

1. Cascina Roccafranca (Turin, Italy)



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Executive summary

[Cascina Roccafranca](#) is a multi-functional community centre located in a former farmstead in Turin's outskirts. After 30 years of vacancy, Cascina Roccafranca was bought by the Municipality of Turin and requalified with the support of the European Union Urban II program. Today, Cascina Roccafranca is a public asset managed through a cooperation between public and civic actors and it provides a wide range of social and cultural activities. Since 2012, Cascina Roccafranca has been part of a network of similar community centres in Turin which was formalized in 2017, and today collaborates with the City Council in the management and the regeneration of urban commons.



Picture 1. Cascina Roccafranca's building seen from the court. Photo (cc) Eutropian

1 Timeline

1600s – Cascina Roccafranca is built by the Compagnia dell'Immacolata Concezione

1689 – Cascina was sold to Count Lorenzo Ballard

1734 – Cascina Roccafranca becomes an independent feud

1840 – Baronessa Chionio buys the building and enlarges it

1957 – Cascina Roccafranca's agricultural lot is halved

1970s – Cascina Roccafranca stops its agricultural function due to the area's industrialization

1999 – the Municipality launches a social forum (tavoli sociali) to discuss the requalification of the Mirafiori area

2001 – Mirafiori Nord is selected as the area of intervention for the European Union's Urban II program

2002 – the Municipality of Turin buys Cascina Roccafranca with the Urban II funds

2004 – Requalification starts in the Cascina Roccafranca

2006 – Cascina Roccafranca Foundation is established

2007 – Cascina Roccafranca opens

2012 – Coordinamento Case del Quartiere is formed

2014 – The Case del Quartiere network withs the national grant "Che Fare?"

2015 – Manifesto delle Case del Quartiere is published

2016 – Torino City Council approves the Regulation on Urban Commons

2017 February – Network Case del Quartiere is established

2 The story of the building complex

Cascina Roccafranca (Roccafranca farmstead) was built in the XVII century to serve as a farmhouse for the religious confraternity, Compagnia dell'Immacolata Concezione. In 1689, the farmhouse was sold to Count Ballard, and it is raised to a feud in 1734. In 1840, its following owner, Baroness Chionio, enlarged the farmhouse and modified its original structure. From 1957, the agricultural land connected to the Cascina Roccafranca was progressively reduced and took over by the Fiat Mirafiori establishment and by a residential development aiming at accommodating workers. In the 1970s, Cascina Roccafranca ultimately lost its function and was dismissed. Over thirty years of vacancy, this building became an urban void, degraded by time, nature and site of small-scale criminal activities, homelessness and marginalisation.

3 The area

Cascina Roccafranca is located in Mirafiori Nord, a neighbourhood in the south-western outskirts of Turin, six kilometres from the city centre, covering an area of

over 2,000 km². Its population grew exponentially in the 1950s with the establishment of the Fiat Mirafiori factories. This growth was managed by the construction of a significant amount of public housing in the area. With Fiat's departure and the closure of many of its production facilities, from the 1990s the area experienced economic crisis and growing unemployment. These economic difficulties were accompanied by the ageing of the population and the obsolescence of many commercial and other economic activities.



Picture 2. Cascina Roccafranca in its surroundings. Photo (cc) Eutroplan

Today, Mirafiori Nord has about 25,000 inhabitants, 30% of whom are over 65. The area has been struggling with severe social and economic problems: unemployment, crime, poverty, low levels of education and training, decaying buildings and public spaces, as well as environmental damage, high level of air and noise pollution across the area. On the other hand, the area disposes of significant green and open spaces and has a history of strong community involvement and an economy with significant growth potential.

"The Mirafiori Nord district was suitable for such a project because it is very heterogeneous, it has many problematic areas but it also has some more regular-quiet sides. Moreover, the citizens' participation was central for this project and in fact, in Mirafiori the participation was already strong." Renato Bergamin



Picture 3. Cascina Roccafranca in Turin. Image by Jorge Mosquera

4 The initiative

In 2001, Torino was selected for the European Union's URBAN II programme and it received 16 million euros to carry out a project requalifying the Mirafiori Nord area. This intervention took into consideration various type of innovative actions: public space renovation, ecological renewal, an economic intervention for employment and trading raise, and cultural and social action. The adaptation of Cascina Roccafranca into a venue for collective use by citizens use became part of the cultural and social intervention plan of the Urban II project. In 2002, the Municipality of Turin used the funds received from the Urban II project to purchase the Cascina Roccafranca and transform it into a space for public services. Cascina Roccafranca's transformation into a community venue was overseen by a committee formed for this scope.

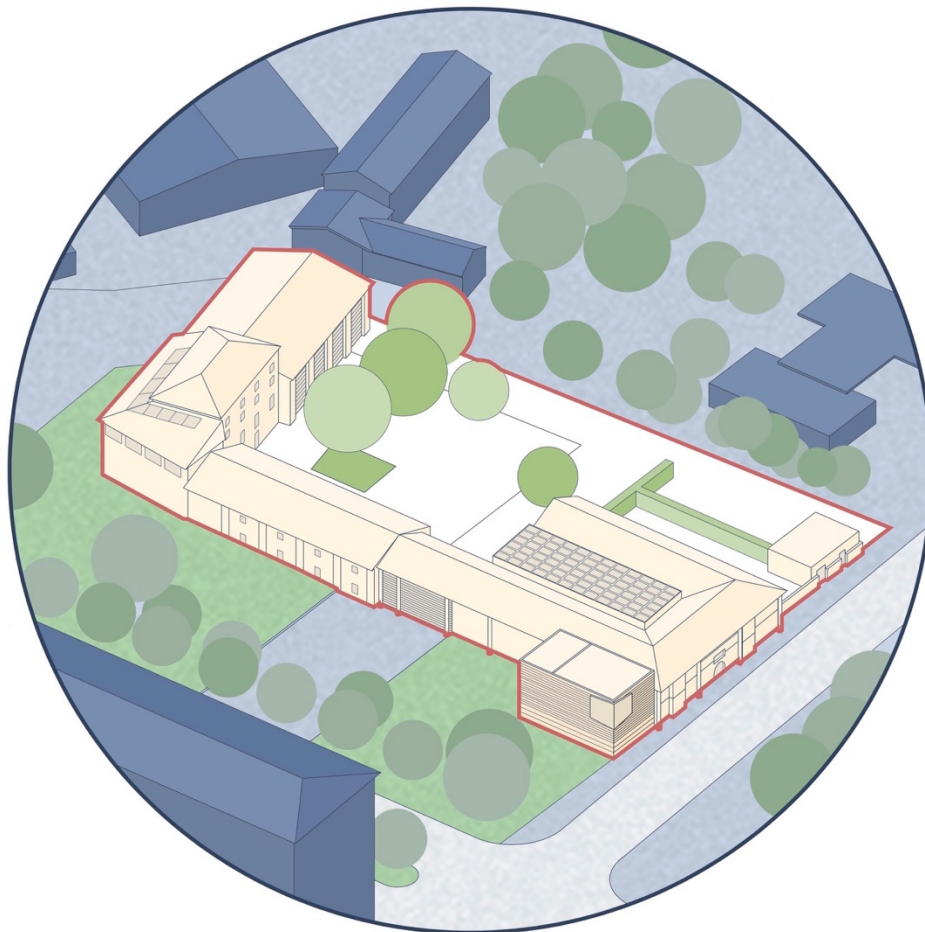
In 2004, requalification works began. During the redevelopment, in 2006, the building's management was assigned to the [Fondazione Cascina Roccafranca](#), a foundation established to represent a group of formal and informal organisations who aimed to requalify the building and to transform it into a multipurpose neighbourhood centre. In 2007, Cascina Roccafranca opened its doors.

5 The complex and its reconstruction

“The first time we entered the site, it was a small forest with trees. People experienced it not just as a degraded building but also as a dangerous place.” Renato Bergamin

Cascina Roccafranca was originally a farmstead, a typical structure present in the Italian countryside and particularly in the Piedmont region. Constructed in the 17th century, it did not have any rare architectural significance, yet with its 2500 square meter buildings and 2000 square meter courtyard, it had a significant place in local history and the community’s memory. Dismissed due to the increasing industrialization of the area, Cascina Roccafranca represents a bridge between agronomic life and cooperative economy.

When it was selected for renovation, the buildings’ infrastructure was in a deteriorated state, covered by vegetation and with structural problems. Already before its renovation, the building was defined as a **site for service provision** so no changes of land use regulations were needed. The building was **not protected heritage** either: it did not have any specific artistic value and there were no restrictions concerning its reuse, so the architectural project was free to change its physical aspects. Nevertheless, while the complex was entirely rebuilt following contemporary safety and environmental norms, its design was also trying to evoke its original historical appearance.



Picture 4. The Cascina Roccafranca buildings. Image by Jorge Mosquera

One of the biggest **challenges in the reconstruction process** was to create a space that would adapt to a wide range of activities while presenting a unique style. The main concept of the building is to create a multifunctional and inclusive space that would welcome a wide range of activities and audiences, but which would also have a clear identity and style. Glass and transparent surfaces were used to convey inclusivity and openness, but architectural features important for the identity and the recognizability of the place, such as brick, the door and window fixtures, were maintained.

“This building is ‘transparent’ to facilitate the idea of sharing and of publicness. In the past there have been similar activities in the district but they were not concentrated in a space but carried out in rented spaces often in former classrooms or basements – never in a beautifully designed space.”
Stefania Ieluzzi



Picture 5. Cascina Roccafranca's reception area. Photo (cc) Eutopian

Cascina Roccafranca today is divided into five parts that refer to the pre-existing spaces in the ancient Cascina. The **canopy**, originally used as storage, is today's main entrance to Cascina Roccafranca. It features an entrance hall, the reception area, the “Piazza,” a play area and baby parking, and an incubator space. Rooms are situated around the high-ceiling central space, often used for public initiatives. On the upper floor, there is a mezzanine that is connected to all the other floors of the structure. **The stall** is the best-preserved part of the old farmhouse and it

has been restored respecting the original architecture. On the ground floor, it hosts the cafeteria, a space accessible from the entrance hall, directly from the pedestrian entrance on Via Rubino, from the inner courtyard, from the villa and from the barn; on the first floor there are multimedia rooms, artistic workshops and classrooms. The **villa** is the most ancient part of the venue but it was also the most degraded. It was completely rebuilt following its original structure and preserving its architectural style. Today, it hosts the area's Ecomuseum on the ground floor, while the two upper floors are used as administrative offices. The **barn**, on the ground floor, hosts a restaurant and on the upper floor a large room used for meetings, gatherings and parties. The restaurant has preserved the original arches and it has a glazed wall facing the courtyard. The **internal courtyard** is a passage point connecting all parts of the building and it is used in summer for events.



Picture 6. The internal courtyard of Cascina Roccafranca. Photo (cc) Eutropian

"These spaces have a spirit, a vibe, but not an exclusive spirit. In the same room, you can have yoga in the morning, children's activities in the afternoon, in the evening the meeting of another group. Space is shared and it has to be adapted to everybody's needs." Stefania de Masi

The participatory planning process around the conception of the Cascina Roccafranca fed into the new venue's planning with many ideas. The idea of total accessibility, with no barriers and thresholds of control, like in a public living room,

came from this process; and so did the idea of architectural transparency that allows people to see what is happening inside the building.

“At the beginning some people were upset, but eventually, everyone appreciated it because it has a fair mix of elements that somehow recall the past but they also suggest modernity. The high-quality refurbishment is as important as is the originality. All these elements give a positive image of the venue itself.” Renato Bergamin

6 Community involvement

The Cascina Roccafranca project was developed following the indications of the community living in the Mirafiori area. At the end of the 1990s, the Municipality of Turin launched a programme to develop a requalification plan of interventions that would improve the environment and its daily use, and which would relaunch the economic activities in the Mirafiori Nord district. Over a year and a half, a group of formal and non-formal organisation composed by social workers, educational and healthcare workers, religious organisations, associations, local committees and schools came together in a social forum (tavoli sociali) and discussed possible innovation in their area. They brought up the need for a meeting space for the community and pointed Cascina Roccafranca as a suitable venue.

Tavoli Sociali: In 1997-98, the Turin Municipality began Progetto Speciale Periferie, a programme to requalify its urban peripheries. The programme created a series of tavoli sociali (social tables), working groups composed by various formal and non-formal organizations present in the area of intervention, for example associations, informal groups, social workers, school teachers; a variety of people working, living and managing activities in the neighbourhood. The tables were coordinated by municipal workers specifically selected for this task. The Tavolo Sociale di Mirafiori Nord was composed of about 60-70 people, representing associations, social workers, health services, children organisations. Discussions with them gave birth to the idea of Cascina Roccafranca as a community venue.

“Using the few resources they had at the time, they were trying to develop new projects and a new strategy of intervention in low-income neighbourhoods and in the planning of public housing.” Renato Bergamin

In order to supervise the requalification of Cascina Roccafranca, to manage the project budget and the communication with the European Union, a committee with representatives of the municipality and of the district was formed, to be dissolved with Cascina's opening. The committee envisioned the development as a participatory planning project in close collaboration with the citizenry. The committee engaged with the community on both organised and informal levels. Following the model of the social forum, it invited citizens and associations to brainstorm about the features of the future community venue and launched an ideas incubator project to gather proposal of activities from the community. In time, citizens and organisations attending the committee's public meetings organised themselves into an association called Tavolo della 2 (2's table). This

became a structured assembly of citizens and local organisations with regular meetings and a director.

As discovered in the participatory planning process, the community in Mirafiori Nord needed **a space suitable for an intergenerational encounter**, which would supply to a wide range of necessities and interests, but which would be also fluid enough to accept constant proposals and innovations. Cascina Roccafranca was envisioned as a multi-purpose space for socialization, civic engagement and cultural activities, to promote an ethical lifestyle and to support the dignity and diversity of ethnic, religious, gender or physically challenged minorities.



Picture 7. The women's library at the Cascina Roccafranca. Photo (cc) Eutropian

The organisation's goal was to gather in the same space a variety of groups of different age, social background and with various interests. For this reason, the planning committee found it fundamental to be conceived as a place welcoming everyone. To achieve this, initiators visited similar spaces across Italy and Europe, carrying out surveys and opening a discussion with the local community.

"For us, a challenge was to imagine a space that could be used on the same day by users of different age. Space is shared, and everybody needs to feel home but at the same time it has to be adapted to everybody's needs."
Stefania de Masi

Over more than 11 years of work, Cascina Roccafranca has adapted to new needs that were not envisioned during the planning phase. For instance, with the economic crisis of 2007, Cascina Roccafranca became a support facility for

residents of the neighbourhood facing unemployment or poverty as well as a centre for integration of the local migrant community.

“Our first feasibility study from 2002 suggested the need for community wellness services, as it was a period of great economic prosperity. With the 2007 economic crisis, we were asked also to deal also with unemployment and with poverty, needs we didn’t plan for when we opened the Cascina.”

Stefania de Masi

Creating an environment that enables cooperation among various associations remains a key objective of the organisation. The Cascina holds regular meetings with the associations working there or using the spaces of the complex, in order to connect long-established associations with newcomers, enhancing their dialogue and innovation. Together with associations, Cascina Roccafranca relies on the work of volunteers and in-kind service providers. This district-level network is fundamental for the efficient organisation of new projects and their success.

Besides meetings, Cascina Roccafranca also promotes accessibility through its open doors policy. The front desk, situated at the entrance of the complex, next to the cafeteria, serves as an everyday communication and reception platform. It is managed by trained volunteers who welcome visitors, answer questions regarding Cascina and the neighbourhood, listen to visitors’ requests and suggestions. The role of the front desk is to gather all sort of information in regard to people’s demands and needs so that Cascina can reach new audiences and start new projects, strengthening its links with the neighbourhood and mobilising youngsters.

“It is hard to fight social isolation without available spaces. When you provide opportunities and spaces, people then respond with a proactive attitude. But you need to have some basic conditions. Cascina Roccafranca gives people an opportunity.” Stefania de Masi

Cascina Roccafranca proposes a model of participatory planning and cooperation between citizens and the local administration. To do so, it experiments with survey tools to gather knowledge from the community and to put it in practice by including the citizens in project development. The work of cultural animators and social animators has been essential in the evolution of Cascina Roccafranca. These social workers have the role of accompanying organisations and private citizens in the realisation of projects, providing support and the necessary tools for independent project management. They help those who propose an idea but do not have organisational experience by discussing their ideas, connecting them with potential partners, and providing a free venue and helping them in all the planning stages, sometimes for months.

“My job requires the ability to listen and to embrace people’s projects. As a social worker, you have to take a step back and support the participation of citizens. This is why our community is truly active because we help ideas become projects accompanying them until their realisation. We give the tools to make it happen but also learn new skills from the people we meet.”
Stefania de Masi

7 Activities

In its event venues, Cascina Roccafranca hosts **hundreds of activities a year**, targeting a variety of groups and interests. About 90% of the activities are directly organized by associations and independent groups who use the venue. Cascina Roccafranca's social workers are also involved in planning events and meetings but much of their work is dedicated to supporting groups in organising activities, especially when it regards younger or more disadvantaged groups without experience. The programming follows closely the needs of the community and therefore, many events and activities are proposed by the users of Cascina Roccafranca.

"We imagine this place, and this project, as a container with spaces to fill. As operators, we monitor if activities correspond to the framework that we defined, the strategic goals we decided upon, the working conditions. But we expect the groups and associations to fill this space with activities."
Renato Bergamin



Picture 8. Theatre rehearsal at the Cascina Roccafranca. Photo (cc) Eutropian

Cascina Roccafranca accommodates about 195 **cultural programs** a year. These activities include music, theatre, conferences, book readings and roundtables with authors of books, language courses, cabaret, dance, even dance in a wheelchair for disabled people. The summer program is usually different from the winter's

schedule as it features more outdoor evening festivals and a summer camp for children on holidays, with a total of 40 programs.

Besides its own events, Cascina hosts about 127 **wellness programs and courses proposed by external organisations** per year. These are weekly activities organized for a period of 4 months or a year. Some of them are free of charge for the participants and the organizers do not pay rent to Cascina either, while in others the participants pay a small annual fee to the instructor but in this case, the instructor also pays a small fee – 8 euros per hour – for the space.

The complex hosts 7 **regular educational activities** per year: an after-school run by volunteers to help students improve on their week school subjects and it targets elementary school students, middle school students, and until the first or max second year of high school; summer activities for groups of 0-6 years old children and for groups of 6-13 years old with games, workshops, and excursions; support activities for children with physical or mental challenges.

Cascina Roccafranca works regularly in collaboration with two cooperatives promoting the **integration of people with mental disabilities**: [Mente Locale](#) (Local Mind) uses creative methods to address depression and eating disorders; [Alzheimer Café](#) proposes meetings for people suffering from this disease and for their families as well as organizes informative meetings with educators and specialized doctors and physiologists.

“We don't have particular limitations in terms of themes but we are open to what people are interested, if they are willing to invest in it. As social operator, we help them by providing spaces, tools, and by connecting them with other groups or other organizations.” Stefania Ieluzzi

Cascina Roccafranca hosts 355 **private parties** yearly. The Foundation has two rooms which can be used on Saturday evening, Sunday afternoon and Friday evening giving space to an average of 4 parties every weekend. Other festivities are organised by the restaurant cooperative. Lastly, a cooperative managing the baby parking and the toy library sublets its rooms for children birthday parties as well.



Picture 9. Event at Cascina Roccafranca. Photo © Cascina Roccafranca

8 The policy environment

Mirafiori Nord and Cascina Roccafranca have been at the centre of a series of urban policies and funding programmes that enabled the Turin Municipality to design and implement a long-term regeneration strategy. In the late 1990s, in the midst of growing discussion about the problems of urban peripheries across Italy, but in lack of any national policy addressing the issue, the Turin Municipality launched the **Progetto Speciale Periferie** (PSP – Special Periphery Project).

Progetto Speciale Periferie: Launched in 1997 by the Turin Municipality, PSP aimed to help the municipal administration to develop skills and capacities necessary to work with larger urban regeneration programmes. PSP focussed on Turin's crisis areas in the peripheries, according to an incremental logic that facilitated local development and the active participation of local citizens. Another characteristic of the programme that it linked the territorial logic of the "neighbourhood" with a wider urban strategy of rethinking the city according to a polycentric model and building new centralities and identities at the peripheries.

Enabled by the capacities developed in PSP, the Turin Municipality could successfully mobilise resources from other funding sources as well. Since the early 2000s, the Turin Municipality's careful use of URBAN II (2000-2006) and Urban Innovative Actions (2017-2020) resources allowed the city to articulate a coherent vision for the territory.

URBAN II, the second round of the European Union's URBAN Community Initiative supported 70 deprived urban areas across the EU in the period 2000-2006. Discontinued in the following EU funding period, the URBAN programme, financed by the European Regional Development Fund, aimed at the "economic and social regeneration of cities and neighbourhoods in crisis in order to promote sustainable development" (European Commission). The programme provides funding for the renovation of buildings and public spaces, local employment, education and training for disadvantaged groups, environmentally friendly public transport development, more efficient energy management systems and the use of renewable energy.

The URBAN II programme's 10.7 million euros funding included 6.2 million euros for infrastructure and urban rehabilitation, 2.5 million euros for training and economic development, 1.4 million euros for social development and integration, and 0.6 million euros for technical assistance. The intervention in Mirafiori included some infrastructure development (the requalification of some squares and the introduction of door-to-door recycling collection), economic development and training, as well as cultural and social activities. Renato Bergamin, the founder of Cascina Roccafranca was responsible for some of these cultural and social activities, and one of the actions funded by URBAN II was dedicated to the adaptive reuse of the Cascina Roccafranca and its transformation into a community venue. The URBAN II programme's design included incentives to build local partnerships with community groups. Complying with this requirement, the Turin Municipality could rely on the Tavoli Sociali, the already existing participation mechanism in Mirafiori Nord, and refocus it towards a common specific goal, brainstorming on the possibilities of a new community venue. This phase of participatory planning lasted about 2/3 years, and eventually resulted in a concept for the Cascina Roccafranca.

"Sometimes we underestimate this stage of engagement with regular citizens because we always take for granted that no good ideas would come up from it. But actually, in this case, there were few ideas that helped us. Paradoxically, some people suggested a sort of shopping centre which seems absurd, but it was actually useful: we understood that we needed an attractive force similar to the one of the shopping centre. Our decision to create a space for all citizens, from the younger to the older, and to have a wide branch of offers – some very simple for leisure and others more cultural – are the results of this idea." Renato Bergamin

Besides the participatory planning process, the last one and half years before the inauguration were spent to test some activities and launch the incubatore di idee (ideas incubator), inviting citizens to suggest ideas for activities to take place in the Cascina.

8.1 Case del Quartiere

As a result of the Progetto Speciale Periferie, participatory planning processes were undertaken in several neighbourhoods of Turin. These processes had a variety of results but in all of them there was an ambition to create a concrete outcome like a space that could collect initiatives, and give a structure and continuity to participation. The spaces created through these processes, although they had different trajectories, had many similarities as well. At some point, these spaces began to connect to each other and began to identify themselves as Case del Quartiere (Neighbourhood Houses). More developed than other Houses, the Cascina Roccafranca was defined as a model for the Case del Quartiere.

“We realized that different single programs of urban regeneration in different neighbourhoods with different stories, different characteristics, different financial tools, different operational tools shared the same goal of creating a space for informal socialization and service provision.” Giovanni Ferrero

Case del Quartiere: In Turin there are 8 Case del Quartiere (Neighbourhood Houses). These are community spaces that offer citizens opportunities to meet through cultural events, social encounters and self-produced workshops. They are managed by a team that collects proposals from external organisations (associations, third sector organizations, social enterprises, committees, groups, individual citizens) to develop a rich program of activities using the spaces of the Houses. The Neighbourhood Houses work in collaboration the city council and they also collect proposals from citizens within the Co-City program.

In 2012, after the Turin Municipality and the [Compagnia di San Paolo](#), the city's most powerful bank foundation, began to recognise the importance of the Case del Quartiere, and encouraged them to build a network. From May 2012, the 8 Neighbourhood Houses in Turin established an informal coordination platform that favour the organization of common projects. Its first milestone was winning the national grant [Che Fare?](#) (What shall we do?) in 2014 which provided the economic resources for regular meetings. Following the publication of a [manifesto](#) in 2015, the Coordination of the Neighbourhood Houses was eventually transformed in 2017 into a formal [Rete delle Case del Quartiere](#) (Network of Neighbourhood Houses), in the form of an [Associazione di Promozione Sociale](#) (an Association for Social Promotion).

“One of this association's goal is to make the Case del Quartiere model a political choice that influences city policies. We have already started a dialogue with the administration so that we can make this become a Turin policy.” Renato Bergamin

The Network's goal is to support the work of the Case del Quartiere by gathering information, managing internal communication and to discover and suggest potential areas of intervention. The Rete delle Case del Quartiere has monthly executive meetings with one representative from each 8 houses and it has two annual assemblies: in Spring to monitor the activities of the Houses and to

evaluate their resource-efficiency, and in Autumn to dig deeper in the themes on which the Houses work. The Network has two offices managed by two part-time employees: an office for internal coordination and a communications office.

“The network enables discussions for coordination, at a practical level, and for the management, at a political level. This gives awareness not just about what we do but also about the consequences our projects have.”

Marialessandra Sabarino



Picture 10. The Neighbourhood Houses. Image © Rete delle Case del Quartiere

8.2 Regulation of the Urban Commons and Co-City

The Case del Quartiere model, based on an experimental cooperation between the Turin Municipality and local civic actors, has opened a new way for public-civic cooperation. The network has informed the local discussion about the commons, and its experience contributed to the design of Turin’s version of the [Regulation of the Urban Commons](#), approved in January 2016. The regulation establishes new forms of cooperation between citizens and the local authority for the care, the shared management and the regeneration of urban commons.

The Regulation of the Commons: Urban commons present the opportunity for citizens to gain power in the management of urban resources and reframe city life based on the use value of public and community assets, rather than their exchange value. In the last decade, municipalities across Italy have been starting to develop regulations that allow the co-management of common goods at a local level, recognizing the active role of citizens in using, administering, maintaining and organising public spaces, buildings or natural areas. Different versions of Urban Commons Regulations have been approved in hundreds of Italian cities.

The Regulation of Urban Commons in Turin provides tools for a formal collaboration between citizens and administration in running community venues. Specifically, by signing the Pact of Collaboration (the main instrument introduced by the Commons Regulation), the Municipality and active citizens (such as informal groups, associations, NGOs or individuals) agree to share responsibility in managing and intervening in various urban spaces. Enabled by the Regulation, the Municipality gathers proposals submitted by citizens and opens public consultations to identify urban common assets to include in pacts of collaboration.

Urban commons are at the centre of the [Co-City](#) project, developed by the Turin Municipality with support of the European Union's [Urban Innovative Actions](#) programme. Co-City aims at bringing the Regulation of the Urban Commons to a higher level, reducing urban poverty with the help of new social enterprises organised around commons-based welfare services and activities. Co-City also envisioned to establish a new Casa del Quartiere, recognising the model as a uniquely efficient means for citizen involvement and neighbourhood work.

The Case del Quartiere are spread across Turin and they rely on district-level networks that makes them an important partner for the Municipality to develop locally rooted projects. The governance of the Case del Quartiere is similar to the collaboration pacts proposed by the Commons Regulation. They also share the goals of creating spaces for the co-production of welfare services and developing tools to address urban decay and the fragility of peripheral areas, by inviting citizens and neighbourhood communities to participate at the decision-making.

The Rete delle Case del Quartiere is a key partner of Co-City, mobilising its experience in generating public-civic cooperation in social inclusion and poverty mitigation as well as in reusing abandoned buildings for socio-cultural initiatives. Having the most important financial capacity among the 8 Houses, Cascina Roccafranca became the representative of the Network for Co-City and it provides the rest of the network with legal infrastructure to manage financial and administration.

"One of the goals of Co-City is to find solutions to the growing urban complexity. This area- and people-based approach on a local scale can strengthen support networks, opportunities of empowerment, but it doesn't affect the structural elements that produce the social and economic crisis in the city. Most of the social frailty are structural such as unemployment on which projects as ours cannot have a broad impact." Giovanni Ferrero

9 Governance

The buildings of Cascina Roccafranca are owned by the Turin Municipality. The Municipality assigned the venue to the Cascina Roccafranca Foundation that manages it jointly with the municipality and district representatives. As a public asset, Cascina Roccafranca's use is limited to social and cultural purposes, preventing commercial activities.

Cascina Roccafranca is managed by the **Fondazione atipica in partecipazione Cascina Roccafranca** (Cascina Roccafranca atypical participated foundation), legally established in 2006. This foundation works with a model between public and private law: in some aspects it depends on public procedures and for others it

works as a private organisation. As a legal entity, Cascina Roccafranca has to respect public procedures when it comes to subcontracting, purchasing goods or services and has to follow the regulations on corruption prevention and privacy. At the same time, it is a flexible entity and it can hire external contractors and freelancers if it needs specific expertise. Cascina Roccafranca's status as a public-private foundation is an experiment, an attempt of close collaboration with the Turin Municipality and after more than ten years, it is generally conceived as a virtuous collaboration.

"This form of governance created a positive form of co-responsibility between public and private actors: the administration gave up some of its powers, and on the other hand, the private associations' mindset shifted from an idea of claiming something from the administration to a perspective in which they co-manage it." Renato Bergamin

The foundation's **governance structure** consists of a Board of Directors with 5 members: 3 of which are nominated by the Municipality (the Councillor for integration policies, the President of the District and one member appointed by the District) and 2 members appointed by the College of Participants (made by 45 associations and groups that operate in the Cascina). The College of Participants meets every six months and nominates its representatives who attend the Board of Directors. This latter meets once a month and it decides on some activities and dilemmas the foundation is facing.

"What happens here is not actually decided by the Board of Directors. The Board mentors, monitors and verifies because all the activities performed here are the result of the suggestions and the ideas coming from associations or groups." Renato Bergamin

10 Economic model

The foundation is autonomous in its financial management and it has its own financial report, besides its institutional report towards the Municipality. It differs from classical foundations as it relies on more than material assets (funds, buildings, etc.), proposing, instead, a joint management by the public administration and various informal groups. The foundation works with over 80 associations and informal groups, as well as 20 individuals who promote activities in the venue. They all contribute to the foundation with their intangible heritage as associations, groups and private citizens but not economically. In particular, they invest their competences and knowledge, as well as their ideas and time to the Cascina's operations.

The Turin Municipality, as the owner of Cascina, is the founding member of Fondazione Cascina Roccafranca. The municipality has contributed to the foundation's work in a variety of ways: it provided a physical asset, giving the building in use, free of charge, to the foundation; and it covers a part of the costs of its services. Some of the Cascina's employees are on the municipality's payroll, the municipality gave a part of the venue's original furniture and covers most of the maintenance work costs. It also manages some of the office's utilities where Cascina's employees work, while other utilities are paid by the entities using the rooms (the cafeteria, and the restaurant).

Besides the 7 employees that are directly paid by the municipality, Cascina Roccafranca's yearly **expenses** amount to around 200-250,000 euros. The biggest part of this expense is constituted by the wages of the foundation's 7 own employees, adding up to around 95,000 euros. Around 20,000 euros are paid out in taxes and other charges. The cost of complying with safety regulations as well as organising services and events amounts to around 76,000 euros.

Cascina Roccafranca's yearly revenues amount to about 250,000 euros. The foundation format simplifies Cascina's management and it enables it to **generate revenues through its spaces and activities**. Selected a through a public call, the cooperative managing the café and the restaurant pay a fixed rent of about 58,000 euros a year. Another revenue stream, about 60,000 euros a year, comes from the use of other spaces by social or private entities. Some of them long-term activities are courses; for example, the English course is open to people who pay about 130 euros a year and the association providing the course pays a low hourly rent to the foundation. Cascina also rents space for private events such as graduations or birthday parties: in 2018, Cascina Roccafranca hosted about 355 private parties, with an average of 4 parties every weekend. Private support through self-financing events and fundraising activities like the occasional campaign 1000 amici per la Cascina Roccafranca (1000 friends for Cascina Roccafranca) brings in about 30,000 euros. Sponsors who pay for specific activities contribute with around 6,000 euros and other grants cover another 10-15,000 euros. The Cascina's biggest sponsor, Compagnia di San Paolo contributes with around 80,000 euros yearly.

"We aim at reaching maximum self-sustainability. When we started in 2007 we could only cover 33% of our costs on our own, now we cover 66%. Besides our income from commercial activities and space rental, we do fundraising with public and private foundations and develop economic partnerships with the private sector on joint projects." Stefania de Masi

Cascina Roccafranca's economy goes beyond the foundation's own revenues and expenses. According to data from 2017, Cascina Roccafranca's partners (mostly users of its spaces) have generated about 770,000 euros worth of economic value.

11 Impact

Cascina Roccafranca's impact is realised at a variety of levels. At the level of the neighbourhood, the foundation invests a significant amount of energy to better **understand its reception and impact on the territory**. Cascina Roccafranca periodically surveys the community's reception of the organisations, and it regularly invites members and participants to public assemblies to evaluate ongoing projects and to discuss possible improvements. For example, the project La Cascina si ripensa (The Cascina rethinks itself) called Cascina's members to evaluate its work over the year. As part of the Rete delle Case del Quartiere, Cascina Roccafranca regularly evaluates its social impact collecting data of people entering the premises, activities, events, the state of its partner associations, its economic revenue.

According to data collected 2017, Cascina works with 178 partners, including associations, informal groups, social enterprises, committees and individual

citizens. In a year, Cascina accommodated 766 activities, of which 195 cultural events, 127 well-being activities and courses, 351 private festivities. Only 10% of activities are directly managed by the Cascina, the other 90% of events are organised by partners. In terms of the hours spent in Cascina, 85% of the time is used by regular, stable partners. 50% of the activities are for free, 34% have fees that cover the event's costs, 13% of events with subsidised fees and 3% with individualised prices. In 2017, 480 volunteers contributed with over 15000 hours of work, as an equivalent of 11 full-time employees.

On the user side, Cascina Roccafranca registered over 160,000 single entries in 2017, with 4000 people inscribed for courses and other activities. Most of the Cascina's public comes from Mirafiori Nord (53%), with another 22% from the district Circonscrizione 2, 19% from Turin and 6% from outside. The largest user group is between 26-64 years (44%), with 26% over 65, 25% under 14 and only 5% between 15-25.

By conducting its programme and hosting a variety of activities, Cascina **creates a variety of jobs**. The Foundation itself employs 7 administrative staff paid by the municipality and 7 staff paid by the foundation. According to data from 2017, all the organisations on the site together employed around 141 people, with hours equivalent of 38 full-time employees.

A social cooperative-run restaurant: The restaurant and the cafeteria inside Cascina Roccafranca are run by Cooperative Raggio, a B-type social cooperative that hires staff with physical and/or psychological disabilities. The cooperative was selected through a call for tenders, Cascina Roccafranca provided the space and the equipment, the restaurant only needs to pay rent. Cooperative Raggio employs 9 full-time partners, and 12-20 part-time employees. In 2018, 16 of these employees belonged to weaker social categories, their employment is subsidised.

Some of the activities in Cascina Roccafranca are provided by social cooperatives, selected through inclusive procurement that aims at creating significant social impact through the choice of partners or service providers. Cooperativa Raggio, the cooperative managing the restaurant and the cafeteria gives work to 25 people among partners and part-time employees.

The Cascina also helps the creation of new social enterprises. The [Cooperativa Educazione Progetto](#), a cooperative running children's activities, received 50,000 funding to start up their business, before becoming autonomous. The baby parking service requires a fee, this gives the cooperative revenue, while the municipality pays for the playground, so none of their activities rely on the Cascina's financial support. The cooperative now employs 7 part-time staff.

„We invested in the first effort, the cooperative that manages these baby areas does the rest. They are doing an excellent job and believe in our mission, they are active participants in the discussion on our centre. We don't have a typical customer/contractor relationship as we choose a collaborative approach and we think it's the only way to make things work.” Stefania de Masi

The Cascina is also a carrier of local **memory and heritage**. It hosts the Centro Interpretazione e Documentazione Storica (Local History Interpretation and Documentation Centre) of the Circoscrizione 2, the district surrounding Cascina Roccafranca. This centre is conceived as an Ecomuseum, that is, a place where local historical memories are archived and made accessible to citizens.

An Ecomuseum is a structure to enable local communities to take care of their territories. Ecomuseums function as collections of local knowledge and memory as well as an effort to valorise local environmental, historical and artistic heritage. Museums on a 1:1 scale without walls, Ecomuseums usually cover entire areas and promote opportunities to learn about an area's history and get involved in its present. In Italy, from the early 2000s, a variety of laws support the creation of "diffused" museums, Piemonte being the first region to adapt such law.

At the level of the city, the organisation had a strong **impact on public policies**, inspiring the creation of other Neighbourhood Houses and serving a model for the Rete delle Case del Quartiere. Its success served as a proof that new forms of the public-civic co-management of spaces are possible in Turin and beyond. Cascina Roccafranca's model also informed the city's Regulation of Urban Commons and the organisation's support was fundamental for the city to obtain EU funding for urban regeneration projects.

"Although the Commons Regulation didn't exist at the time, many of its concepts were already experimented in Cascina Roccafranca in its form of public-civic cooperation. Its model of long-term participation, not limited to decision-making related to the realisation of a project inspired a new way of structuring urban environments and the relations among people in the long term." Giovanni Ferrero

12 Interviewees

Renato Bergamin, director of the Cascina Roccafranca Foundation

Stefania de Masi, project manager at Cascina Roccafranca

Giovanni Ferrero, project manager of Co-City

Stefania Ialuzzi, project manager at Cascina Roccafranca

Marialessandra Sabarino, president of the Rete delle Case del Quartiere

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