

Cohousing: Io Cambio Status *(Cohousing: I change status)* Case study H1 - Italy

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1. The initiative and its organizers

“Cohousing: io cambio status” (CICS) is a project led and financed by the Autonomous Province of Trento (APT) through its Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy (*Agenzia per la famiglia, natalità e politiche giovanili*, PAF). The project is aimed at supporting youngsters - 18-29 years old and especially the so-called NEETs – in their transition to adulthood, through a housing-led approach. The title of the project itself stresses this dimension: I (the beneficiary of the project) CHANGE (has the possibility to change his/her condition) STATUS (from a young man/woman to an adult).

For this purpose the project implements a set of actions to support youngsters’ autonomy, whose precondition is the provision of an affordable room in a shared house in order to foster the leaving of parental home. During their two years’ stay in the house the beneficiaries are guided by a coach, whose role is to improve their employability through training, vocational guidance, meetings with experts and to enable their social and/or cultural participation through volunteering and participation in the civil life of the neighbourhood/city. This is the reason why the project is included within the sector of youth policies, instead of housing policies.

PAF is a public agency set up by the APT in 2011, which coordinates the provincial policies in favour of families, in order to build an integrated system of structural policies for the families’ wellbeing. PAF’s main goals are: promoting actions to encourage births and parenting, managing family standards¹, promoting equal opportunities, promoting civil service and implementing policies to support young people’s pathways of work and social inclusion. The last aim is pursued through the action of the Youth and Civil Service Office, hierarchically dependent by the Agency and actively involved in CICS project.

PAF delegates the management of the project to the School of Social Training (*Scuola di Preparazione Sociale*), that is in charge of the supervision of the project and of its implementation, through the employment of three tutors. The School of Social Training (SST) is an association with a long history and an important role in the city and province of Trento. It was founded in 1957 as a catholic-oriented training agency on social and political issues and it has been for a long time a cornerstone in the political training of many local politicians. In the 1990s it started to lose importance and in the 2000s its role and actions were deeply revised: nowadays it carries out training-related activities, socio-political research, project management, promotion of civic participation.

A network of third sector organizations sustains the project in different ways, starting from the provision of the apartments where the beneficiaries are hosted. They also have the task to promote their pathways towards autonomy, offering them opportunities of collaboration in their activities in support of homeless and disadvantaged people. In particular these are the involved organisations:

- *Fondazione Comunità Solidale* is a religious foundation strictly connected with *Caritas*. It manages many services for homeless and other socially excluded people (night shelters, women’s shelters, apartments, help desks). Its main contribution to the project is in making available a big apartment to accommodate the beneficiaries.

- *Villa Sant’Ignazio* is a social cooperative providing shelter for people with mental, social, familiar or economic problems. Three rooms within its building are assigned to CICS’ beneficiaries.

¹ *Family in Trentino*, *Child-friendly Business* and *Family Audit* are three trademarks that the Autonomous Province of Trento recognizes to public and private organizations that meet some specific requirements.

- *Progetto 92* is a social cooperative providing shelter for children and families. It made an apartment available to CICS's beneficiaries, but it is not used because of the lack of applications, so that this partner is not currently involved in the initiative.

CICS project is entirely funded by the Autonomous Province of Trento and its total cost is 138.400 euros. This total amount includes the rent for the apartments, a quota for SST's management and the cost for the three people employed in the project.

2. Basic information on the local context and the emerging problems

CICS is located in Trento, a city of 115.000 inhabitants in Trentino-Alto Adige Region, in the North East of Italy. In this very particular context, however the provinces (Trento and Bolzano) are more important than the Region itself because of their status of "Autonomous Provinces". This special status was assigned by the national State within the Constitutional Law, in 1948, to 4 Regions (Sicily, Sardinia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Valle d'Aosta) and 2 Provinces (Trento and Bolzano) on the basis of specific reasons, such as the presence of ethnic minorities (in this case a German speaking community) and/or of separatist movements, the short distance from border lines (in this case with Austria) and the territorial features (in this case a mountain area). This status entails legislative autonomy on much more subjects than the other Regions/Provinces, administrative autonomy and financial autonomy, as they can retain a substantial part of the tax revenues instead of paying them to the central State. This special configuration makes the Autonomous Province of Trento a much richer and influential actor than the Trentino-Alto Adige Region.

2.1 The socio-economic context

The territory of the Province of Trento is one of the richest in Italy and it is steadily at the top of the charts as far as wellbeing is concerned². It has a population of 530.308 inhabitants (at 1st January 2013), steadily growing. The fertility rate is of 1.55 children per woman against 1.42 at national level (2012). More than one fifth of the population lives in the city of Trento (114.198 inhabitants in 2011). The mean income per person was 21.400 euros in 2011, ranking fifth among the 20 Italian regions (OPES, 2012).

The effects of the economic crisis have been consistent but dampened by some structural features and by the implementation of specific policies. In the period 2008-2011 the provincial GDP decreased 1.3%, while in Italy it was reduced by 3.4%. In 2012 the decrease of the GDP was 2.0% (2.4% at the national level), the reduction of the internal consumptions 3.0% (4.3% at the national level) and the decrease of the investments 8.9% (the same for the whole Country), primarily due to a sharp fall in the investments in the construction industry (-12.7%) (IRVAPP, 2013). These slightly better performances are due to the diversification of the local economy structure (agriculture, industry, tourism, advanced tertiary services) and to the substantial anti-crisis measures adopted by the Autonomous Province of Trento.

The at-risk-of-poverty rate (considering the 60% threshold of the national median income) was 13.5% in 2012, constantly and sharply growing from 2008 (it was 4.9%), lower than the national rate (19.4%) but higher than the one of the North East of Italy³ (10.5%)⁴. However if we consider

² See for example the ranking published every year by the prestigious newspaper *IlSole24Ore*, where the province of Trento was at the first place in 2013: http://www.ilsole24ore.com/speciali/qvita_2013/home.shtml

³ The North East of Italy includes the Provinces of Bolzano and Trento, the Regions of Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Emilia Romagna and it is considered as a significant term of comparison both by analysts and policy makers.

⁴ See Appendix A – Table 1

as a threshold the 60% of the provincial median income the rate grows up to 16.5% (2010) (IRVAPP, 2013). Furthermore the risk of poverty is not equally distributed: it is polarized in younger and elder people⁵, women and migrants⁶.

The employment rate is 65.6%, in line with Europe and North East of Italy and much higher than the national data (55.6%), while the unemployment rate is at 6.6%, lower than the national average (12.2%) but steadily growing since 2009, when it was at 3.5%⁷.

It is worth to notice that the APT has implemented a minimum income program, lacking at the national level. This special situation has been made possible by the legislative and financial autonomy of the APT. The minimum income in the Province of Trento is a means-tested monetary transfer integrating recipient's income up to 6.500 euros per year and complemented by measures of activation in the labour market. It was introduced in October 2009 and since then 30.873 people (until February 2013) benefited from it. The average monthly transfer is of 462 euros. The minimum income program has positive impact on the reduction of poverty, especially on severe deprivation. The activation measures do not show hitherto any direct effect on the employment (IRVAPP, 2013).

The non-profit sector is particularly developed in the Province of Trento: it is the top region in Italy (in proportion with the number of inhabitants) per number of employed and the second one per number of organizations and per number of volunteers. There are 5.371 organizations (+17.5% compared to the 2001 census, 1.8% of the national data, 102 organizations every 10.000 inhabitants, it's 51 for Italy), 11.062 employed (1.5% of the national figure) and 103.489 volunteers. In most cases the organizations are engaged in the cultural and sporting sector (69.2%) while the 10.1% (540 units) are engaged in the social assistance sector. The non-profit organizations in the Province of Trento are primarily funded by public subsidies (55.1% of the revenues against an average of 34.3% in Italy). This percentage is even higher if we consider only the organizations providing social assistance (78.0%) (Provincia Autonoma di Trento and Istat, 2014).

2.2 Housing market and social housing

In the province of Trento 75.3% of households lives in owner occupied houses (73% in Italy), 17.3% in privately rented apartments (20% at national level) and 3.7% in socially rented apartments (6% in Italy)⁸. The prices for the purchase or the rent of a house in the Province of Trento are among the highest in Italy. The mean price is 2.495 €/sm for the purchase (6th place among the 19 Italian regions plus 2 autonomous provinces) and 9,32 €/sm for the rent (7th place).

The market value of a dwelling in the neighbourhood where CICS is located is 3.400 – 5.000 euros per square meter, 7.5 – 11.2 for the monthly rent. This means that, for a flat of 50 sm, the monthly rent would be between 525 and 784 euros⁹.

The social housing in the Province of Trento is managed by ITEA (*Istituto Trentino per l'Edilizia Abitativa*, Local Institute for Housing), a limited housing company controlled by the Autonomous Province of Trento, with the task of implementing the provincial Housing Plan, building and managing social rented dwellings.

⁵ See Appendix A – Fig. 1

⁶ See Appendix A – Fig. 2

⁷ See Appendix A – Table 2

⁸ Source: Census 2011

⁹ Revenue Agency, Database of the housing prices:

<http://wwwt.agenziaentrate.gov.it/servizi/Consultazione/ricerca.htm?level=0>

The access to public social housing is regulated by some basic requirements: a) being a European citizen and/or being resident in the Province of Trento since at least 3 years; b) having a low income (measured by a score, called ICEF that must be lower than 0.23 points) and c) not owning any housing property.

Residents meeting the basic requirements can submit an application to their Municipality of residence, which issues a ranking. The position in the ranking is defined on the basis of the following criteria: economic condition, family and house conditions (presence of disabled, single parents, etc.), geographical condition (a score is attributed to each year of residence in the province of Trento up to 25 points), job condition (a score for each year of job activity up to 20 points). The same ranking is effective also to access to other dwellings directly provided by the municipalities or other public agencies.

Households with a very low income, who cannot afford the social rent due to ITEA, can apply for a supplementary benefit to the municipalities. This subsidy cannot exceed the 50% of the rent and anyway it cannot be higher than 300 euros per month. It can be granted also to households not living in socially rented dwellings with at least one member living in the Province of Trento since at least 3 years. The amount of the benefit, its duration and modality of administration are decided by municipalities.

The number and typology of dwellings reserved to social housing to be built or restored by ITEA is decided by the Provincial Housing Plans. New buildings can also be constructed or restored by private companies, with a public subsidy not greater than the 40% of the average building costs, established by the APT in 1.357,00 €/sm for the new buildings and in 1.593,00 €/sm for the restoration. As established by National Housing Plans, a provincial housing fund has been constituted to support the implementation of local housing policies, co-financed by the Autonomous Province of Trento and by the central State. Each year, it is distributed partly to the APT and partly to the municipalities, considering their applications.

The APT provides another form of support to the rental sector, called *canone moderato* (controlled rent). The application has to be addressed to the Municipalities. This measure has been conceived for the mid-low income households. At least the 40% of the dwellings supplied through this type of rental control must be assigned to young couples aged under 45 and married/living together since not more than 5 years. Again, together with income, the residence in the municipality where the application is submitted and in the province of Trento affects the position in the ranking to have access to the measure.

In 2013 a special anti-crisis measure has been adopted by the APT to foster the purchase or building of the first house: a subsidy of 50% of the total cost, with a maximum of 100.000 euros. It was addressed to people living in the Province of Trento since at least 2 years with a mid-low income. Each municipality had to reserve to young couples at least the 40% of the available resources. The households with dependent children were favourite too.

2.3 Youth condition and youth policy

Young people in the Province of Trento aged 15-29 are 82.190, 15.5% of the population (Bazzanella and Buzzi, 2014). Considering the group selected by CICS (18-29), there are not official data but they can be estimated in around 65.000 units (12.3% of the total population). Around 15.000 live in the Municipality of Trento.

In 2011 50.8% of young people aged 18-34 in the province of Trento was still living in the parental home (against a national figure of 59.2%). Around half of them are employed (47.1%) or are

studying (45.9%), while the rest are job seekers (7.0%) (Bazzanella and Buzzi, 2014). The percentages are more similar when considering the range 18-24 (84.7% against 88.1%) but they are significantly different for the range 25-34 (34.0% in Trento and 42.2% in Italy).

These figures are quite typical of South European welfare regimes, where family plays a pivotal role in providing young people with accommodation and financial support. Evidence from recent research (Mendola *et al.*, 2008; Billari, 2004; Aassve *et al.*, 2002) highlights that a low income and the lack of job opportunities and social protection are the main factors that prevent young people from leaving their parental home. This is particularly true in Italy, where young people have always been at the margins of the welfare state, with the idea that the combination between family support and employment would have been enough to guarantee their emancipation. The local welfare system of the Province of Trento seems able to partially support the leaving of parental home, at least in the range 25-34, thanks to a quite dynamic labour market and to the implementation of specific local policies, described below, but the issue remains open especially for the range 18-24.

The available data about NEETs concern the 18-24 years old population, covering only partially CICS' target group (18-29). The share of the young people aged 18-24 neither in employment nor in education and training is 17.7% in the Province of Trento, one of the lowest rate in Italy (they are 20.3% in the North East and 29.3% in the whole Country), but constantly growing from the 9.4% of 2009¹⁰. In absolute terms they are around 6.600 people on around 37.500. Considering their gender, slightly better performance concern males (16.0%) compared to females (19.4%), contradicting the national trend.

The issue of NEETs is specifically tackled through the Youth Guarantee Program of the European Union that the APT is using to promote many activities in the fields of general and vocational training, international exchanges, internships, new services for matching supply and demand, and further subsidies for hiring. The total fund for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Program in the Province is 8.371.352 euros.

The level of education is growing¹¹, although the social class, the status and, most of all, the educational level of the parents are still predictive factors, especially for women (OPES, 2012). The rate of the early school leavers among the 18-24-year-olds is 11.0% in the Province of Trento, against a national rate of 17.0%. The Province of Trento reached the goal of the 10% established by the Lisbon Strategy in 2011, when the rate was 9.6%, but then it started to grow up again, while it is constantly decreasing in Europe, Italy and North East¹². Considering another important indicator of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the rate of people aged 30-34 with tertiary education, the Province of Trento reached its top in 2011 (26.7%) but then the data decreased to 23.3% in 2013, similar to the national rate of 22.4% that, on the contrary, is increasing (the goal for 2020 is 40%). The situation is particularly serious for males, whose rate collapsed from 21.0% in 2012 down to 15.7% in 2013. In the same period, this data is more stable for females: from 32.0% to 31.0%.

Against a data on general population of 65.6%, the youth employment rate in the range 20-29 (quite similar to the target group, 18-29, of CICS) in the Province of Trento is 53.6% (47.3% for women). It is higher than the national rate (41.2%), lower than the European average (59.6%) and constantly decreasing since 2008, when it was 67.9%¹³. The available data on youth

¹⁰ See Appendix A – Table 3

¹¹ See Appendix A – Table 4

¹² See Appendix A – Table 5

¹³ See Appendix A – Table 6

unemployment refer to the range 15-24 and it is 23.5%, for the first time higher than the average in the European Union¹⁴.

As in the rest of Europe, new jobs for young people increasingly take the shape of temporary jobs. The 63.8% of youngsters (under 35) actually works with temporary contracts or as an apprentice, while only the 26.7% has an open-ended contract¹⁵. Furthermore the experience of working under temporary contracts has become longer and more fragmented: young people are usually hired at least two times with temporary contracts in the first 5 years of their job career (OPES, 2012).

The APT has tackled this situation implementing some specific measures to subsidize the hiring of unemployed aged 18-29, especially women, young parents under 30 and young people aged 20-30 who worked under temporary contracts for at least 15 months in the last 3 years. Furthermore other subsidies from 2.000 to 4.000 euros aim to foster apprentices' possibility of hiring. These measures integrate national subsidies sustaining youngsters' employment (one third of his/her salary is covered by the central State) and promoting apprenticeship. Finally the APT promotes the so-called "intergenerational handover" that sustains the reduction of the work hours of people close to retirement in order to hire under 35 years old workers. In this case, the APT covers the income gap of senior workers and provides contributions to the company.

To sum up the target population of the project is young people aged 18-29 neither in employment, nor in education or training and still leaving in their parental home, and the local system seems to lack a coordinate intervention keeping together the issues of employment, education and housing. Hitherto the APT has concentrated its efforts in the implementation of policies and instruments (European, national and local) to tackle the issue of employment. In this sense housing is a quite unexplored sector, with the exception of the measures for young couples, and the effort of CICS to focus concurrently on housing and employment is innovative and could promote new synergies between the two sectors.

3. Genesis of the initiative

The initiative started from the convergence of different but complementary ideas by three actors that were concurrently searching for resources to set up autonomous projects. They can be considered as innovators, in the sense that they were able to mix and redefine their own ideas in order to create a common and more sustainable project.

The first actor is the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy. The mandate of PAF in relation to Youth Policy since its establishment in 2011 is to promote young people's autonomy, trying to strengthen their condition mainly in three areas: life experience (Civil Service, volunteering, international exchanges...), education and work (new job opportunities also during the education cycle, including summer jobs), housing (supporting the leaving of parental home). PAF's specific interest in cohousing stems from the experience of its Director, who was previously the Director of the provincial Housing Policy Office. In this position he developed an interest towards cohousing, since he had the opportunity to know some experiences in other European countries and was interested in setting up a project in Trento. When he was assigned to the PAF he did not set aside the idea of cohousing, and he was thinking on how to readapt it to his new institutional position. Thus the issue was how to connect cohousing and autonomy.

¹⁴ See Appendix A – Table 7

¹⁵ See Appendix A – Table 8

The second actor is the School of Social Training. In the last years SST is concentrating its efforts on the topics of participation and active citizenship. A specific interest in youth participation rose when the current Director was engaged. Before accepting this position she worked for ten years at the Youth Policy Office of the Municipality of Trento and is therefore particularly expert in that area. As a result of this new configuration SST proposed to the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy a project about youth participation. In that occasion a first axis of the future CICS was outlined: something that could keep together cohousing and participation of young people in the society.

“The project was set up in this way: I went to have a talk with the Director of PAF in order to propose him a project on young people and participation, I had a lot of thoughts about it and then I arrived and he told me: “you should prepare a project on cohousing!” Shit! I taugth and immediately said him “Ok! Wonderful!”. (Director of SST)¹⁶

The third actor is a group of three young sociologists who, as freelances, were preparing in that period a project about NEETs, since they worked at a research about that topic and then decided to transform their studies into something operational.

“After that meeting I started to think a lot about the project, about the transition to adulthood and so on and then I met XXX (one of the three sociologists, editor’s note) and he told me: “did you know that I started working with some friends on a project about NEETs?”, so I told him about my meeting with the Director of PAF and we just decided to conflate our ideas in a project of cohousing addressed to the NEETs”. (Director of SST)

As a result of this plot, occurred throughout 2012, the three sociologists wrote a project with the support of the School of Social Training and then presented it to the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy, which finally decided to directly finance it, without issuing a public tender. According to a 1990 provincial Law on Public Contracts the public tender is the ordinary procedure to choose a contractor, but the Autonomous Province of Trento can decide to employ a private treaty in some special cases mentioned by the law. It is the case of CICS since, according to the official documents of the APT, it has been considered as a service that could be assigned only to a specific provider, for technical reasons and for reasons related to the protection of copyright. For these reason the APT gave a direct assignment to the SST for the management of the project and to *Fondazione Comunità Solidale* and *Cooperativa Villa S. Ignazio* for the supply of the accommodations and the external educational support.

The final step of this preliminary phase was the issue of a call for the selection of a first group of 25 co-housers¹⁷ for a period of two years. The call was addressed to people aged 18-29, resident in the Province of Trento since at least 3 years, living in their parental home since at least 3 years, unemployed or employed in occasional jobs, not enrolled at the University (or at least 2 years out-of-course) or at a training or vocational courses. The applicants were required to deliver the following documents (in brackets the score attributed to each area):

- A letter containing their motivations to enter the project, their expectations about work and volunteering, their general desires and expectations about their future (14 points).
- A statement regarding the number of adult brothers and sisters searching for a job (2 points).
- A statement about their previous experience of volunteering (2 points) and/or civil service (2 points).
- The statement of the gross individual income of the last 3 years (0 points).

¹⁶ All the reported quotations have been translated from Italian to English by the authors.

¹⁷ The promoters of the project call “co-housers” its beneficiaries. We will also adopt this term alongside the report.

The income-related criteria was considered only in the event of a draw.

17 people applied, 9 females and 8 males. The low number of applications is mainly due to the period of publicity of the announcement that was opened from 20th December 2012 to 9th January 2013. This has been a precise choice made by PAF, which did not want to draw too much attention on this trial project.

One of them was excluded because of an invalid application. 4 of the applicants did not show up to the interview, so that 12 people, 6 males and 6 females aged 21-29, finally entered the apartments in March 2013 for their two years' stay:

- 9 of them were allocated in the apartment owned by the partner organization *Fondazione Comunità Solidale*. The apartment is located in *via Saluga* (Saluga Street), next to *Piazza Venezia*, an important and central square in Trento. It has a common space composed by a kitchen and a living room and 9 single rooms. The apartment is at the first floor of the building; the second floor is occupied by *Il Sentiero* (The Path), a shelter for homeless people managed by the same Foundation. The ground floor hosts the seat of another cooperative (*Infusione*) that promotes the social inclusion of women with migrant background and the office of the School of Social Training.

- 3 people were hosted in *Villa S. Ignazio*, a community for disadvantaged people managed by a cooperative with the same name. In this case the co-housers have at their disposal a single room and can use the services provided by the cooperative for its users: kitchen, TV room, living room, laundry, breakfast and so on. It is a very different way of living the experience of cohousing.

The provision of the apartments is free of charge for both organizations: they receive a rent of 250 euros per room per month, paid by the Autonomous Province of Trento (125 euros) and the beneficiaries (125 euros). The third apartment, made available by the cooperative *Progetto 92*, has not been used.

One of the 3 co-housers living in *Villa S. Ignazio* left the project immediately, during the first week, having realized that it was not what she expected. Other two people left later the project, the first one having found a work in another city and the second one having moved in a cohabitation with her boyfriend.

At last the co-housers are actually 9: 8 in *Via Saluga* and 1 in *Villa S. Ignazio*.

The opinion of the interviewees about them is very different. According to the director of PAF they show a huge frailty that complicates their paths towards autonomy. The director of SST reports an opposite situation: this condition of frailty concerns only 2 of the beneficiaries, while the majority shows a different profile compared to the usual idea of NEETs. They are very active people, committed in many forms of social participation. These observations are confirmed by the coach, and represent a partial failure of the project, that has met a different target with regards to the expected one. This has occurred because of the restricted and uncomfortable period of publicity of the announcement that has created a sort of pre-selection, favouring young people already accustomed to search for the right information and reply in such a few time in the middle of the Christmas holidays¹⁸.

"Obviously people who applied were people that already had a well-defined interest, that already got aware about their condition and their will-power of leaving the parental home, entering the labour market, and so they immediately identified in our call the possible way out from this condition". (Director of SST)

¹⁸ This issue will be discussed more in details in Chapter 7, within the challenge #7.

During this first phase the composition of the network has changed. Four third sector organizations were involved in the design of the project, to create a multi-professional team and containing the cost of the initiative: first, giving an “educative value” to the cohousing experience by enabling beneficiaries’ participation and volunteering; second, finding apartments available at a very convenient price to reduce the cost of the initiative.

Two of them, *Fondazione Comunità Solidale* and *Cooperativa Villa S. Ignazio*, are still actively involved in the project, providing accommodation and taking part in the coordination group of the project¹⁹. The third one, the Provincial Agency for the Minors (*Azienda Provinciale Per i Minori*) quit the project, since it realized that the actions were addressed to people aged 18-29, while its ordinary target are minors. The last one, the cooperative *Progetto 92*, was practically excluded from the project immediately after the selection of the beneficiaries, since its apartments were not used because of lacking applications.

4. The activities and organization of CICS

CICS main purpose is to promote young people’s autonomy through a set of facilities including the availability of a shared apartment at a very convenient price (250 euros per month, 125 paid by the beneficiaries) and a set of actions to foster their access into the labour market and the civic life of the community.

The project is entirely funded by the Autonomous Province of Trento and its total cost is 138.400 euros, partitioned into three years (2013, 2014 and 2015). The leading organization is the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy, while the implementing actors are three third sector organization; this is the allocation of tasks and funds hitherto:

Organization	Role	2013	2014
School of Social Training	Project management Employment of three coaches	€ 30.613,00	€ 37.005,04
Fondazione Comunità Solidale	Supply of the apartment in <i>Via Saluga</i> External educational support	€ 10.000,00	€ 10.586,94
Cooperativa Villa S. Ignazio	Supply of three rooms and shared facilities External educational support	€ 5.000,00	€ 4.500,00

The School of Social Training employs 3 tutors, called “coaches”, for a total amount of 15 hours per week (5 per coach). They are the 3 sociologists who designed the project. They have different specializations: vocational training, participation and volunteering and supervision and social support.

CICS’ activities are divided into three main areas: the daily management of the cohabitation; employability; civil participation.

1. *Cohousing*: this area includes the activities related to the daily management of the cohabitation. As an example we report the following actions:

¹⁹ See Chapter 6.

- a. Meetings about the limits and opportunities of cohousing.
 - b. Meetings to build a set of common rules to manage the cohousing and the relationship with the other inhabitants in the building, especially the referents and hosts of the two already mentioned organizations working on homeless people in *Via Saluga* and disadvantaged people in *Villa S. Ignazio*.
 - c. Meetings to co-design and organise the common spaces.
 - d. Interventions of conflict management and problem solving.
2. *Vocational training and employability*: an individualised plan is co-designed by each co-houser and his/her coach, considering factors like previous education, training, working experience and starting skills. The coaches have the task to guide the co-housers in increasing their awareness of their own skills, potentialities, personal and professional interests and limits. Individual meetings between coaches and co-housers are integrated by formal and informal collective meetings with entrepreneurs and employers coming from different fields, proposed by the coaches and/or the co-housers.
3. *Knowledge of the local labour market*: according to the project's vision, this is a milestone in the process towards autonomy. The complexity of the actual labour market requires a deep understanding of its organization, mechanisms, actors, opportunities and limits. In this sense a set of actions is provided in this area:
- a. Mapping of the companies and organizations of the territory and of the networks they belong to, in order to understand the specific features of the local economic district, its requirements in terms of available jobs and competences and so on.
 - b. Establishment of a (physical or virtual) space for a continuous updating of the information between the CICS system and networks of job opportunities.
 - c. Direct access to job/internship opportunities.
 - d. Guidance in the job search and, in case, in the entrance in an organization through, for example, the support in the analysis of the requirements, in the preparation of a job interview, in the management of conflicts and expectations and so on.
 - e. Collaboration with experiences like hubs and spaces for coworking, in order to support potential initiatives proposed by the co-housers.

Actions *a,b,c* should be mainly realised by a panel working group on labour market that should be enabled in the second year of the project involving the promoters of the initiative, the provincial Job Agency, the Trade Associations, the Federation of the Cooperatives and some private employers.

4. *Volunteering and civil commitment*: volunteering is considered an important instrument of non-formal learning of professional skills since it gives the possibility to become familiar with the dynamics of the organizations (hierarchies, conflicts of interest, rivalries, cooperation and competition, bureaucracy and so on) besides being a form of civil participation. This activity is promoted through meetings with volunteers and voluntary organizations and support in the access to the selected organizations for some hours per week. Co-housers are also required to attend meetings with local politicians and administrators and socio-political workshops.

In the first year (March 2013 – March 2014) a great effort has been dedicated by the coaches to organise and manage the cohabitation among the beneficiaries, setting common rules, co-designing the available spaces and solving some conflicts. A special attention has been given to the rules and relationships between the co-housers and the neighbourhood, with particular reference to the people in need hosted by the organizations involved in the project, mainly for two reasons. Firstly the choice of accommodating the beneficiaries in apartments owned by organizations of

social assistance was made also to create a beneficial context from a relational and educative point of view. Secondly, some of the co-housers showed some difficulties in relating to this kind of context and understanding the expected behaviours (e.g. having a special discretion in handling alcohol).

In the area of employability vocational training and meetings with experts have been proposed to improve the knowledge of the local opportunities in terms of work, education and training. Some of these activities were collective and mandatory, like the “dinner with the expert” usually hold at Thursday evening in *Via Saluga*, where a guest is invited to share his/her professional story. All the guests participate for free. Other activities related to job search have been implemented, depending on the individualised plan of each co-housers (such as assistance on how to prepare a CV and a job interview, analysis of competences etc.). To fully achieve the project’s goals in this area a working group on labour market is expected to be enabled in the second year. The working group should involve the promoters of the initiative, the provincial Job Agency, the Trade Associations, the local Federation of the Cooperatives and some private employers, and represents the major challenge of the project, since it should work on the creation of concrete opportunities for entering the labour market for the beneficiaries. In the promoters’ idea this should be the step that make it possible for the beneficiaries to definitely leave their parental home and achieve their autonomy after the two-years cohousing period.

The area of civil participation is still not clearly defined: according to the call the beneficiaries are expected to engage in some form of volunteering and civil commitment, with particular attention to the neighbourhood, but the operational procedures have not been clarified: a total amount of hours, a list of available organizations, possible fields of engagement and so on. The result is that some co-housers are already engaged in voluntary activities in associations or social movements, some others informally collaborates with the partners of the project, while the others are identifying possible destinations with the help of the coaches.

Hitherto these are the main difficulties as reported by the interviewees:

- Expectations and motivations of organisers and beneficiaries, both as individuals and as a group, were not always homogeneous: the former were focused on work, activation, volunteering, while the latter were more focused on enjoying the new physical space free from the parents’ control.
- Building a good climate within the group of the co-housers was considered as a precondition for the success of the project and became a more difficult challenge than imagined, needing a lot of energy by the coaches, in terms of individual and collective meetings.
- The lack of previous experiences of autonomy and co-managing the house stimulated a close support by the coaches.
- Some beneficiaries’ low motivation to participate at the project’s activities (co-designing of the cohousing, meetings, volunteering, networking in the neighbourhood).

These difficulties emerged mainly because the initial agreement between the promoters and the beneficiaries was not clear about some aspects like volunteering (is it mandatory? How many hours should each co-houser dedicate? Which organizations can host their volunteering experience?) and the expected level of participation to the proposed activities (are all the meetings mandatory? What does it happen if a co-houser does not participate? What kind of social relations/actions are the co-housers required to enable in the neighbourhood?). This lack of definition is due partly to a taken-for-granted by the side of the promoters (in their mind the relation with the neighbourhood would have arisen spontaneously) and partly to a conscious strategy: the promoters’ aim is to build a method that should gradually reach a completion

starting from a second edition of the project, thus they did not want to impose too much limits since the beginning, basing their work on a learning-by-doing perspective.

Furthermore both the context (apartments within host communities where social workers are employed) and the socially-oriented approach of the coaches (prompted by the PAF) strengthen the educative dimension of the experience for the co-housers. These circumstances can hinder the development of pathways towards autonomy, shifting the focus of the project from the issues related to housing and work to the quasi-social support to the beneficiaries.

The promoters are aware of these difficulties and are already working on the next call that is expected to be issued in 2015, and is considered as a milestone in the development of the experience.

“One of the aspects that we have to consider in the new call is that this is not a project of social assistance, but it is a project of personal development, it is funded under the umbrella of the Youth Policy and not of the Social Policy. It must be about prevention, we have to take care of the NEETs also to avoid to deal with a social need in the future, we have to build opportunities to strengthen normal situations before they transform into poverty”. (Director of PAF)

From this point of view it is worthwhile to study an initiative at such an initial stage, since it gives an insight into ongoing processes of testing and validation of innovative practices that are evolving through action in a trial and error approach. The study of the behaviour of public and private actors in this prototyping phase sheds light on how the prerequisites for upscaling are built and how the governance challenges are managed when they rise. It must be said furthermore that in this initiative the perspective of upscaling to produce systemic change is already present in this early stage.

5. The socially innovative dimension of the initiative

Drawing on social innovation literature the innovative dimension of CICS is analysed using three basic dimensions (Gerometta, Häußermann and Longo 2005; Moulaert *et al.* 2005a,b; Oosterlynck *et al.*, 2013): a) the satisfaction of basic social needs (content dimension) in this case the need for affordable housing and support towards autonomy; b) the transformation of social relations (process dimension) in this case the relations among different actors (public administration and third sector organizations), including the beneficiaries and the three “innovators”; c) the empowerment and socio-political mobilization (linking the process and content dimension) in this case related to the participative democracy used to decide and manage the activities and to the possibility to take control of their own life given to the beneficiaries.

a) Content dimension

CICS addresses two emerging social needs not tackled neither by the traditional welfare state nor by market actors. The first one is the need for affordable housing for young people, the second one is the need for support towards autonomy for NEETs and, in general, young people. The housing policies support the purchase of houses for young people, but this measure still requires a considerable starting capital. Prices in the rental market are expensive: as a comparison, the average price for a studio apartment in the city of Trento is around 500 euros per month, while the beneficiaries of CICS pay 125 euros. While addressing to these needs however, the project uses a cross-sectorial approach, which relates different dimensions of young people’s life and autonomy: housing, job, civic participation, improving skills and professional competences. The project tries to systematise aims and measures usually belonging to different policy sectors and

this is exactly a missing element in the local context²⁰. It does so in a perspective of prevention, that allows to support NEETs before they drift in a condition of poverty, considered in Amartya Sen's broad relational meaning (Sen 1992, 1999). This approach can be considered innovative in a context where cuts in social expenditure tend to affect prevention policies in order to allocate funds to contrast the ascertained needs, although it can result in savings in the mid-long term.

Furthermore CICS succeeds in reaching a target excluded by the institutional welfare services: young people, and NEETs in particular, are often mentioned as a new vulnerable group but they are *de facto* excluded, especially in the Italian welfare state, traditionally biased in favour of policies for elderly. The situation is quite similar in the province of Trento, although the local government is promoting specific measures addressed to young people within the active labour market policies that are being reinforced through the implementation, starting from 2014, of the Youth Guarantee Program. These policies, however, only considers the issue of employment²¹.

The project also marks a difference with the "traditional" cohousing experiences: its purposes, related to the access to labour market and the achievement of a wider autonomy, are broader than the stricter meaning of cohousing, where the focus is on the low cost sharing experience. All the interviewees underline this aspect.

"This is a new approach because I, but also the three sociologists, made a lot of research about other experiences and I found a lot of cohousing experiences, but they are not related to this matter of autonomy and access to the labour market, while our project was born for this purpose." (Director of SST)

This is also one of the most critical aspect of the project, since initially this main purpose has not been fully understood by the beneficiaries, who were on the contrary almost entirely concentrated on the pure cohousing experience and on the physical aspect of the apartment. . The importance of the cohousing experience *sensu stricto* has been limited for the 3 people hosted in *Villa S. Ignazio*, since the possibility to customise rooms and common spaces was almost zero and the dynamics were focused not on the cohabitation among the co-housers but between the co-housers and the rest of the community. This circumstance helped the 3 beneficiaries to concentrate themselves more on their individual growth rather than on the everyday life of the apartment, albeit there have been at the beginning some tensions since everybody wanted to enter the apartment in *via Saluga*, which was considered more attractive than *Villa S. Ignazio*. Because of these dynamics, the School of Social Training would like to introduce in the new version of the project a mandatory period for everybody at *Villa S. Ignazio*.

Finally the project is giving the possibility to "read" some social needs in a new and different way, and this could help the future planning of the housing and social policies addressed to young people. Some interviewees report that leaving parental home could be delayed not only for economic reasons, but also for a frail identity. This would mean that housing policies addressed to young people should also consider this aspect and strengthen the intervention in this direction besides the provision of economic measures.

"There is a need that is deeper than the simple issue of housing: it is like a disease of the self, they miss a good tension that should come from a sense of responsibility... NEET in reverse becomes TEEN". (Director of Villa S. Ignazio, focus group)

However it must be underlined that there is some confusion about this issue, since some actors (PAF and the third sector organizations) relate this feature to a "contemporary youth condition",

²⁰ See Chapter 2.3.

²¹ See Chapter 2.3 for a more detailed description.

while SST and the coaches tend to attribute it just to some specific cases within the project (2/3). A process of assessment would thus be required to better understand the issue before it becomes a matter of policy making.

b) Process dimension

CICS can be considered as a “semi bottom-up initiative”. Albeit it is managed and pushed by the local government it stemmed from three young sociologists' studies and personal experiences, who raised other strategic actors' awareness in order to tackle the issue of NEETs. The outcome of this process has been the establishment of a collaboration between the Autonomous Province of Trento and the third sector organizations that provides us with an interesting case of active horizontal subsidiarity, to the extent that during the focus group has been said that “The APT is not acting as a public body”. Considering that a public body is usually perceived as slow to adapt to the new needs of society and to the emerging issues raised by the third sector organizations, this statement sounds like a recognition of its capacity to promote a management style based on horizontal governance. Within this public-private network the public government gives the needed reliability to the project (in addition to the funding) and the private partners manage the activities and provide skills and human resources. This occurs both at macro and micro level: thanks to this network the beneficiaries can engage in experiences of social participation and/or volunteering, creating new connections and social relations involving socially excluded people (like homeless hosted at the upper floor in the apartments in *via Saluga* or the disadvantaged people living in *Villa S. Ignazio's* host community). This is considered as an innovative aspect by all the actors involved.

The network also works with its institutional mandate: the supervision granted by all the organizations involved guarantees a deeper level of follow-up to the beneficiaries' experience. This means, for example, that the main choices regarding the individuals and the group are taken also considering the position of *Fondazione Comunità Solidale* and *Villa S. Ignazio*, that are not only the home-owners but are also directly involved in the activities.

The actual effectiveness of this network will be tested, in the next months, by the activation of the working group on the labour market, which should involve other actors, mainly the local Job Agency and private employers. This could become an innovative institutional space to tackle the issue of youth unemployment beyond the boundaries of the project, especially if its work will not be limited to support the experience of the CICS' beneficiaries.

“*The Autonomous Province of Trento is not acting as a public body*” has been said during the focus group. This means that its role is considered as innovative, since it has been able to react to the requests of the third sector organizations and to promote a management style based on horizontal subsidiarity and governance.

c) Empowerment dimension

CICS' goal is not only to foster the leaving of parental home but also to follow-up that decision. The beneficiaries are not only provided with an affordable accommodation, but also with a set of services to promote their activation in the labour market and in the local community, starting from the neighbourhood where they are living. Considering this goal, each beneficiary is provided with a personal support in order to acquire or strengthen his/her skills, thus promoting the individual empowerment.

Collective empowerment should be promoted through the participation in the neighbourhood's life and the activation of the beneficiaries as volunteers and/or activists. However the goal here is not to raise a collective awareness about the issues related to housing and young people, but to improve the individual skills of each beneficiary. This remains an innovative attempt for a cohousing project, although it is encountering some difficulties, due to the lack of clear instructions and agreements. As far as volunteering is concerned the executive procedures of the activities are still not defined, and an idea of what "participation in the neighbourhood's life" means has not been shared. The project manager and the coaches assumed that these kind of relations within the neighbourhood would have arisen spontaneously, but this has not occurred during the first year.

The only attempt to promote a collective action concerns the daily running of the cohabitation that is managed through a model of participative democracy, but this does not affect the awareness of the beneficiaries about their condition in the housing market.

6. Institutional mapping and governance relations

As reported by all the actors involved, CICS is a project managed through horizontal public-private governance. In the second year of activity, it will be integrated by the participation of private employers in the creation of a working group to support the access to the labour market for the co-housers. Indeed only public and third sector are currently involved.

Before discussing the specificity of the governance model of the initiative, one must keep in mind that the Autonomous Province of Trento is a strong and powerful actor, very active in the field of social policies, partly due to its autonomy status²². In addition the APT has always had good performances in terms of efficiency and efficacy of its organization and intervention, so the local community has always been supportive to its local institutions and accepted their highly pervasive presence in their life. This contextual characteristic permeates all the governance relations and all the local policies, thus affecting the development of social innovation in two directions: on the one hand a powerful and supportive administration can guarantee support for developing and upscaling socially innovative initiatives; on the other hand such a pervasive presence (for example, many third sector organizations depend almost entirely by provincial funds) can restrain creativity and the potential of change of some innovative processes.

In such an institutional context the strong presence of the local government in CICS presents both sides of the coin, the potential support for upscaling and the risk of choking the initiative. In this sense the governance model adopted to manage the project becomes crucial in deciding its destiny. Hitherto governance relations have been participative and most of the decisions have been shared, and this certainly contributes to give breath to the initiative.²³

CICS' governance relations are structured into three levels: the leading board, the coordination group and the institutional panel.

The former is composed by the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy (leading organization) and the School of Social Training (managing organization), included the coaches. It is a strictly executive board, where inputs coming from other levels or from the co-housers (through the coaches) are transformed into decisions.

²² See Chapter 2.

²³ See Chapter 7, Challenges 3 and 6.

The coordination group is composed by the leading board and the partner organizations *Fondazione Comunità Solidale*, *Cooperativa sociale Progetto 92*, *Cooperativa sociale Villa S. Ignazio*. It has a role of supervision of the developments of the project and can be enlarged to other actors in case of need, especially provincial bodies dealing with housing, labour and minimum income. It has a role of supervision of the development of the project. The relationship between the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy and the partners is regulated through specific agreements. The provision of the apartments is free of charge for them, since the rent costs are covered by the beneficiaries and APT, but they are required to help with external educational support in case of need. PAF and SST consider their role as very important:

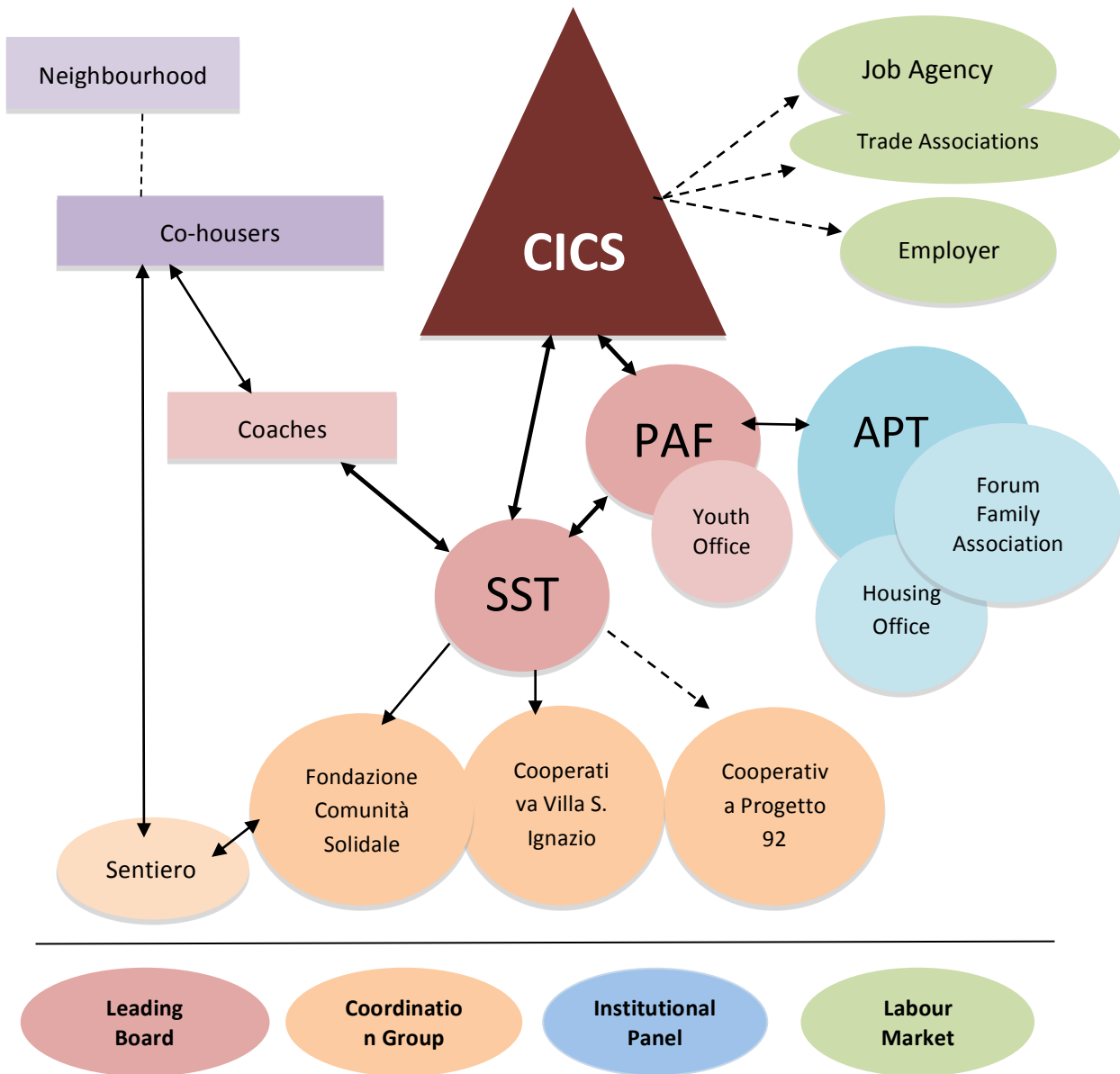
“Which is the added value of the participation of these organizations? It is that they can have an educational role within the project. The apartments might also have been found through the ITEA (the local public institute for social housing, editor’s note), but that context would have not had an educational background. On the other hand the third sector organizations involved in the project employ social workers that have a relationship with the beneficiaries, and the educational issue is continuously faced during the implementation of the project”. (Director of PAF)

The institutional panel is the setting where general issues about the project design and management are discussed and then disseminated to the other two levels. It is composed by: PAF, the local Forum of the Family Associations (*Forum Trentino delle associazioni familiari*), youth associations, providers, other public bodies, other private organizations. Despite not being a formal partner of the project, the Forum of the Family Associations plays an important role within the institutional panel, since it is a privileged partner for all the family policy provided by the Autonomous Province of Trento. It is a federation of 44 associations dealing with family in the territory of the province. The relationship between the APT and the Forum is regulated by an agreement stating that the Forum is the only second level body that collaborates with the APT in the design and implementation of family policies. Following the principle of subsidiarity some employees of the Forum work together with public servants of PAF in family-related panels and in the management of a help desk.

The participation of the Forum is not a case: the APT considers the family a pillar of its welfare policy and of its youth policy too. Forming a family is considered as a goal for young people’s transition to adulthood and many initiatives and policies addressed to young people follow this purpose. CICS is not an exception: PAF’s idea is to offer a chain of interventions where the cohousing experience represents the first link, to support the leaving of the parental home. The second step would be a single room or flat and the third one a cohabitation with a partner. The latter was the object of the first policy measures within this “housing chain”, the contribution to young couples to purchase a house. CICS represent therefore a possible solution to provide the chain with its first link. Nevertheless the final goal remains the formation of a family, and that is why the Forum of the Family Associations participates and the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy is leading the experimentation. PAF is indeed the result of the institutionalization of this political representation of the transition to adulthood: young people are supposed to form a family and become parents.

A sub-level of the institutional panel is the working group on the labour market that should be activated in the second year of the project, including the Job Agency, the Trade Associations, the Federation of the Cooperatives and private employers that are willing to host the beneficiaries for practices or other kind of experiences. This is considered as a pillar of the project and its constitution has been slowed down also by the local elections held in October 2013 and by the fact that the initiative should be taken by the Director of the PAF, whose time availability for the project is quite low.

Fig. 1 – CICS in the local governance system: actors and relationships²⁴



Source: our elaboration from desk analysis, interviews and focus group

7. The governance challenges

#1: Mainstreaming social innovation

The experience of CICS is carried on by the Autonomous Province of Trento with the aim of building a model of intervention in the field of housing policies for youngsters. This aspect clearly emerged by the side of the representatives of the APT, both in the interviews and focus group:

²⁴ CICS: Cohousing: lo cambio Status; PAF: Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy; SST: School of Social Training; APT: Autonomous Province of Trento.

“The experience must be not only useful and interesting, but it must affect the policies, in the sense that it should result in a model that could be repeated and spread”. (Director of Youth and Civil Service Office)

Although the initiative is placed within the framework of youth policies and not of housing policies the intention of the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy is to integrate the experience in a more complex and gradual pathway towards housing for young people:

“We have to understand how we can organize the chain of housing for young people, this is the first step but we should build a whole system. This is a shared apartment, I call it an “uncomfortable cot”, a first phase of a chain of services, then we could offer a private room, and this is a second step, then a third one could be an apartment for two people, for example a partner, and finally the last step is represented by the fund for the purchase of an apartment addressed to young couples. We must study and build this kind of system”. (Director of PAF)

This aim was not so clear for the other actors involved in the project, which were more concentrated on operative and practical issues.

However the initiative in its current formulation is considered not to be sustainable at a large scale, mainly because of the weight of the educative approach in terms of economic and human resources.

The research of a model of intervention implies answers to some questions raised by the representative of the Youth and Civil Service Office during the focus group:

- Is this experience invasive of people’s lives, their relations and values? Should the educative method applied in this experience concern these issues? What are the limits that public sector must preserve to protect citizens’ free choices?
- Is the project sustainable from the economic point of view? The strong educational focus could become “heavy” and difficult to sustain at a larger scale (especially because of the costs for professionals).

The APT aims at going on with the experimentation. In 2015 a new call will be published, with a very similar formulation and still addressing a limited target (25 people aged 18-29 on a total amount of 6.600 NEETs aged 18-24 in the province of Trento)²⁵. At the moment, the experience is not yet going to be spread, up-scaled or mainstreamed, because a sort of a second trial period is considered necessary and a complete assessment will be available only in 2018.

However, mainstreaming is in PAF’s intention for next future: once experimented, assessed and built a model of the experience, it will be part of housing policies for young people. The involvement of the Housing Policy Office, still weak in the project, is considered as a condition to be realised to reach this aim. The first step would be the stable presence of a representative of the Housing Policy Office in CICS’s institutional panel and/or in the coordination group.

“The idea is very challenging, since following this trial period we would like to create a specific law. Our legislative autonomy would allow us to create specific articles or laws to transform this project into a permanent policy”. (Director of PAF)

In this sense the APT can benefit from its characteristic of legislative autonomy described in Chapter 2, since it can create new laws in a much easier way when compared to other Regions of Italy. This is a condition that could foster or, at least, speed up social innovation.

“How can we upscale this experience? We have two ways: as a housing policy or as a youth policy, identifying different actions for the promotion of young people’s autonomy, one of which is the cohousing. I

²⁵ See Chapter 2.3.

would prefer the second way, it would be easier because it would fall into my authority and I could manage it by myself. This could be a goal of this legislature that has just begun (with the provincial elections of October 2013, editor's note)". (Director of PAF)

At the same time, cohousing experiences are rising in the entire Province. Although they are not directly related to CICS, the presence of such an initiative prompted by the local government favours processes of imitation.

The first one has been set up in the city of Trento by a social cooperative working on elderly. Some apartments in a house for elderly people were rented for free to a group of youngsters in exchange of a set of services to be provided to the hosted elderlies.

A second initiative has been set up in Pergine Valsugana (a municipality of 20.000 inhabitants, 10 kilometres from Trento), where the local Municipality provides accommodation to a group of young people in the same building where the local Youth Centre is placed, asking them a contribution in the management of the Centre. In this case there has been a direct contact, even if informal, between this experience and CICS. The Municipality of Pergine Valsugana is considering the hypothesis of employing in its project the same coaches involved in CICS, on recommendation of the School of Social Training.

#2: Governing welfare mix: avoiding fragmentation

The initiative has been able to avoid fragmentation keeping together different inputs and actors who had slightly different ideas: cohousing, NEETs, active participation. Thanks to the mediation of the School of Social Training all of these inputs converged into the same project and did not create different but overlapping initiatives.

The involvement of two important actors in the potential support for the project, as the provincial Housing Policy Office and the local Job Agency, has been weak until now. Thus at the moment there is no coordination between CICS and these organizations. The former would be an obvious stakeholder if a possible direction for the initiative is to represent a model for a new housing policy for young people, and the latter is a crucial local actor as far as active labour policy is concerned, since it is the collector of the local job opportunities and it already has a broad network of private employers that could potentially be involved in CICS.

Also the Municipality of Trento, is not directly involved, although contacts are underway for the next issue of the call. It is an important actor, both considering housing policy (it is the final provider of social housing) and youth policy (it implements many actions, also coming from the national and provincial level). Furthermore the level of the District (the Municipality of Trento is divided into 12 Districts) seems the best one to involve the beneficiaries at the neighbourhood level.

Finally there is no coordination by the Autonomous Province of Trento between CICS and other similar initiatives set up in other contexts. SST is trying to promote informally some kind of collaboration with them (see challenge #1). Such a network would probably be an important advisory actor in case of a new framework law or of a change in the local housing policies in order to upscale the cohousing experience.

#3: Governing welfare mix: developing a participatory governance style

All the actors involved agree upon the definition of "horizontal governance" for CICS's governance style. This means that all the actors feel to be actively involved in the processes thanks to the fact

that the Province has been able to overcome hierarchies and established a peer relationship with the third sector organizations. The already mentioned words *“The Autonomous Province of Trento is not acting as a public body”*, pronounced by a representative of a third sector actor, imply a vision of a public sector usually overarching private organizations’ interventions, but at the same time recognize that, in this case, this usual attitude is not occurring. This approach has been recognized as one of the aspects that can foster social innovation, since it gives the possibility for all the actors involved to contribute with new ideas, also in a critical way. The institutionalized course of the relationship between public and private sector has been challenged, since in this project the third sector is not considered as a mere service provider and the public body as a mere funding provider (see challenge #6).

Two main critical points can be highlighted about the participatory governance style applied in CICS’ experience.

First, the still undefined world of the other organizations that should support the project in the field of activation. Private employers should attend at the working group on the labour market and insert the co-housers in jobs within their organization. Social cooperative, associations and other third sector organizations are supposed to host co-housers as volunteers. Both these networks are hitherto undefined. They represent a major challenge as far as the participatory governance is concerned, since the active involvement of an external network could multiply the effects of the project in terms both of changes in social relations and of the quality of the service provided.

Second, the participation of the target group. The “voice of the co-housers” is supposed to be reported within the governance system by the coaches. Although they are indeed quite close to them, they are nonetheless contracted by the School of Social Training and they are in a rather ambiguous position. A non-mediated representation of the target group in the governance of the project would also help it in keeping alive its innovative potential, since it would be closer to the everyday life of the target population.

#4: Equality and diversity

A high degree of diversity within the target population is emerging in the trial project. Some of the beneficiaries are very active and involved in socially relevant networks and initiatives, others appear relationally poor, someone cannot afford to leave the parental home for economic reasons, others show a personal and social frailty that hinder the step towards autonomy, and so on. This could be depend on how the call for participants and the selection of tenants were conducted (#5). A reflection about it could lead to have more attention for different sub-groups of the target population in the following of the project.

#5: Uneven access

The access is a major challenge in CICS’ initiative. The main issues concern the small size of the initiative (25 beneficiaries on a total number of NEETs estimated in at least 6.600 units) and the criteria to select the beneficiaries:

- The low attention to income-related criteria in the selection of the co-housers. It gives less chances to young people who cannot leave their parental home for economic reasons and cannot afford a market-based rent. The statement of the personal income in last 3 years is

required but it does not affect the final score in the ranking, apart from the event of a draw: in this case the applicant with a lower income is privileged²⁶.

- The score attributed to the number of adult brothers and sisters searching for a job: this double-faced criterion from one side favours the applicants with a more difficult familiar background, from the other side it is uneven towards applicants that do not have siblings in the described condition (or that do not have siblings at all).
- The score attributed to previous experiences of volunteering and/or civil service. This criterion could contribute to pre-selecting the more socially active youngsters, hindering the participation of the more socially excluded.
- The requirement of being resident in the Province of Trento since at least 3 years. It was introduced in order to address to people with a consolidated link with the local context. On the other hand, it excludes many people in need of an accommodation, like student, foreigners and other newly-comers. It is worth to notice that this criterion is applied to access to other social housing programs and to the minimum income program, as reported in Chapter 2.

As described in Chapter 2.2 the local social housing policies are addressed to young couples. In this sense the project gives a possibility in terms of housing also to young single men and women.

#6 Avoiding responsibility

This is a case in which the public administration takes the responsibility to tackle a new need (housing and work for young people) with the collaboration of the civil society. This role is recognized to the Autonomous Province of Trento by all the actors. To strengthen this position the representatives of the local administration highlighted many times that the purpose is to test a model that could be repeated and upscaled. *“If the public administration delegates, this is a problem, but it is a mistake also if it acts like a starring-role”* has been said during the focus group, and it seems that CICS’ governance model maintains a satisfactory balance between these two extremes.

According to the representatives of the third sector organizations this situation is a crucial point: *“In the last years the third sector relaxed on the public funding, that is now diminishing, thus the situation must change. The public sector in turn relaxed on the funding distribution and on the proxy of the management to the third sector. Both have adapted to the situation, as they were resting on a double bed. It is instead necessary to sit around a table, not only to plan the use of the resources but also to co-planning and co-evaluating. In a moment like this, it is fundamental if we want to keep the current level of welfare services”*. (Director of Villa S. Ignazio, focus group)

This excerpt provides us with the fitting image of a transition “from the bed to the table”, an effective description of the new form that the public-private relationship should take in order to innovate the local welfare system, avoiding at the same time the proxy of responsibility and the centralization of power.

#7: Managing intra-organizational tensions

Some unresolved questions did emerge during the fieldwork. These are the main ones:

- *Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy vs. Housing Policy Office*: no specific tensions were reported, but the initiative is at the border of the two administrative structures and legislative fields. This kind of situation is quite common as long as social innovation is concerned, due to its cross-sector vision, however at the institutional level it

²⁶ See Chapter 3.

would be important to define which structure is the leader. Hitherto it is clear that PAF is the leading agency but the direct involvement of the Housing Policy Office would be required to plan together the future course of action, in order to clarify which legislative framework will be affected by this initiative: housing policy or youth policy? This convergence between the two agencies could be extremely facilitated by the position of the current director of PAF, who is indeed the previous director of the Housing Policy Office.

- *The co-housers' behaviour*: some tensions between the co-housers and the hosting organizations were reported due to the behaviour of the formers and their alleged lacking observance of some rules of cohabitation, like the respect of the turns to clean the stairs or of the parking ban and similar everyday management issues. These tensions were reported especially in the initial phase by the representatives of the hosting organizations.
- *The co-housers' point of view*: especially in the initial phase a tension has been reported between the expectations of the promoters, focused on the dimensions of work, volunteering and autonomy, and the ones of the beneficiaries, often related to the physical space they get when they are accepted in the project. The co-housers started to consider the experience as they were university students, as the shared apartment represented the occasion to set them free from their parents' control. As a consequence the recreational and self-centred aspect was predominant and was manifested through the willingness to organize the personal spaces, to decorate the private and common rooms, to do parties and so on. In this sense there has been a tension between the personal experience of the co-housers and the need to frame the initiative within a set of rules and formal steps in connection to the fact that CICS is a public project with collective aims and financed through public money.
- *The coaches' work hours*: the total amount of hours dedicated to the project is 15 hours per week that is 5 hours per coach. This is unanimously considered insufficient to carry on all the activities that should be done. The result is that the implementation of important parts of the projects, like the development of a system of evaluation, is jeopardized. This would require an availability of time that is currently unsustainable.

These difficulties partially shifted the attention from the issues related to housing and work towards an everyday management of the involvement of the co-housers in the activities of the project, delaying the beginning of the activities strictly related to labour market and volunteering.

#8: Enabling legal framework

The legislative autonomy attributed to the Autonomous Province of Trento constitutes an important condition for the start-up and, especially, for the upscaling of local socially innovative initiatives. This feature enables the local government to set up and change its own laws and rules in order to accomplish the desired results for the satisfaction of new social needs or the implementation of new models of governance.

For this reason the direct involvement of the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy is crucial for the development of the initiative. PAF's goal, as reported by its director, is exactly the enhancement of the current legal framework through the creation of a new law that can adopt the innovation introduced by the experience of CICS, transforming it into a permanent policy. This process is made possible by the legislative autonomy enjoyed by the APT. Although the most logical way would be to introduce changes in the local housing policy, the most enabling framework is currently the one related to family and youth policy mainly for four reasons:

- PAF is a powerful agency: family policy is a very important matter in the province of Trento, both at institutional and at social level. The local government is working a lot for this topic and

considers it as a pillar of its political action. The creation of PAF is the result of this special attention and, as a consequence, this agency has a great power when compared to other provincial offices and it is not accountable to a specific department but directly to the President of the APT.

- Youth policy is gaining momentum within the political action of the APT. A new framework law about youth is in the legislators' mind and autonomy would be its keyword. It would thus be easier to include the cohousing experience among the various actions promoted by the APT to support young people's autonomy rather than start from scratch a new specific housing policy.
- Albeit it was previously the director of the Housing Policy Office, it is obviously easier for the director of PAF to propose new laws that fall under his authority rather than include other offices and servants that are not directly accountable to him.
- The Housing Policy Office has hitherto not been directly involved in CICS. It is informed about the project but is not following its developments. It would thus be quite hard to refer to it only as long as the policy effects are concerned.

In this context also the 1990 provincial law on Public Contracts must be quoted, since it made it possible for the APT to give a direct assignment of public funds to the implementing actors (SST, *Fondazione Comunità Solidale* and *Cooperativa Villa S. Ignazio*), without any public tender²⁷. This procedure can foster social innovation at the beginning, when some innovative actors can be supported in the start-up phase of their project, but it could also become a trap, reinforcing a privileged relationship that may exclude other potentially innovative actors.

²⁷ See Chapter 3 for a description of the procedure.

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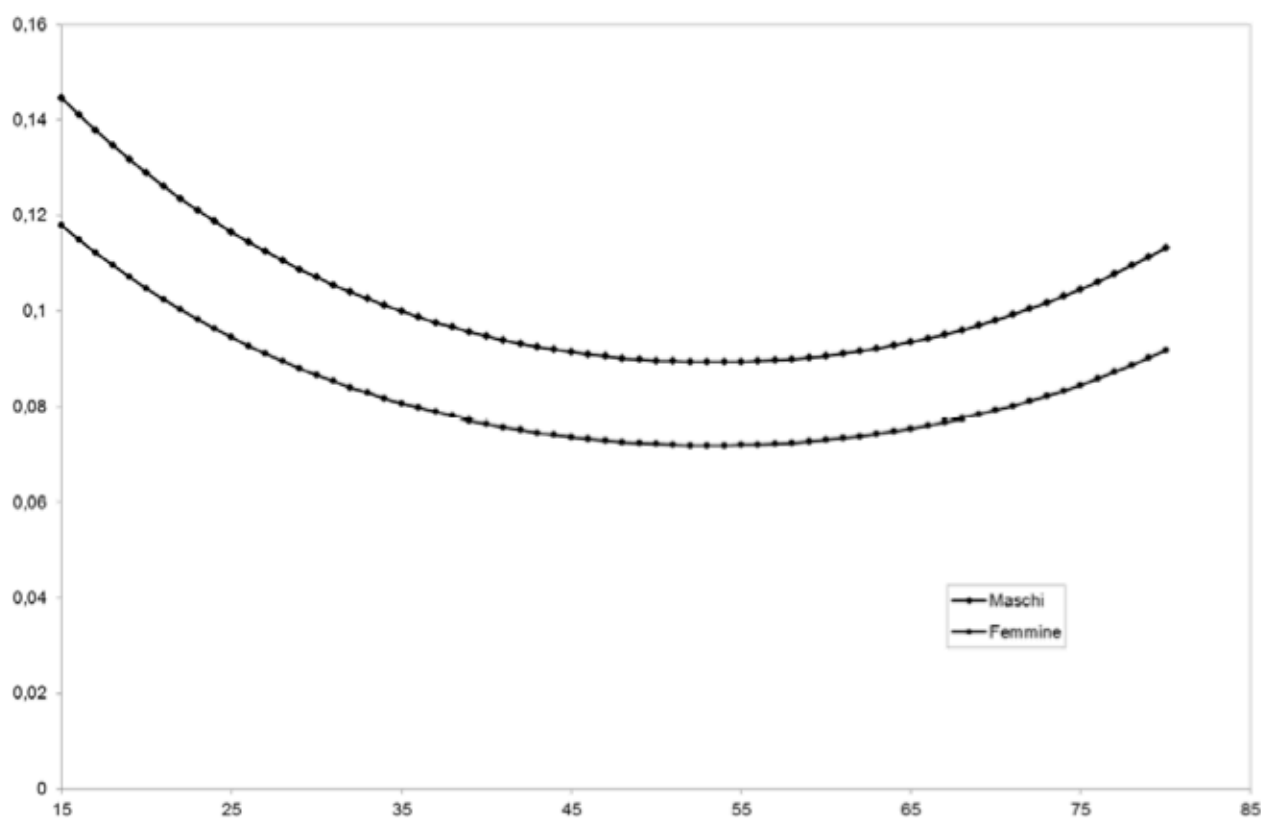
Appendix A – Tables and Graphs

Table 1. At-risk-of-poverty rate (percentage of total population)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Italy	18,7	18,4	18,2	19,6	19,4
North East	9,6	9,4	9,6	9,6	10,5
Province of Trento	4,9	7,2	7,5	11,9	13,5

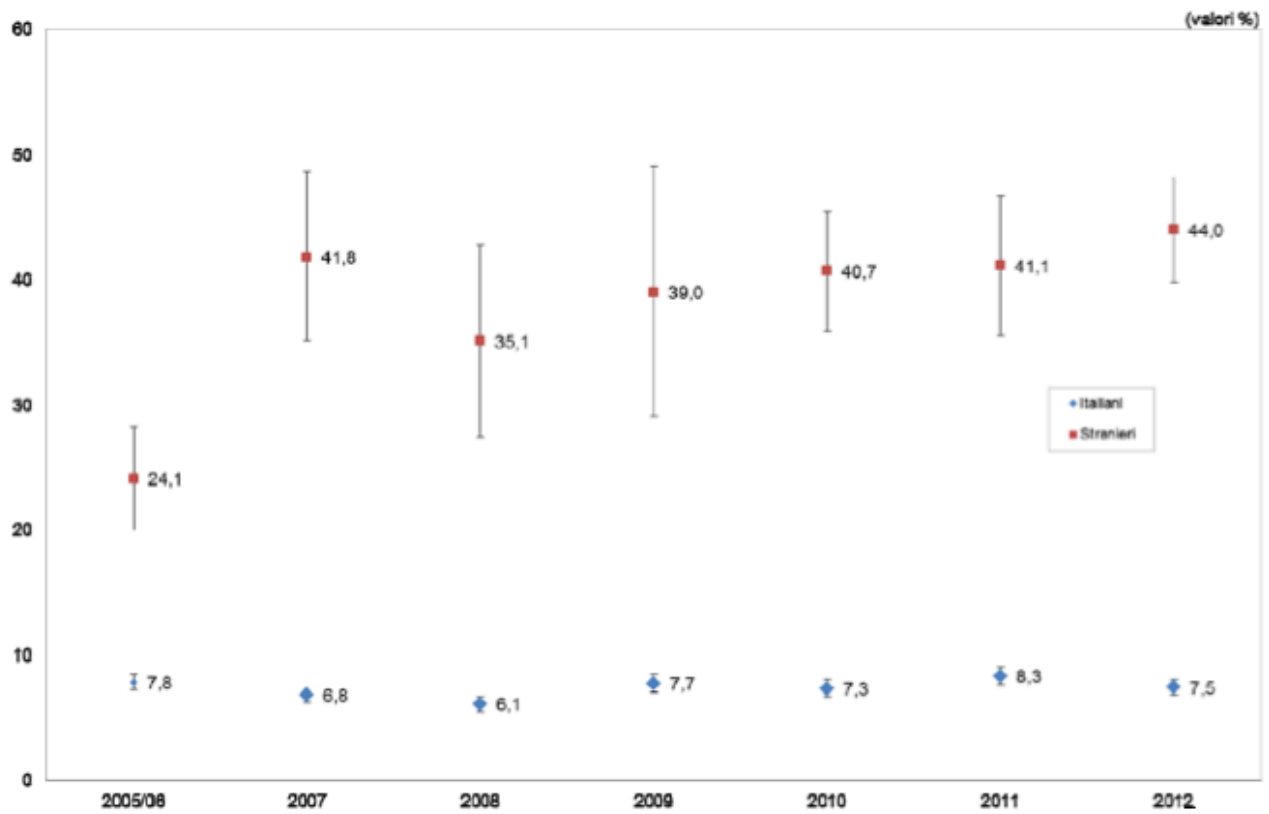
Source: Eurostat

Fig. 1. Odds of being poor in the province of Trento depending on age and gender (threshold 50%)



Source: IRVAPP 2013

Fig. 2. Poverty trends depending on citizenship (threshold 50%)



Source: IRVAPP 2013

Table 2. Unemployment rates (15 years or over)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union	8,9	9,6	9,6	10,4	10,8
Italy	7,8	8,4	8,4	10,7	12,2
North East	4,7	5,5	5,0	6,7	7,7
Province of Trento	3,5	4,3	4,5	6,1	6,6

Source: Eurostat

Table 3. Young people 18-24 neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET rates)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union	14,1	13,9	16,1	16,5	16,6	17,0	16,9
Italy	20,1	20,7	22,4	24,2	25,2	27,0	29,3
North East	9,9	10,6	13,9	16,6	17,4	19,8	20,3
Province of Trento	9,4	9,6	11,4	16,2	15,1	16,4	17,7

Source: Eurostat

Table 4. Level of education per cohort of birth and gender in the province of Trento (%)

Cohort of birth and gender	Highest qualification				
	Primary school	Lower secondary school	Vocational training	Upper secondary school	Degree or more
<i>1927/1942</i>					
Men	48.6	25.1	6.7	12.2	7.4
Women	60.0	24.6	4.8	7.5	3.1
Total (N=898)	55.0	24.8	5.6	9.6	4.9
<i>1943/1958</i>					
Men	15.4	31.9	20.2	20.9	11.6
Women	24.8	33.5	16.9	14.4	10.3
Total (N=1.538)	20.3	32.7	18.5	17.5	10.9
<i>1959/1974</i>					
Men	1.8	27.3	27.3	30.2	13.5
Women	1.3	25.5	25.7	32.1	15.4
Total (N=1.693)	1.5	26.3	26.4	31.2	14.5
<i>1975/1985</i>					
Men	2.1	18.7	19.5	26.8	22.9
Women	1.4	12.4	11.7	40.9	33.5
Total (N=736)	1.7	15.4	15.4	38.9	28.5

Source: OPES 2012 (our translation)

Table 5. Early leavers from education and training (range 18-24, %)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union	14,3	14,0	13,5	12,8	12,0
Italy	19,2	18,8	18,2	17,6	17,0
North East	16,0	15,4	15,2	14,7	12,6
Province of Trento	12,2	11,8	9,6	12,0	11,0

Source: Eurostat

Table 6. Youth employment rate (range 20-29, %)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union	65,6	62,7	61,6	61,1	60,1	59,6
Italy	53,5	50,0	47,8	46,9	45,3	41,2
North East	67,6	63,5	60,8	60,1	57,9	53,3
Province of Trento	67,9	64,0	61,3	61,5	57,7	53,6

Source: Eurostat

Table 7. Youth unemployment rates (range 15-24, %)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union	20,0	21,0	21,4	22,9	23,3
Italy	25,4	27,8	29,1	35,3	40,0
North East	15,7	19,1	19,7	24,1	26,9
Province of Trento	11,5	15,1	14,5	20,5	23,5

Source: Eurostat

Table 8. Distribution of the employment conditions at first job among young people under 35 in the province of Trento per cohort of birth (%)

Employment condition	Cohort of birth			
	1948/1957	1958/1965	1966/1974	1975/1992
Open-ended	49.6	43.6	40.0	26.7
Apprenticeship	16.6	14.4	17.8	25.0
Fixed term	21.2	26.1	29.9	38.8
Self-employed	8.1	11.4	8.6	6.1
Without contract	4.5	4.5	3.7	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	1.365	1.171	1.341	1.354

Source: OPES 2012 (our translation)

Appendix B – The fieldwork

In February 2014, the Urbino team conducted:

- Analysis of documents (e.g. project, call for selection, web sites of the actors involved) concerning the innovative experience and aimed to individuate useful information about its working and development. Analysis of institutional documents, data and researches to describe the local policies and poverty conditions in the framework where the experience is realized (e.g. laws, housing plans, social plans, implementation programs, reports, agreements).
- 3 qualitative interviews involving the Director of the Provincial Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy of the Autonomous Province of Trento; the project manager and Director of the School of Social Training, managing organization of the project; one of the three sociologists who launched the initial idea, now employed as a coach in the project.
- A focus group involving 7 participants: The director of the Youth and Civilian Service Office of the Autonomous Province of Trento; the civil servant of the Youth and Civilian Service Office in charge of the accountancy of the project; the project manager and Director of the School of Social Training; the Director of the cooperative Villa S. Ignazio, partner of the project; an employee of the Fondazione Comunità Solidale, partner of the project; two of the three sociologists who launched the initial idea, now employed as coaches in the project.