

Polo Civico del Quarticciolo (IT)

1. OVERVIEW	
Title of the Practice:	Polo Civico del Quarticciolo (IT)
Location:	Rome
Country:	<input type="checkbox"/> Italy
Scale:	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood level
Website / Contact:	--
Status (as of 2026):	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Context: <i>[free text, max 500 characters]</i>	
<p>Quarticciolo is a peripheral neighbourhood in eastern Rome, marked by public housing and strong social marginality, including economic and cultural poverty, high unemployment, and the city's highest school dropout rate. Its urban layout and unsafe conditions have reinforced its reputation as a ghetto, leading to the closure of most shops and key public facilities. Despite this, Quarticciolo hosts one of Rome's most advanced experiments in civic space activation, supported by a strong, collaborative network of local and institutional actors promoting community welfare and territorial development.</p>	
Fundamental rights and freedoms addressed: (from the EU Charter)	
Relevant families of fundamental rights and freedoms (max 3):	<input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of assembly and association <input type="checkbox"/> Non-discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of expression and information
Keywords:	
Typologies of participation (max 3):	
<input type="checkbox"/> PARTICIPATION: Inclusive	
<input type="checkbox"/> PARTICIPATION: Collective cultural expression	
<input type="checkbox"/> PARTICIPATION: Community empowerment	
<p>Details: A broad participatory network of local organisations, schools, municipal social services, and cultural institutions has established a "neighbourhood House" to serve as the hub of the Civic Center. This shared space strengthens collaboration among existing social spaces and places residents at the heart of decision-making. A key focus of the Quarticciolo Civic Center is the co-creation of local social economy initiatives and employment opportunities, tested through a "community cooperative" model. More broadly, the Center promotes participatory projects that link the regeneration of non-residential spaces with locally driven economic activities, developed in close collaboration with neighbourhood inhabitants.</p>	
Governance model (max 1):	
<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNANCE: Community-management	
<p>Details: The Polo demonstrates the foundations of a community-based governance infrastructure rooted in participation, shared responsibility, and collective action. Local residents are directly involved through free services, open meeting spaces, and advocacy work, and are recognized as resources rather than problems. A strong multi-actor network, bringing together local organisations, schools, social services, cultural institutions, and a public university, supports shared management, strengthens legitimacy, and fosters dialogue with municipal authorities.</p>	
Field(s) of activity (max 3):	
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY: Other fundamental rights	
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY: Solidarity work	
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY: Education (non formal or informal)	
<p>Details: The Polo hosts a wide range of community-driven activities that combine social support, cultural production, education, and advocacy. It offers free services and open meeting spaces that enable residents to gather, organise, and participate in collective decision-making. Educational and social initiatives support school attendance and youth engagement, while the popular gym provides a recognized and accessible sport-based program that promotes health, inclusion, and alternatives to involvement in criminal activities. Cultural and social projects encourage exchanges between neighbourhood residents and external actors, helping to break isolation and foster openness. The Polo is also a platform for advocacy activities aimed at reopening local businesses and cultural spaces and improving access to public services. Alongside these practices, the Polo carries out institutional dialogue and legal actions to obtain recognition of the social utility of its activities and to legitimize the use of spaces, strengthening the long-term sustainability of community-based initiatives.</p>	
Typology of space (max 3):	
<input type="checkbox"/> TYPE: Physical space	
<input type="checkbox"/> TYPE: Permanent	
<p>Details: Quarticciolo's space unfolds within its dense public-housing blocks, activating a network of physical spaces that anchor community life. A neighbourhood house, a popular gym, a microprinting shop, an after-school program for children, and a local brewery all provide permanent, well-defined locations for activities. Courtyards, squares, and adaptable indoor rooms support workshops, meetings, and social encounters. These spaces are open and accessible, visible from the street, and designed for both informal and organised uses. They are inclusive, welcoming all ages and backgrounds, and flexible, adapting to evolving community needs. Through these diverse physical hubs, the neighbourhood sustains visibility, daily life, and a sense of collective ownership.</p>	
Network of participating actors:	
Promoter(s) or initiator(s):	Local community members
Target group(s):	Local community members
Contributor(s)...	
Role(s)	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-owner (co-managing, sharing power and responsibility)	Local undertakings (members of the second-level Third-Sector Entity: ASD Palestra Popolare Quarticciolo ODV, Mutualismo a Roma Est, Comunità Energetica Quarticciolo APS, Microstamperia APS, Amici di Franci e Fede ODV, ASD Borgata Gordiani, ODV Nonna Roma)
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-owner (co-managing, sharing power and responsibility)	Municipio V of Rome - City Council
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributors (adding content/value/resources)	Local not-for profit activities (micro brewery, after-school support for children, etc.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Contributors (adding content/value/resources)	University of Rome "La Sapienza"
<input type="checkbox"/> Active users (living the civic space actively)	Local community members
Funding entity(ies)...	
Nature/features	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> Private/entities	In-kind support is provided through a network of local actors who actively collaborate in the production of community welfare and the promotion of the neighbourhood. These include: neighbourhood Associations and Committees; Cultural and Educational Institutions; Other organisations and Trade Unions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Private/citizens	Local community members rely on donations, crowdfunding, and other participatory initiatives to secure the resources needed to keep all local spaces functional and inclusive
<input type="checkbox"/> Public	Municipio V of Rome - City Council provide specifically targeted funding to support the neighbourhood market, the medical clinic, and the operation of local public desks and services, fostering solidarity and mutualism
<input type="checkbox"/> Public	The National Government, through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR, in Italian) is providing significant public funding for the redevelopment of the area, including the enhancement of the civic hub, the creation of nurseries, the development of sports facilities, and the renovation of social housing.

2. NARRATIVE

Why / How it started	<p>The Quarticciolo Civic Hub emerged as a grassroots initiative of local self-organisation and mutual solidarity, driven by a broad network of neighbourhood associations and residents. It was created to respond to the lack of services and institutional neglect. Rather than being a single entity established by one authority, it is the outcome of a participatory process rooted in community collaboration and shared commitment to the wellbeing of the district.</p> <p>The Civic Hub was created in response to multiple, interconnected needs, primarily addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by the neighbourhood. Quarticciolo has long experienced conditions of marginality, marked by inefficient public transport, poorly maintained public housing, and a chronic lack of social services. In this context, a broad local network chose to organise collectively, giving rise to a strong practice of solidarity and mutualism.</p> <p>Through self-organisation, residents and associations began producing forms of community welfare, stepping in where institutional support was absent or insufficient. This mutualistic approach is based on shared responsibility, collective care, and the idea that essential services (education, social support, cultural activities, and access to opportunities) can be co-produced by the community itself. At the same time, the Polo aims to foster urban regeneration and social inclusion, promoting a renewed sense of urban centrality and creating positive impacts in terms of training, social participation, and youth employment. By activating inclusive spaces and local economies, it also works to counter the influence of organised crime, offering alternative social and economic models rooted in legality and cooperation. Central to this vision is the valorization of existing spaces, particularly a neighbourhood house that serves as the hub's nerve center, strengthening connections among local social spaces and reinforcing a shared sense of belonging and collective empowerment.</p>
How it is managed	<p>The Polo Civico, supported by Municipio V of Rome, serves as a hub for social engagement and local development. Through its Social Desks, the Polo offers direct support to social housing tenants and connects residents with municipal social services, helping to address housing needs and overcome the digital divide for access to Roma Capitale services. In promoting local animation and development, the Polo organises a neighbourhood market emphasizing short supply chains and environmental and social sustainability, revitalizes abandoned ATER shops, and fosters self-entrepreneurship with initiatives such as a community brewery, a catering workshop, and a social carpentry lab. Participation laboratories have guided the co-creation of a neighbourhood Plan with La Sapienza University, officially adopted by the City Council in November 2024 and presented to the Chamber of Deputies in February 2025, with technical committees now planning implementation. Monthly public assemblies and internal participant monitoring ensure ongoing dialogue and responsiveness to community needs, reinforcing the Polo as a permanent, inclusive civic space.</p> <p>As regards resourcing, the Quarticciolo Civic Hub is currently supported through a combination of public funding (mainly from Roma Capitale and the national government/PNRR funds) and the collaboration and in-kind support of a broad network of local associations and organisations.</p>
Links to Civic Space Dimensions	<p>The Polo reinforces freedom of assembly and association by offering open, accessible, and free spaces where residents can meet, organize, and act collectively, enabling sustained civic engagement without barriers to participation.</p> <p>Its approach is grounded in non-discrimination, recognizing all residents as equal civic actors regardless of social, cultural, or economic background, and ensuring that services and spaces are inclusive and respectful of diversity.</p> <p>By involving educational players, the Polo strengthens freedom of expression and information, expanding access to knowledge, research, and public debate, and increasing the visibility and credibility of community voices.</p> <p>The Polo contributes to overcoming social isolation by creating a plural and open civic space that connects the neighborhood with external individuals and organizations, encouraging exchange, dialogue, and the circulation of ideas.</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue with municipal institutions supports residents' right to express collective needs and interests in the public sphere, while advocacy activities are based on the active participation of service users, ensuring that diverse voices can be heard and converge around shared objectives.</p>
Other information:	<p>Quarticciolo faces a critical challenge in confronting the spread of organised crime, particularly crack dealing and the recruitment of young people and families into illegal activities. Crack is a highly dangerous substance, causing rapid psychological dependence and severe physical and mental health consequences. The popular gym acts as a protective stronghold against youth involvement in drug trafficking, engaging young people through a widely recognized sport and supporting them in healthy life paths and long-term personal and social development. Advocacy efforts also focus on reopening local commercial and cultural spaces, restoring economic vitality and safe, shared places for community life in the neighbourhood. Work with residents further aims to strengthen school attendance, preventing children and youth from being forced to attend schools far from their homes and reinforcing educational continuity within the community.</p>

3. REFERENCES

Media profiles of the Practice:	https://www.facebook.com/quarticciolo.ribelle/
Publications, articles, media posts about the Practice:	https://www.retisolidali.it/roma-poli-civici-esperienze-esquilino-quarticciolo/ https://eticaeconomia.it/roma-e-le-sue-disuaguanze-il-ruolo-emergente-dei-poli-civici-di-mutualismo-solidale/ https://iris.uniroma1.it/retrieve/618c3011-4c29-4887-89e7-a8b9f71c81a0/Pontoriere_Polo-civico-quarticciolo_2024.pdf