

MUNGIVACCA QUARTER-BARI OUTSKIRTS APULIA - ITALY



The improvement of life quality standards in urban outskirts is a tool which can start a positive process of citizens' participation and affective re-appropriation of their own territory.
(Jacques Delor-White book about Work)

Mungivacca quarter was born in 1948 thanks to the building of the “Working class neighbourhood”, as it was called at that time, a group of 155 dwelling houses. Since then, for decades, the place has not been considered worth of urban improvement, and it lacked the most part of services needed, including transport suitable links either with the rest of the city or with the neighbour little towns of Bari Province.



A view of Mungivacca

Indeed, the zone presents different problems, among which:

- a. the road plan is absolutely inadequate;
- b. morphological quality of urban space is below standard and disaggregates human relationships;
- c. the built-up area is poor, lacking qualitative architectural elements;
- d. absolute absence of cellars and garages in the buildings, so that external space is not used properly.

The quarter has become one of Bari outskirts considered at risk of social exclusion and young delinquency, since young people here did not, and still do not, have any chance for entertainment or work.

Working-class inhabitants feel a strong need for improvement of their old flats and buildings, and ask for an urgent intervention of a Public Institution for Popular Buildings (in Italian IACP) who is the actual landlord of the flats for which they pay a life rent.

The case comes to the attention of the local administration and the whole city is involved in the matter. Bari University students of Engineering and Architecture organize even an exhibition of their projects to propose an improvement of the whole quarter, and not only a restoration of the single buildings.

In 1997 a Committee for the Improvement of the Quarter was founded by the same citizens who, in collaboration with local administrators, convinced the Town Council to include Mungivacca in Bari Plan of Urban improvement.

In 1999 the so-called “Contract of Quarter”, an agreement between the citizens and the Public Institution of Popular Building was signed, to start interventions with experimental building techniques useful to restore the buildings in need. This contract aimed “to promote the building and social improvement of quarters marked by a widespread degradation of buildings and urban environment, by lack of services in a context of scarce social cohesion and strong dwelling discomfort” (from the Italian law D.M. 22nd October 1997).

The Institution identified 58 cases which needed urgent interventions of special maintenance. Therefore, according to the funds available, they decided for an intervention in three main areas:

1. maintenance of the facades: restoration of the plasters, repair of the balconies and frames; thermal-proofing system with panels;
2. maintenance of the roof paving and the stairs: demolition and re-building using a new thermal-proofing system, including a water-proof layer and a curved screen as a new cover which will allow the creation of new spaces for the inhabitants;
3. reinforcement of structural elements in bad conditions.



The curved roof screen

The construction site of Bari-Mungivacca has been defined an “Integrated Programme of Urban improvement and salvage”, characterized by a series of different operations “integrated” and complementary to one another, responding to a larger design of resettling of the whole area. The project plan is about the creation of an area including:

Housing:

- a. 13 dwelling buildings (154 flats)
- b. New equipped spaces
- c. A University students residence



The students' residence project

Services:

- a. a pedestrian square
- b. an underground car park

Urbanization:

- a. creation of new roads
- b. an urban park next to the square
- c. a cycling path

As for the last point, a new and more efficient railway station is going to be built in the quarter, which will serve Bari metropolitan area as an underground city station, and a so-called “platform of exchange” including railway and roadway, will be created next to the new tube station, also serving a new commercial area where an IKEA space will open in a short time.



Mungivacca railway station