



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

**IN-HABIT - INclusive Health And wellbeing  
In small and medium size ciTies**

## **D3.1 - SUMMARY**

# **Inclusive Transformation Plan of Lucca into a Hum- an Smart City Lucca's Pilot**



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 869227

The presence of **animals in an urban environment** has always been managed with the perspective of protecting humans in terms of hygiene and possible noises. Concurrently, in countries with developed economies, life confined in built environments has increased a new need and a growing demand for contact and knowledge with nature and non-human beings. Nowadays, many studies show how the well-being of people, including vulnerable ones, can find new resources and new opportunities by enhancing **human-animal interaction**. In such respect, innovative nature-based solutions and social innovation processes could mobilise animal resources and their interaction with people to increase the quality of life of local inhabitants and support less empowered ones.



**Lucca** is a medium-sized Tuscan city near the banks of the Serchio river surrounded by greenery. Thanks to its not excessive size and its flat lay, it is suitable for being traversed by foot, by bike, or with pets on a lead, perhaps along the tree-lined city walls. Lucca is a pet-friendly city and also very suitable for elderly people and children.

The city centre is almost **80% car-free** and, therefore, safe for pets, as well as presenting many drinking fountains scattered throughout the city where pets can drink and refresh. Furthermore, many restaurateurs already welcome animals.

The IN-HABIT project in Lucca is based on the innovative concept of the **human-animal bond**, which: “can be defined as a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviours considered essential to the health and well-being of both. The bond includes, but is not limited to, the emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals, and the environment,” (The American Veterinary Medical Association).

The Inclusive Transformation Plan in Lucca provides an exhaustive report of the activities carried out.

## IN-HUB establishment: organisation, methods, and achievements

The **IN-HUB** was designed as a platform aimed at discussing ideas, possible problems, innovative solutions, and services around five thematic areas (citizens, social sector, tourism, professionals, and education). **Stakeholder mapping activities** were held in December 2020 and are an on-going activity.

At first, the University of Pisa (UNIFI) team identified the above five possible **thematic areas** to engage stakeholders around, and after some workshops run by Tesserae, the network of actors was expanded to include the health sector and some departments of the Municipality of Lucca. Meetings were held to present the IN-HABIT project and identify associations linked to the animal sector to contact and involve in the project.

The Municipality of Lucca sent official invitations asking people/associations belonging to the sectors identified to be part of the Lucca IN-HUB. UNIFI oversaw finding people in the pet care area working locally. Throughout this phase, the **Gender, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (GDEI) approach** was kept in mind to also be able to involve people at risk of exclusion.



On the 19th of January 2022, the **official launch** of Lucca IN-HUB was held online. A press release was published on the 18th of January to

promote the launch, and IN-HABIT partner Book On a Tree published an article on the official IN-HABIT website and spread the word on the social media.

In December 2021, new meetings with the Lucca administration for co-designing the IN-HUB were organised. The UNIFI team proposed a conceptual idea of the IN-HUB and a list of topics, related to the issues to be faced with the IN-HABIT project and developed during the work of the platform. The Municipality of Lucca thought about possible people to include in the project, choosing them from those who had participated in the previous phases. The structure proposed will be made of representatives of various subjects of interest that will be divided, subsequently, into 5 thematic working groups. These groups are open to the development of other discussion topics that may arise in progress as well as collaborating on shared themes with the other thematic working groups.

The IN-HUB structure was discussed together with Municipality of Lucca and Lucca Crea. IN-HABIT partner Tesseræ (TSR) also provided advice and feedback. The **process methodology** was designed according to transition theory and transition management processes. Tools provided by TSR will be used during workshops and working group discussions. Since the Lucca IN-HUB launched, monthly meetings have been organised for the thematic groups to discuss innovative solutions and services.



As for the top-down process of the soft solutions, UNIFI together with the Municipality of Lucca has thought about some possible actions that the departments could carry out after discussion and approval by the IN-HUB working groups. This will be the starting point for activating a process of involving the local community to generate and increase the "collective knowledge" aimed at identifying solutions to improve people's quality of life through human-animal relationships.

## Co-design of visionary and integrated solutions (VIS): top-down driven and bottom-up participative processes

Local Community Activator (LCA) training was held over five days in March and April 2021 to provide members with knowledge and tools on how to engage their city with the IN-HABIT project, and to reach out to people living in the neighbourhood (with specific attention to those at risk of exclusion and discrimination) to engage them in co-designing and co-creating project solutions. The training aimed to empower LCAs to perform digital communication tasks, gender-based and diversity-based research and impact assessment activities, organisation and animation of events and citizen engagement, and co-design and research tasks in the field.

The co-design of the key impact indicators helped identify the **expectations and needs** of the target groups of the VIS through the inclusion of citizens' points of view. In particular, through the direct consultation of local inhabitants and representatives of groups at risk of discrimination and exclusion, project partners have identified the expectation of the project target groups in terms of the possible changes the IN-HABIT solutions may bring about on their health and well-being.

The preliminary analysis of the context of Lucca was carried out between May and July 2021, through **the creation of a database** defined by the research groups of UNIPI and ISIM. The database was organised into thematic areas, covering various aspects of the quality of life of the resident population, in social and economic terms, and those of availability of services. As a whole, the objective of this study was to outline the starting context for the implementation of the project.

In Lucca, researchers from UNIPI, in the role of LCAs, helped University of Reading (UREAD) to collect data to produce a comprehensive mapping of the institutional framework that supports decision-making at the city level.

Data collected informs UREAD of the extent to which gender and diversity aspects have been taken into consideration in policy making at different levels, from the political commitment to the possible implementation of action plans.

A baseline study on the state of health and well-being of Lucca's inhabitants was carried out by ISIM. The study included three types of data collection: a survey including health and well-being indicators, a focus group with 10 participants, and 5 stories collected.



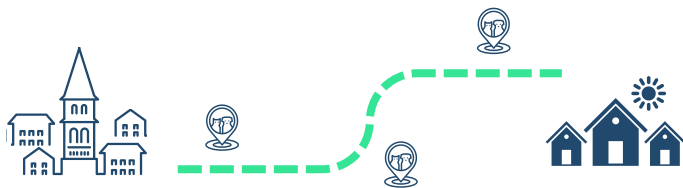
To facilitate and moderate the bottom-up process, various methods and tools have been used, such as the organisation of participatory processes to achieve active participation of stakeholders and citizen in the decision-making process. The primary goal of participatory processes is to create productive discussions to develop solutions about specific themes.

A Design for Change workshop to promote mindset change took place on the 21st and 22nd of January 2022 in Lucca. The workshop introduced design and co-design activities to educators working in schools, educational centres, and social organisations in Lucca, with the aim of providing them with co-design tools to help members of the community (women, children, young people, elderly, people with disabilities...) become the primary agents of change within the IN-HABIT project framework.

## City-specific VIS to boost IHW

At the beginning of the project, the UNIPi team planned some hard and soft solutions to be developed. Regarding the hard solutions, the idea was to involve stakeholders, at a neighbourhood level, in the co-design of

**Animal Lines:** paths that link an area of the old city centre with Lucca's suburbs and peri-urban areas. Different **areas accessible to people and their pets** are planned to be built along the path. The participative process within the community helped gather information, needs, and ideas about what to implement inside the relational areas, what materials to use to create an accessible place, and how to make the areas comfortable for both people and their pets.

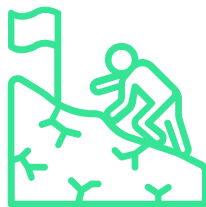


As for the **soft solutions**, the UNIFI team planned some ideas to suggest to IN-HUB members as a place from which to start developing their own co-designed solutions. During the platform launch on the 19th of January 2022, there was the opportunity to gather some initial ideas on solutions and services to be implemented around Animal Lines.

Concerning co-deployment and co-management of VIS, the planning was split into hard solutions and soft solutions. The former is nearly under deployment. Management of Animal Lines will be planned with the members of the IN-HUB and will probably regard organising volunteering activities to keep the path and its areas tidy and clean, as well as utilising spaces to organise Animal Assisted Interventions and other social activities. Regarding soft solutions, various meetings will be held within thematic working groups to co-design their deployment and management.

## Emerging lessons and recommendations

The organisation and development of the IN-HUB faced several **challenges** which led to the postponement of the platform's launch. The main challenge was related to the process of recruiting two LCAS from the Municipality of Lucca during the pandemic. The next challenge was organising the IN-HUB launch event, planned for mid-December 2021 but postponed due to its overlap with a political period and the incoming Christmas period. Then, with the further worsening of the pandemic situation in January 2022, the launch on January 19th 2022 had to take place online.



The introduction of an innovative approach such as Nature Based Solutions related to human animal bonds emerged as particularly demanding in terms of raising awareness among diverse stakeholders. The process of top-down co-design thus inevitably had to involve the administrations, with some initial difficulties in founding interaction between the innovative theme and the different departments. Regarding the bottom-up process in the co-design, mindset changes happened in different ways: positive answers came immediately from some thematic groups, while for others the process of change needed more time.

Including the GDEI perspective of certain targets, such as LGBTQ+ people and ethnic minorities, represented a great challenge during questionnaire collection and interviews for the baseline survey.

One of the biggest problems faced was the Covid-19 pandemic. This heavily impacted the whole process, leading to the postponement of events and tasks. In addition, most activities had to be held virtually. Being prepared to adapt plans was thus really important to ensure continued progress.



Regarding stakeholder engagement, considering organisations and platforms already within the community is recommended. It is important to build a dialogue with and try to engage them, as building everything from scratch might lead to excluding important stakeholders from the process.

This is an abstract of D3.1 Inclusive Transformation Plan of Lucca into a Hum-an Smart City (2022), by project partner UNIPI.

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