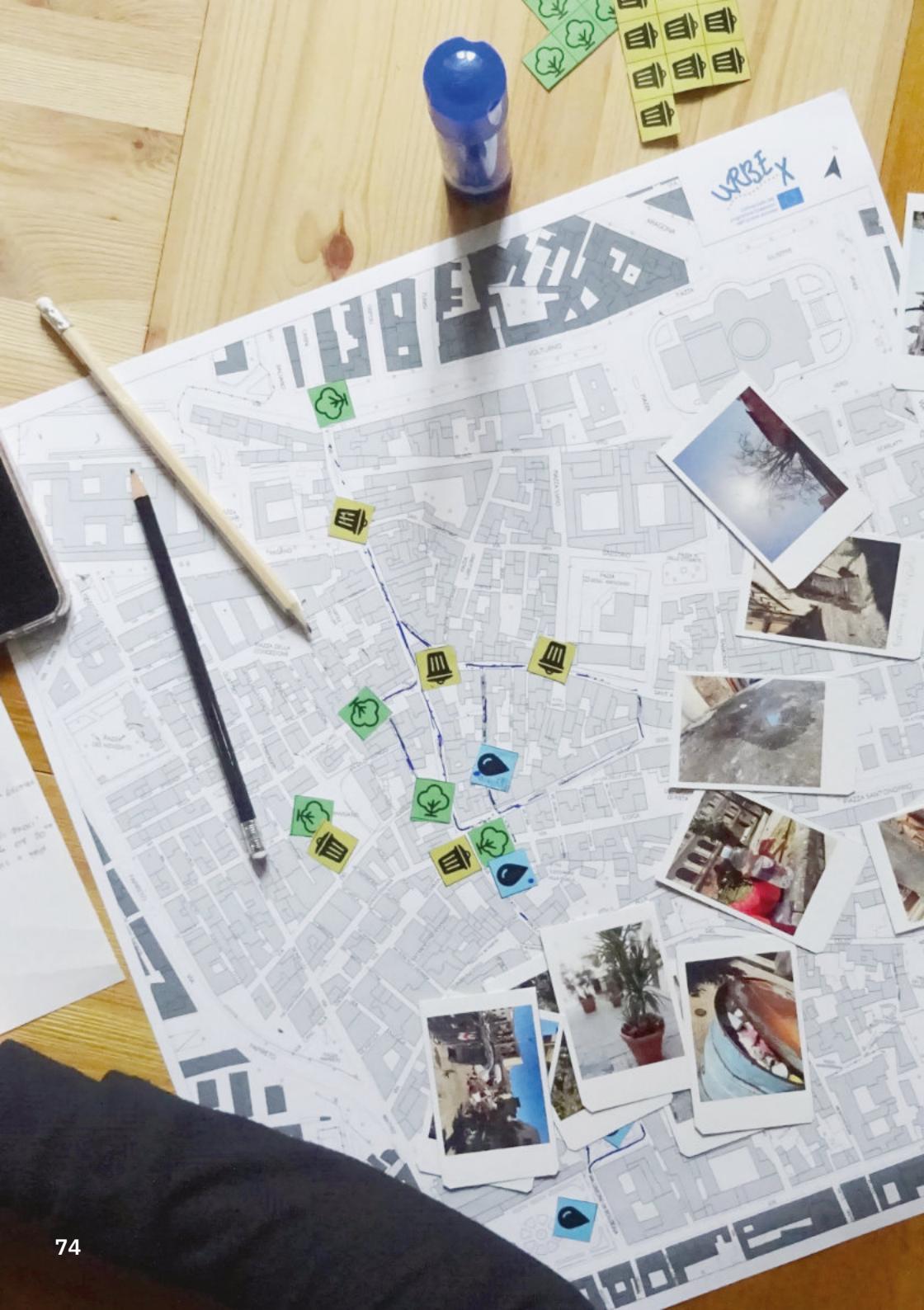
LOCAL ISSUES

Specific challenges of the neighbourhood are:

- low educational level (the majority of the residents (72%) have a low level of schooling)
- high unemployment level (only 36.2% of the population is employed);
- high level of structural dependence of young people;
- low participation and low civic engagement

The main obstacle for the inclusion of the disadvantaged adults living in the Capo-Monte di Pietà is the precarious living conditions. Other obstacles are the low level of education and understanding of the benefits of civic participation. The ways to access social services and municipal services to support inclusion (although limited in number and budget) are not well known and shared among the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Therefore, the municipal social services need to be better spread and simple ways of communicating to citizens (in particular with those at risk of exclusion) should be created and tested. There are also no systems in place to encourage participation in the decision making processes.

In 2017, the local municipal department responsible for Palermo city centre launched a series of public meetings in the main squares and meeting points to facilitate the dialogue among the administrators and the citizens. In April 2018 a public committee took place in the neighbourhood Capo-Monte di Pietà. The committee was an opportunity to hear the needs of the residents and to start to create a network among organisations, local stakeholders and residents.

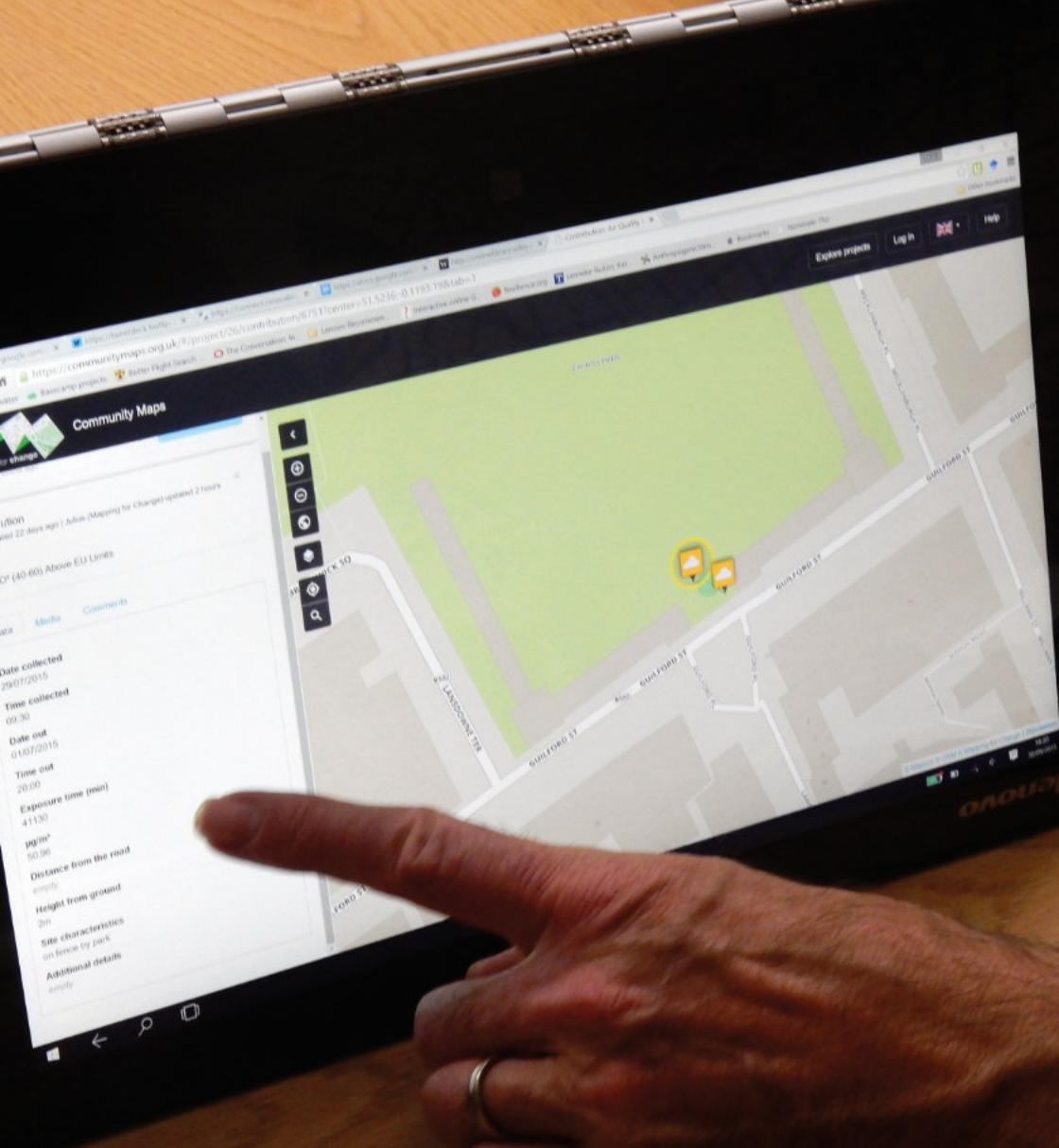


CURRENT POSITION

The interest of Bond of Union toward this area began when the organisation was given a workspace there by the Municipality of Palermo. In early 2016, Bond of Union staff carried out an action-research in the neighbourhood with the involvement of the local inhabitants. The main aim of the study was to identify a need - analysis to understand the perceived needs and address present and future action with and in the neighbourhood. Although initially resistant, the residents of the neighbourhood and the local stakeholders (artisans, workers of the market, etc) became willing to express their opinion, to analyse the problems of the neighbourhood and to identify possible solutions.

The results collected from this research have been used to inform a needs analysis for the design of educational projects in 2017 and 2018. The need to recreate a link and a shared memory among the residents of Capo have been the focus of projects as Youth Map and Urbex addressed to a target of young participants. Using methodologies such as urban exploration, mapping and interviews the young participants had the opportunity to interact with residents and stakeholders of the area and to design simple ideas to resolve the local issues identified.

In the development of COMENSI, Bond of Union directly involved the local municipal department responsible for Palermo city centre, the social services office of the local department, the not-for-profit and volunteering actors located in the neighbourhood, the residents and the workers of the neighbourhood (mainly artisans and workers of the market).





NEIGHBOURHOOD OF REFERENCE **LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON**

Mapping for Change will work with disadvantaged adults in the London Borough of Islington. Taking information from State of Equalities in Islington Annual Report 2018:

- » Islington's total population is 233,200.
- » It's the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales, with 15,524 people per square km. This is almost triple the London average and more than 37 times the national average.
- » 32% of residents were in Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and 20% of residents "Other White" in 2018.
- » 56% of lone parents are not in employment while just 21% are in full-time employment - half the figure for the wider population.
- » Poverty is an issue in every part of the borough: there is a neighbourhood in every ward in Islington that is among the poorest 20% of neighbourhoods in England.

FOCUS AREA

Within Islington, the specific focus will be the Mildmay Ward, which sits on the boundary with the borough of Hackney. The area, like many in London, has been subject to many changes over the past few years, with gentrification being a cause for friction among residents. Many residents in social housing feel that their neighbourhood, and even their homes are under threat of development as the cost of housing continues to increase.

LOCAL ISSUES

New, more affluent people are moving in to the neighbourhood and the local character is slowly changing to reflect this. The high street now offers more patisseries and artisan food stores than affordable traditional bakeries or green grocers. The products on offer are not typically affordable to those on a low budget, reducing the choice of food for 'long-term' locals to supermarkets and fast food outlets. Not only does this have health implications, but also social ones as the spaces where people used to interact whilst shopping and eating are becoming 'out of bounds' or have just disappeared.

As property prices increase and social housing stock is reducing and being sold off to private individuals and investors, affordable housing is a rarity. Where once several generations of a family would be neighbours, sharing care responsibilities and resources, the young generations are now not able to find a property in the area. This is breaking up families and leaving older people and young parents with no natural support network. This further increases the level of deprivation experienced by vulnerable and disadvantaged adults. The divide between 'haves' and 'have-nots' is on the rise as the different lifestyles and daily routines can mean very little interaction between the two worlds. As a result, disadvantaged adults can feel powerless, frustrated, left behind and angry.

A number of local residents have lived in the neighbourhood all their lives and to some extent have become self-governing. Whilst this has its benefits at a hyper-local level, when decisions are made at a borough-wide or regional level, there are no systems in place to encourage participation in the process. The greatest obstacle will be to challenge the powerlessness felt and overcome apathy.

CURRENT POSITION

Mapping for Change is based within the heart of the ward, in Mildmay Community Centre which is managed by Mildmay Community Partnership whose sole purpose is to engage with local stakeholders. Also based within the community centre are other non-profits including London Gypsies and Travellers; Room to Heal - a charity supporting refugees; and Creative Opportunities who provide support and mentoring for young adults to realise their full potential. A number of other local groups use the centre for regular events including football for under 5s, bingo, dominos and indoor bowling for pensioners, line dancing for elderly ladies and a weekly group lunch for refugees and migrants. Despite the Centre having an active schedule, there is much more potential for involving a wider target group. Social events held at the Centre tend to attract the same core group of residents even though all are welcome.

More recently a yoga class for Turkish women has started which is a positive sign, but the class is not well attended. By establishing the reasons for not being able to reach a wider group we can begin to address this and start to build relationships and reduce isolation, prejudice and division. By using our existing networks we can hope to understand the deeper issues sooner, and establish tools and methodologies for various target groups. We will research how our work can complement and enhance existing projects in order to ensure genuine buy-in and a mutual benefit, beyond knowledge exchange, for all participants.





NEIGHBOURHOOD OF REFERENCE

BERLIN, SÜDLICHE FRIEDRICHSTADT

Tesserae will develop its project in the Südliche Friedrichstadt area, in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg.

- » Area: 24,64 hectares
- » Total population: circa 5,500
- » 70.8% of the residents are from a migrant background (mainly a Turkish or Arabic). For comparison: The Berlin average for people with migration background is 29.86%
- » Circa 2,500 households in Mehringplatz (especially flats with few rooms: 1-2 room-apartment: 41.5%; 2.5-3 room-apartment: 48.5%)
- » The area has a younger population than most other neighbourhoods of Berlin: more than 23% are younger than 18 years (Berlin average: 15.4%) and 52.6% are between 25-65 years old in Mehringplatz
- » Percentage of unemployed persons: 14.4% (Berlin average: 7.92%)
- » Child poverty in Mehringplatz: 72.07% (Berlin average 30.5%)
- » Little fluctuation: the average of residential duration is 12.7 years
- » Language barriers (of German) make it difficult to graduate school and subsequently to find a job
- » Lack of attractive public, accessible spaces (e.g. for doing sport)

BACKGROUND

The Südliche Friedrichstadt is an atypical "deprived Neighbourhood", though quite emblematic of Berlin's peculiar urban character and history. Formerly a baroque monumental round plaza at the end of the main North-South axis Friedrichstrasse, next to the "Hallesche tor" (city door towards Halle), it was completely destroyed during WWII. Successively it found itself as a peripheral territory at the edge of Berlin Wall. Rebuilt in the seventies on a concept by Hans Scharoun readapted in residential key by its follower Werner Düttman, it has become a huge social-housing settlement inhabited mostly by immigrant households.

At the end of the Eighties the area was of interest to some intervention of the IBA plan. After the fall of the wall the neighbourhood was subject to an important re-centralization process starting from the reunification of Germany and the progressive reconnection and healing of the divided city. This dynamic has progressively affected the neighbourhood with a new pressure from cultural industries, which have historically been present in the surrounding media district, and new urban development projects, starting from the realisation of the extension of the Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Liebeskind.

In 2005, the area around Mehringplatz was targeted by the national Soziale Stadt programme (Socially Integrative City), identifying this territory as a deprived neighbourhood in need for specific social support measures according to standards defined at Federal level. Soziale Stadt is a complex and comprehensive community-led local development scheme that combines a tight spatial focus, local participation, and the integration of policies and human and financial resources. This federal programme, jointly financed by European Regional Development Funds and national funds, decentralises decision-making by delegating responsibility for small-scale projects to residents living in deprived areas selected by the Berlin Senate.

The Quartiers management teams provide a platform for networking and interaction, enabling groups and actors to debate and identify local needs, values and responses. In 2009, the study Kreativ Raumpionere am Mehringplatz developed a strategy to support the settlement of cultural actors and creative industries in the area.

The vision was successively developed with a set of projects mobilising a mix of commercial and cooperative investors that are currently on course to realise this within the framework of a Regeneration Area Plan approved in 2011 (Sanierungsgebiet). This plan complements the new constructions financed by private stakeholders with a set of publicly funded infrastructure and public space renewal projects. In 2015, a temporary structure, the Bauhutte, was created with a combination of private and public funds to act as an interface between established citizens and the incoming inhabitants/stakeholders, hosting among other meetings, the Sanierungsbeirat (regeneration advisory board).

In sight of the accomplishment of the regeneration process, the area has been finally recognised as Mileuschutzgebiet, designated with a public interest status as an area to be protected from gentrification and preserved in its original character and social mix.

Such a set of policies and investments over the last twenty years brought both attention and tension to the neighbourhood, culminating in speculation and caution around its evolving identity. Today the new developments are starting to be delivered to new residents and productive activities, and the integration of new and old lifestyles, economies and social issues are more pertinent than ever in the Südliche Friedrichstadt.



LOCAL ISSUES

Although subject to numerous social and regeneration interventions the Südliche Friederischstadt - and Mehringplatz in particular - still maintains some characters of a disadvantaged neighbourhood, at least in the national German statistical terms of reference. Higher than the average level of unemployment, concentration of marginal population, drug dealing and presence of youth gangs are still perceived issues. Meanwhile while the presence of immigrant population – mainly with Turkish and Arabic origin – is still very relevant, there is a new social polarisation on the horizon as with new middle class residents and creative players moving into the area. This brings with it with the connected risks of gentrification, rising prices, displacement and social conflicts. The situation is complicated by the presence of a great number of building sites connected with the regeneration program.

CURRENT POSITION

Tesserae has been working in the Südliche Friedrichstadt since 2016 through the Erasmus+ KA2 Adult EULER, the Erasmus+ KA2 Youth URBEX and the H2020 Rise CoCreation. This gave us the opportunity to develop knowledge about the local social and policy context and set up partnerships and collaborations with several local organisations. One of the reasons for choosing this place as focus area in our recent projects is the great variety of social programs, local initiatives and organisations present within the territory resulting from a complex composition of public policies, economic opportunities and social demands influencing local development. A key aspect in our intervention is the large number of initiatives that already provide numerous sorts of neighbourhood hubs. This reflects the oversupply of social projects that are committed to engaging local residents and sometimes produces, by contrast, passivity and saturation of the attention capacity of the locals.



On the other hand, there is also a lot to learn from good practices and different approaches adopted by public and non-governmental initiatives in this area. We draw on a stakeholder mapping process we started for the EULER project in 2017, which includes a set of video interviews published online and destined to feed the neighbourhood platform planned to be developed within COMENSI. We identified a set of venues that had already established a role in engaging local communities and we decided that rather than set up a new neighbourhood hub we would collaborate with some of the existing initiatives.

We aim to support their work with innovative methodologies, and create a transversal program of activities aimed at networking and optimising the existing structures. These existing neighbourhood hubs include: the Quartiermanagement established by the Soziale Stadt national programme; the Kiezstube (hood cantine) provided by the local public housing company GEWOBAG; the ZLB public library, very active with community programs; the Café MaDaMe, run by a social enterprise; Supermarkt, an organisation that develops digital commons and coop platforms; Feldfünf, a new art gallery for community art projects.





NEIGHBOURHOOD OF REFERENCE

SAVSKO NASELJE, LJUBLJANA

ProstoRož plans to cooperate with disadvantaged adults in Savsko naselje neighbourhood in Ljubljana. Savsko naselje is a modernist residential neighbourhood, built between 1945 and 1960 and is a part of Bežigrad district. The ethnic structure consists of Slovenes as well as residents of Bosnian, Croat and Serbian descent.

- ↳ total population: 8.000
- ↳ number of cars: 4.000 (planned for 500 cars)
- ↳ number of cultural associations: 2 (10 in 1960)
- ↳ fragmented and unclear ownership of green areas in the neighbourhood

LOCAL ISSUES

Savsko naselje was one of the first residential neighbourhoods in Ljubljana constructed after World War II. At the beginning the neighbourhood was known for its high quality of living based on its proximity to the city centre, diverse network of public spaces and strong social bonds between the residents. In the past few decades the neighbourhood regressed in social, spatial and economic sense.

Privatisation processes, which started during the economic transition in the 1990s, caused ownership issues of public spaces, absence of regular maintenance and degradation of public spaces. Many of the green areas have been changed into improvised parking lots to meet demand as the neighbourhood was originally designed for fewer cars. In addition, the majority of public services moved out of the neighbourhood causing the number of cultural associations to drop from 10 to just two. The absence of public services has resulted in a complete lack of trust in public institutions. Social bonds among the residents have also been broken.



Approximately half of Ljubljana's residents live in similar neighbourhoods built between 1945 and 1990 and are facing similar issues to those in Savsko naselje.

CURRENT POSITION

In 2013, we started an Integrated Urban Regeneration project in Savsko naselje, initiated by the Department of Urban Planning of Municipality of Ljubljana. It relied on the cooperation between the local residents and different organisations (MHP, V.I.B.E., Saprabolt! And prostoRož). Our goal was the renovation of public spaces, as well as the revitalisation of social bonds among the residents. Through organised and spontaneous community meetings we formed a programme for regeneration on several levels: social and cultural activities; sports; informal socialising; bottom-up spatial planning; and a traffic strategy for the neighbourhood. We provided a space for public debate where each resident was able to participate in discussions on topics that interested them. Over two years, several experts, municipal institutions and NGOs joined the process.

During the project we witnessed a lack of trust in public institutions on a local level, as the neighbourhood had been neglected by the local authorities in the past. Many of our actions were based on increasing the level of mutual trust and motivating the residents to actively engage in the community.

Part of the activities during the integrated urban renewal were focused on the community centre, which was built in the 1960s with the help of local residents. The building hosted local administration and cultural associations as well as various events in the small hall and a bar on the ground floor. The role of the community centre changed drastically in the 1990s, when the local administration moved out of the neighbourhood and the bar had to shut down.



The only room that stayed in use was the hall, mostly occupied for various dance lessons, while the local residents lost their access to the building. We renovated one part of the community centre that now functions as the Library of Things, a new social service accessible to all residents that promotes social and environmental impacts of sharing economies (see best practice example).

The Library of Things also serves as a community living room. It hosts various events, from workshops and lectures to board game nights and birthday parties, which are mostly organised by the locals. Anyone can rent the space for free, as long as the activities held in the Library are free of charge. In the last few years the Library has already hosted different groups of disadvantaged adults, since the space is equally accessible to everyone without any financial risk.

After the official conclusion of the integrated urban renewal we maintained our presence in the neighbourhood through the Library of Things, which celebrated its fourth birthday in January 2019. We see an opportunity in COMENSI to increase the role of the Library based on four years' experience, combined with the expertise of other community based projects across Europe. Our goal is to reach and engage a broader audience cooperating as participants as well as active content creators.