



THE SECOND INTERVIEW: CARMEN

Lucca's Local Community Activator

Why did you decide to embark on this IN-HABIT journey?

As a Veterinary sciences student, I became involved in the project thanks to my thesis supervisor, professor Chiara Mariti, who asked me to participate as she knew my interest in animal ethology and the human-animal bond. As soon as I knew that pets would be involved, and that the main focus was to improve people's health and well-being thanks to their relationships with their domestic animals, I accepted the invitation to be part of IN-HABIT and embarked on this amazing journey.

Describe your neighbourhood and its main highlights.

Lucca is like a gem both to its citizens and to tourists who come to visit it for the first time. The main highlights are certainly the ancient walls (completely preserved until today) surrounding the city centre, which, with their 4 km circular path, and the trees and green areas disseminated along them, represent one of the city's most important monuments. The wall trail is popular both with tourists and with locals, who often go there for a jog or to walk their dogs.





What has been done in your neighbourhood so far?

The main activities that have been carried out in the first year of the project are related to the co-design of animal lines.

Lucca citizens, along with a group of stakeholders, had the opportunity to attend a participative process aimed at co-designing and co-deploying the animal lines and green areas that will be disseminated along the path.

In addition, we have recently discussed the structure of the IN-HUB, the innovative platform that will be launched before the end of the year and that will allow the community to co-design innovative services to improve the human-animal bond and people's health and well-being.

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered?

The biggest challenge we had to face at the beginning was in preparing the right field, because the use of the human-animal bond as a means to improve people's inclusion and well-being is an innovative topic, especially if linked to the urban environment. Talking about pet-friendly cities and policies that give pets rights, especially in Italy, is something that has only recently emerged; the idea that pets' relationships with people can be strengthened to improve human well-being (not only in specific contexts such as animal-assisted interventions) is even more novel and innovative.

What have you taken home from this experience so far?

Thanks to the IN-HABIT project, I have been able to meet a lot of different people (especially in this period in which it's difficult to travel, due to Covid-19) from all around Europe and with different areas of expertise. In addition, I have taken home new knowledge from different thematic areas that I was not used to working with.

