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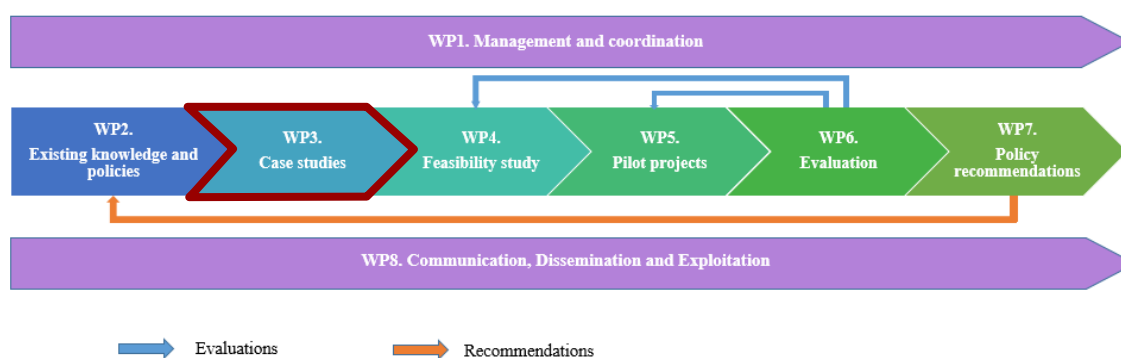


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## Glossary

|                |                                                                                                                       |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AB</b>      | Advisory Board                                                                                                        |
| <b>ACV</b>     | Agermanament Comunitari Valencià pilot project (Valencian Community Sponsorship)                                      |
| <b>Arènes</b>  | Research Centre University Rennes 1                                                                                   |
| <b>AURA</b>    | Auvergne Rhône-Alpes                                                                                                  |
| <b>D</b>       | Deliverable                                                                                                           |
| <b>DMP</b>     | Data Management Plan                                                                                                  |
| <b>EC</b>      | European Commission                                                                                                   |
| <b>EIC</b>     | Ethical Issues Committee                                                                                              |
| <b>EU</b>      | European Union                                                                                                        |
| <b>GA</b>      | General Assembly                                                                                                      |
| <b>HaMo</b>    | <i>Habiter Montreuil</i> (French housing initiative)                                                                  |
| <b>IMBY</b>    | In My Backyard (French housing initiative)                                                                            |
| <b>IMO</b>     | International Migration Office                                                                                        |
| <b>LIP</b>     | Lyon Ingénierie Projet                                                                                                |
| <b>MA</b>      | Mälmo University                                                                                                      |
| <b>MERGING</b> | Housing for iMmigrants and community intEgRation IN Europe and beyond: strategies, policies, dwellings and Governance |
| <b>MS</b>      | Milestone                                                                                                             |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Non-Governmental Organisation                                                                                         |
| <b>SAISAR</b>  | Spanish System of Shelter and Integration for Applicants and Beneficiaries of International Protection                |
| <b>SBE</b>     | Social Business Earth                                                                                                 |
| <b>SC</b>      | Stakeholders Committee                                                                                                |
| <b>SO</b>      | Specific Objective                                                                                                    |
| <b>STATIV</b>  | Statistics Sweden database                                                                                            |
| <b>SWOT</b>    | Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats                                                                            |
| <b>UGOT</b>    | University of Gothenburg                                                                                              |
| <b>UJML</b>    | Université Jean Moulin Lyon                                                                                           |
| <b>UN</b>      | United Nations                                                                                                        |



|              |                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>UNDP</b>  | United Nation Development Plan          |
| <b>UNHCR</b> | United Nation High Council for Refugees |
| <b>UNIBO</b> | Università di Bologna                   |
| <b>UVEG</b>  | Universitat de València                 |
| <b>WP</b>    | Work Package                            |





## Introduction

The so called ‘refugee crisis’ starting in 2015 represents a hot topic in the political debate that has overwhelmed the European Union (EU) and many of its Member States. *De facto*, EU policies have failed in responding effectively to the growing movement of people across the Mediterranean as they have mostly focused on signing inter-states agreements aimed at preventing the arrivals of refugees and migrants on European shores, instead of addressing the reception and protection needs of people escaping from situations of conflict, persecution, and human rights abuse (Crawley et al, 2016: 60). The political failure, taking place both at the national and EU levels, also regards the missing attention to the longer-term integration needs of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe. As Barbelescu (2017) states, the pressing nature of the crisis but above all the lack of political consensus within and between Member States has dramatically proved the limits of the EU’s commitment to human rights norms. As such, refugee protection in the EU has now become deeply circumscribed where states are “clearly content to maintain an asylum system that grants certain rights to the very few” (Stevens 2017: 188), which could represent an added value for the well-being and the development of the host societies. Furthermore, Member States have responded to the crisis in a very discrepant way, despite having agreed to institute a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), committing to “a shared responsibility to welcome asylum seekers in a dignified manner, ensuring they are treated fairly and that their case is examined according to uniform standards so that, no matter where an applicant applies, the outcome will be similar” (Common European Asylum System - [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en).) Single Member States are still free to establish how they implement the CEAS, because most EU policies on integration and diversity have remained at the level of guidance. Several countries have recently decided to ‘elaborate and adopt national plans related to the integration of third-country nationals’ (European Asylum Support Office, 2016. p 116). Therefore, unsurprisingly much of the European literature on refugee integration is grounded on national case studies and the role of central government. However, there is also a growing research trend focussing on local authorities and the specific urban context. Among scholars, Jørgensen (2012) and Scholten (2013) have underlined the need of a “decoupling” between the local and national. Myrberg (2017) goes further, stating that “local governments are shifting from a passive to an active role, not only in the sense of implementing policies, but also politically because they become the source of innovation and of new frameworks of relationship with other levels of government” (p. 324). In this vein, it is necessary to consider the extent to which international rights, duties and powers have been transferred to cities and regions, which become objects of regulatory efforts at the international level and have a stake in their enforcement, also thanks to their tendency to form global networks (Blank, 2006). In any

case, the situation is that “while local governments have more or less power depending on their national settings, they are subordinate” (Emilsson, 2015: 4).

Despite this, a recent fieldwork conducted by Mayer (2018) gives evidence that although cities are expected to implement national politics of migration control (through registry offices, social services departments, schools, etc.), and in most European countries they do not have legal competence to care for asylum seekers and refugees, the steadily increase of arrivals and the insufficient reaction of national authorities have obliged them to engage in this matter without having either a legal mandate or any specific funding to do so. As Ambrosini (2017: 594) affirms: “What is important is that civil society organisations do not confine themselves to easing tensions between state sovereignty and the affirmation of universal human rights: the controversial issue of protecting irregular immigrants has in some cases given rise to forms of protest, advocacy movements, or mobilisations by undocumented residents themselves”.

Reflecting the greater role of horizontal and not just vertical governance relations, recent research focuses therefore prominently on the role of civil society, investigating on what local actors are facing with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers, mirroring what Brenner (2004) has defined as the “rescaling of statehood”. Nowadays, such rescaling counteracts the “nationalist” rhetoric of some European leaders, who look for consensus grounding on a supposed incompatibility between the new arrivals, many of whom are Muslim, and Europe’s secular and/or Christian heritage (Ralston 2017, Lucassen 2018).

The comparative report we present in the following constitutes a sub-study of the MERGING project, an H2020 funded research, gathering 10 partners and aiming to foster refugees’ integration through co-constructive housing. The consortium is formed by 10 partners originating from 6 countries: the University of Lyon III - Jean Moulin (France – coordinator), the University of Rennes I - EHESP (France), Quatorze (association of architects, France), Lyon Ingénierie Projet (academic project management company, France), the University of Valencia (Spain), the University of Bologna (Italy), the Universities of Gothenburg and Malmö (Sweden), COTA (Consultant in public policies, Belgium), and Social Business Earth (social enterprise, Switzerland). Studying refugees’ integration through housing represents a complex and multivariate challenges. Therefore, to gain an explorative and comprehensive look at the problem, we conducted a qualitative analysis through local case studies on innovative housing projects intentionally pursuing integration’s goals. To this aim, we included into our analysis different typologies of housing, based on the new concept of living (intergenerational and or multicultural cohabitation), buildings forms (both the construction of new buildings and the requalification of existing facilities), their location both in city centres and in peripheral areas and dotation in public services (transportation, medical facilities, schools, social assistance, etc.). Moreover, we considered also multifunctional cases that -beyond housing - offer also different type of support, from manual activities to social and legal assistance, from the possibility to take part in (or develop) entrepreneurial activities to the provision of professional

and/or language training, while creating and/or facilitating interactions between refugees and local citizens. All in all, recalling the Bourdieu's definition of social capital (i.e., a set of cultural, economic, symbolic, and relational capitals), we looked for projects offering activities or opportunities for refugees to develop skills and eventually access to job offers, but also to interact with local citizens as both aspects contribute to refugees' integration.

The report is structured as follows: After presenting the state of the art for what concerns the operational concept of integration, we proceeded with the search and the analysis of the local case-studies and the existing literature on housing as a driver of refugees' integration (Chapter 1.), we illustrated the Methodology on which basis the local case studies were selected, the criteria leading the data collection and consequently their analysis, before introducing the comparative rationale in term of the procedure we followed, the challenges we met and the goals we pursued (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 offers an overall contextualisation of the housing project, before going more in depth in their structure and aims, differentiating between collective (buildings-centred) and decentralized projects: from urban centrality to regional dissemination. Chapter 4 presents the different governance regimes of refugees' integration through housing, going from multilevel and vertical approaches to interactive governance of multi-stakeholder networks. Chapter 5 focuses on social integration through housing, in terms of the empowering processes set in motion to facilitate refugees' autonomy after the expiration of the project, the participatory process intervening between housing and creation of social bridging and the refugees' perception of their domestic space, the meaning of their "making home" and "feeling at home", often despite a forced co-habitation with other people. Chapter 6 presents the emerging issues between challenges and opportunities and offers some concluding remarks.

## 1. State of the art

There is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration: "a word used by many but understood differently by most" (Robinson, 1998). Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the meaning of "successful integration", whose definition is ambiguous both in the literature and even in the social policy field. Integration can be defined as "the process of becoming an accepted part of society" (Garcés-Mascreñas and Penninx, 2018). In the EU context becoming part of a society is a process linked to the recognition of rights, duties, and citizenship. During this process, individuals move through a multisectoral inclusion route involving employment, housing, education, and health, that are referred to as "public outcomes" because these are both the outward "markers" of integration and at the same time "means" towards a deeper inclusion in the community in which they live. However, internal dimensions as the subjective integration factors (Hynie et al., 2016) are also important. Indeed, all along this path, individuals' subjective well-being and feelings of safety, stability, sense of belonging and

detachment are subject to and depend on the way they connect with other actors in society, thanks to facilitators like language and cultural knowledge. This can be seen as a tri-directional process where 1) refugees and migrants themselves, 2) the pre-existing refugees and migrant communities, and 3) the host society take part.

Between these three levels of actors, Ager and Strang (2008) identified three different forms of social connection or relationship resulting in **social bonds** within a refugees/migrants community sharing either an ethnic/national or religious identity. Such connections also produce **social bridges** between them and other communities, including relationships with members of other immigrant/refugee communities and/or local community members that could facilitate the development of **social links** with institutions, including local and central government services, improving refugees' access to social services and their participation in broader civic engagement activities (see also Woolcock, 1998). Finally, this process also incorporates several external dimensions, including the general conditions in which the reception takes place, legal, socioeconomic, and sociocultural factors (Törngren & Emilsson, 2020).

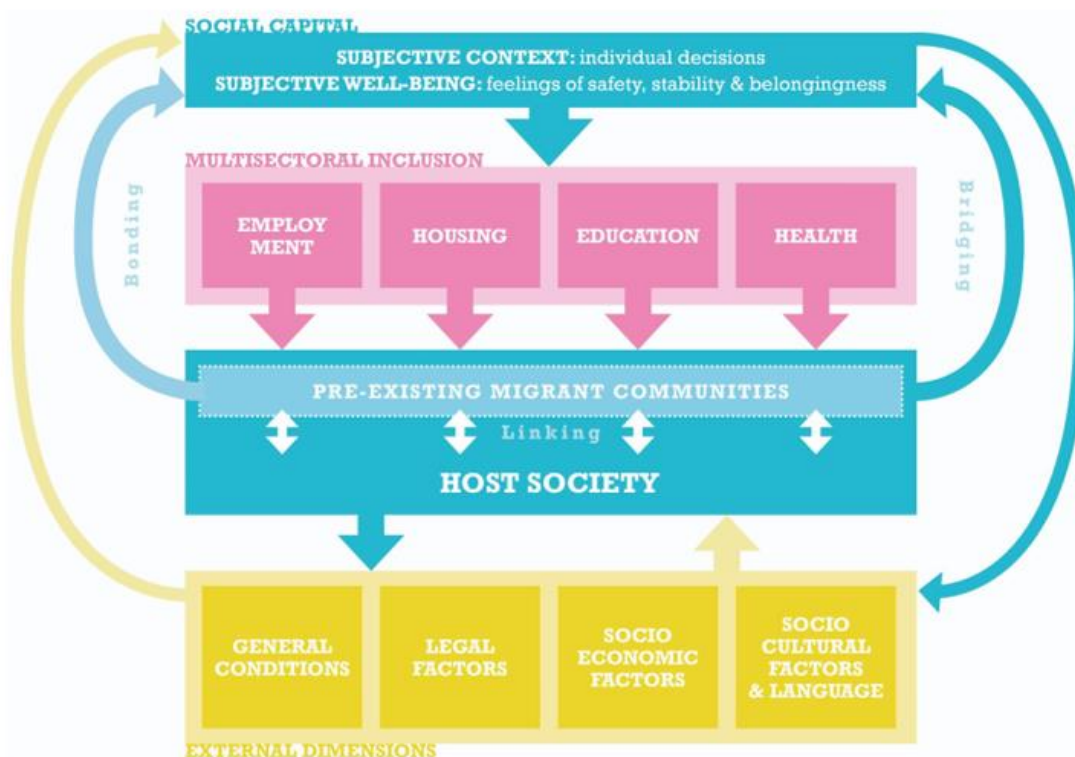


Diagram n.1 – A multidimensional definition of integration. Source: WP2 Integration definition.

## 1.1 The role of housing as a driver of refugees' integration

This operational definition essentially suggests a goal to work towards, expanding the actual scholarly contribution on refugee integration, in which research on education and labour market entry still dominate the field. **In the MERGING project, we claim that more attention should be paid to the importance of housing and the way in which this may affect integration outcomes**, especially now that states are making more restrictive choices in terms of who has access to housing. We support the idea that housing - the provision of and access to accommodation - is a cornerstone of refugee integration and community well-being as housing conditions impact a community's sense of security and stability, opportunities for social connection, and access to healthcare, education, and employment. We agree with Phillips (2006), when he stated long before the actual "crisis" that "the housing conditions and experiences of refugees clearly play an important role in shaping their sense of security and belonging, and have a bearing on their access to healthcare, education and employment" (p. 539). However, due to historical chronic shortages of accommodation in the European cities, this represents a real challenge in the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees.

A study on the integration of refugees in Greece, Hungary and Italy highlights that first reception centres are often overcrowded and are inadequate to provide fair living conditions ([https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/614194/IPOL\\_STU\(2017\)614194\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/614194/IPOL_STU(2017)614194_EN.pdf)). In this domain, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) play a crucial role in filling the gaps due to the limited means and funding of local government, above all in cities with housing shortages and vulnerable groups who cannot access the private rental market while the waiting lists for social housing get longer and longer. In November 2016, the Working Conference held in Amsterdam with the aim of finding solutions to the problems of refugees' reception and housing had already recognised that the shortage of affordable housing, the limited budget of the cities, and the difficulties in accessing European funding programmes (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund Plus, Asylum and Migration Fund and Invest EU) represented the three main challenges cities have to face (Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees 2017). To overcome the difficult access to European funding, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities - an institution of the Council of Europe - recommended to grant local and regional authorities' direct access to European Funds, but its advice in terms of best practices to be pursued remained rather vague, suggesting to "support housing solutions and initiatives that encourage mixing and positive interaction between refugees and host communities" (Illes and Renström, 2017: 31).

Several scholars have analysed the impact that unfair housing conditions have on refugees' integration process. While some argue that hosting refugees in neighbourhoods where already existing migrant communities live can help their settling process, others claim that this is harmful for language learning and cultural encounters with the local community. Darling (2016) and Meer

et al. (2019) highlighted that being very often housed in marginalised urban areas that suffer from social exclusion is particularly harmful for refugees' integration perspectives. In countries employing a dispersal policy, a similar process of exclusion has been observed, especially in poor areas of the rural periphery. As a consequence, this leads a majority of those who receive a positive asylum decision to migrate to the big cities, which already have a significant shortage of affordable housing. In Italy, Bolzoni et al (2015) tackled the problem of exclusion and restricted access to housing in Turin, where the city council adopts both informal practices and administrative provisions to prevent migrants' access to housing. Following the many administrative obstacles, including the refusal of the municipal registry office to accept residency applications, many refugees in Turin have started squatting actions. In this case, the role of the local government is decisive because if they are denied the necessary paperwork, refugees cannot fully enjoy their rights. This constitutes a gap between the national legal framework and its local implementation that impedes a successful integration path in Italian society.

On the contrary, according to Hauge et al. (2017) the use of "decentralized accommodation" as for example in Norway, that places asylum seekers in ordinary homes rather than a centralized institution, seems to have positive effects for what concerns their well-being and the reduction of conflicts. They argue that asylum seekers "become more independent, active and more integrated when they are moved from an institutional centre to ordinary housing units" (p. 16). Bakker et al (2016) intervene in the debate pertaining what option suits best integration logics in asylum support systems employed in the Netherlands and the UK: whether the use of large, centralized reception centres or rather reception facilities' dispersal throughout the hosting country. Both countries have adopted 'deterrent approaches' to asylum support but while the British approach is based on dispersal to deprived areas, the Dutch system favours the use of asylum accommodation centres. The results show for both countries that **staying in state-provided asylum accommodation negatively affects refugees' personal social networks and health**: the lack of privacy and autonomy in the Dutch asylum centres can have a detrimental effect on mental health and the poor conditions of accommodation in the UK can contribute to a deterioration in refugees' physical health. This contrasts with the experiences of those who lived in self-arranged housing. **The most important finding is the key role played by integration policy. The provision of integration courses significantly supported the health outcomes of refugees and language proficiency was correlated with positive outcomes in terms of both social networks and health.** Such research demonstrates the close link between the housing experiences of asylum seekers and their eventual integration. All in all, here is a common consensus in the international literature according to which home is a multidimensional (Mallet, 2004), subjectively significant (Easthope, 2004) and politically relevant entity (Duyvendak, 2011). However, there is still a lack of large-scale research on what meanings immigrants attach to their homemaking compared to natives, and whether there is a relationship between feeling more or less at home and the practices of appropriation of domestic, community or public spaces. It is difficult for social research to deepen these aspects as long as the idea of home



refers only to the representation of a monolithic and immutable space (public or private), a property of the natives to which the immigrant should adapt as a "guest" in order to be somehow accepted. Empirical research on home, as a social phenomenon, is relatively recent and only in the last decade, alongside housing studies (housing policies, access/exhaustion/possession of the material good of the home), some studies defined as transdisciplinary home studies have developed. Their aim is to understand the processes of appropriation and signification of domestic spaces (Saunders, Williams, 1988; Despres, 1991; Somerville, 1997; Briganti and Mezei, 2012). Scholars have also emphasized the immigrants' need to maintain some characteristics of their countries' homes in their new accommodation abroad. This has been observed in the ways they decorate and use their domestic spaces but also in the styles of clothing, eating, and using leisure time (religious, cultural, recreational activities that re-connect to the home of origin) (cf. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017; Cancellieri, 2017). This trend of research is very promising, therefore in the MERGING project we set a special focus on the meanings that refugees attribute to their domestic space in term of the practices and relationships they carry out at home. The aim of understanding how and how much they "feel at home" in the host country, could help to reconstruct their subjective processes of integration, attachment, and investment in their new environment, offering wider hints for planning immigrants' housing solutions that consider the different ways of living and cohabiting.

All in all, for asylum support systems, the key recommendation is to be more inclusive with housing embedded in communities as a means to foster social integration in the longer term. This evidence could be probably read as the starting point of the **shift that is taking place across the European systems of reception from containment in reception centres to urban dispersal reception** as it has been evidenced in the Italian case (Manara and Piazza 2018). **There is also a recognition that 'precarious housing (and the associated lack of an official address) is a major obstacle to benefitting from labour market integration programmes'** (Martín et al 2016: 47).

Keeping in mind this evidence, in the MERGING project we will analyse some housing projects that claim to be innovative as they try to promote a more comprehensive approach to refugees' integration, combining the material need of having a place to live with the promotion of other integration's supporting elements, such language and training courses, the encounters between refugees and neighbourhoods and the intimate experience of "making a home" in the host place where integration processes are underway.

## 2. Methodology

The MERGING project addresses refugees' reception and housing systems made available in a number of European countries by adopting a **cross-national and comparative perspective**. The present report on local case studies is thus framed within significant parts of the national states of the art sketched within the scope of WP2 for each country that is subject to our research (Italy, Spain, Sweden and France); Literature review on immigrants' housing policies and practice existing

at supra-national, national, and local level across relevant disciplines (see D2.1 Report); Policy analysis including elements of discourse analysis of documents, programs and legal framework that frame, shape and limit housing and immigrants' integration in the four countries of the MERGING project, including how European discourses on integration and refugees' policies guidelines are interpreted and implemented at national level (see D2.2 Report).

According to our research design, WP3 had two major goals. The first one entailed the selection of a relevant project providing refugees with accommodation. An in-depth qualitative analysis of the selected case study was accordingly conducted to assess how the provision of housing affects refugees' inclusion in the four countries. With this goal, the role of housing was also considered in connection with the access it provided to other social rights such as employment, health, education, and social participation more broadly. Grounding on the comparative analysis of the findings of this in-depth qualitative analysis, WP3's second goal was to construct a typology of integration operating model for successful immigrants' inclusion through housing (see D3.3 Report).

## 2.1 Selection of case studies

In the attempt of securing European coverage, the MERGING consortium gathers countries that have in common both the increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers following the "migrants' crisis", which started in 2015, and the shortage of affordable housing for the most vulnerable groups of population, with whom immigrants share the problem. Furthermore, starting from the '80s, the two partner countries that lay at the external borders of Europe, i.e., Spain and Italy, have also turned from emigration to immigration countries. Due to their geographic location, they are considered the two very first gateways for immigrants and asylum seekers trying to access preferably Northern European countries. Laying further in Northern Europe but counting on a more generous welfare system (universalistic regime), Sweden shows the highest ratio of immigrants per inhabitants (IMO, 2020), while France, according to the French Office for Refugees (2020), currently faces a high increase of application for asylum (+11% 2019/2018). In all four countries, new arrivals created many social tensions since the migration crisis has occurred at a time when the EU Member States were still unequally and slowly recovering their economic growth and employment rates from the economic crisis of 2008.

Theoretical sampling strategies were combined with purposive sampling strategies to maximize the variety of case studies we had considered within the scope of WP2 and focus on the most significant ones. Each country selected four or five potential case studies, interviewing the respective project leader according to a semi-structured protocol proposed by UNIBO/SBE team (University of Bologna and Social Business Earth) and then discussed and approved by all partners. The information was used to compile, for each case study, an Excel grid that was then used by all partners to select the housing project on which to conduct the local case study in Bologna, Paris and Rennes, Goteborg and Valencia. The grid assessed five analytical dimensions through 57 items to be detected:



1. TARGET AUDIENCE (10 items)
2. URBAN PLANNING (14 items)
3. INTEGRATION GOALS (14 items)
4. GOVERNANCE (11 items)
5. WELFARE (8 items)

Each item was given a score from 1 to 3 points, depending on whether the individual project assessed was "not responsive" = 1; "quite responsive" = 2; "very responsive" = 3. In principle, the partners would have to select the case with the highest score (see Table n. 1).

|                     |                                                                                                   | Italy                                        | Spain                                | Sweden                                   | France                               |                                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                     |                                                                                                   | Housing First                                | Agermanament Comunitari València     | Sällbo                                   | Les Cinq Toits                       | UTUD                                            |
| General information | Started                                                                                           | 2015                                         | 2020                                 | 2019                                     | 2018                                 | ~ 10 years ago                                  |
|                     | Project Phase                                                                                     | growth                                       | start-up                             | growth                                   | growth                               | growth                                          |
|                     | Stakeholders involved                                                                             | 5+                                           | several                              | 4                                        | 3                                    | several                                         |
|                     | Beneficiaries                                                                                     | 73                                           | 23                                   | 51                                       | 350                                  | 152                                             |
|                     | Employees                                                                                         | 10                                           | 5                                    | 2                                        | unknown                              | 1                                               |
| Target Audience     | Beneficiaries' age                                                                                | 18 - 65                                      | 18 - 50 (families with children)     | 18 - 25 (refugees) 70+ (Swedish elderly) | 18+ and families with children       | 18+ and families with children                  |
|                     | Promoting cohabitation of young native people and young refugees                                  | ~                                            | ✓                                    | ~                                        | ~                                    | ~                                               |
|                     | Promoting cohabitation of natives and adult refugees                                              | ✓                                            | ✗                                    | ✗                                        | ~                                    | ~                                               |
|                     | Promoting cohabitation of natives and refugee families                                            | ✗                                            | ✗                                    | ✗                                        | ~                                    | ✗                                               |
|                     | Refugees                                                                                          | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
| Urban Planning      | Asylum seekers                                                                                    | ✗                                            | ✗                                    | ✗                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Urban requalification of an object                                                                | ✗                                            | ✗                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Construction of a new building                                                                    | ✗                                            | ✗                                    | ✗                                        | ✓                                    | ✗                                               |
|                     | City center                                                                                       | ✓                                            | ~                                    | ~                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Proximity to services                                                                             | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ~                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Eco-sustainable building/area                                                                     | ~                                            | ✗                                    | ✗                                        | ✓                                    | ✗                                               |
|                     | Multifunctional space                                                                             | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Space                                                                                             | public and private                           | public                               | public                                   | public                               | private                                         |
| Integration Goals   | Involvement of local communities and stakeholders                                                 | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Promoting economic integration                                                                    | ✓ (referring job agencies, training courses) | ✓ (courses and support programs)     | ✓ (employment service)                   | ✓ (employment)                       | ✓ (referring social services)                   |
|                     | Promoting social integration                                                                      | ✓ (association and cultural events)          | ✓ (associations and cultural events) | ✓ (activities/events in common space)    | ✓ (associations and cultural events) | ✓ (association for cultural and leisure events) |
|                     | Promoting cultural integration                                                                    | ✓ (language training)                        | ✓ (cultural and language events)     | ✓ (through co-living concept)            | ✓ (cultural and language classes)    | ✓ (cultural and language classes)               |
|                     | Development of professional training courses and business start-ups                               | ~                                            | ✓                                    | ✗                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Promoting relationships with local community                                                      | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Recognising the plurality of social relationships and differences                                 | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
| Governance          | Accommodation duration                                                                            | long term                                    | limited term                         | limited term                             | limited term                         | short/long term                                 |
|                     | Multi-level governance                                                                            | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ~                                               |
|                     | Taking part in the decision-making process                                                        | ✓ (weekly meetings)                          | ✓                                    | ✓ (association meetings)                 | ✓ (monthly meetings)                 | ✓ (meetings)                                    |
|                     | Mixed composition of board of stakeholders                                                        | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Improvement of social and interpersonal relationships and promotion of collective decision-making | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ~                                               |
|                     | Implementation of innovative models of co-responsibility and collaboration                        | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ~                                               |
| Welfare             | Funding                                                                                           | mainly public                                | public                               | public                                   | generated                            | public and private                              |
|                     | Focus on psycho-social and physical well-being                                                    | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Support in accessing healthcare and job market                                                    | ✓                                            | ✓                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Support in accessing unemployment benefits                                                        | ~                                            | ✗                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✓                                               |
|                     | Measure of the level of satisfaction and happiness                                                | ✓                                            | ~                                    | ✓                                        | ✓                                    | ✗                                               |

Table n. 1 Overview/highlights of the grid's five analytical dimensions



## 2.2 Data collection and subsequent analysis of case studies

Once the five case studies had been selected, interviews - either online or in-person - with stakeholders, community members, and the project beneficiaries were conducted using three semi-structured interviews' grids proposed by UNIBO and SBE, and then discussed and accepted by all partners. The aim was to investigate how the three groups of actors consider the role of housing in the path towards integration and social inclusion of refugees' and beneficiaries of international protection. Moreover, some questions were dedicated to the transition from the condition of "having housing" to that of "making home" which analyses how immigrants/refugees experience their domestic spaces once they have found one. To this aim, we adopted the operational concept of integration presented in the previous section (see "the state of the art"). In so doing, we considered the research of some scholars who presented index and criteria to qualify and assess integration policies, among them the works of Alastair Ager and Alison Strang (2008), Michaela Hynie, Ashley Korn and Dan Tao (2016), Begoña Garcés-Mascareñas and Rinus Penninx (2016). We also decided to maintain a vigilant attitude towards the concept of integration, drawing on the critique of the term and its implication suggested by Shahram Khosravi's autoethnography of the European borders (2010). Hence, we decided to remain open to including potentially unforeseen dimensions of integration, which might have emerged from our informants during interviews.

Most interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of each interviewee and then transcribed. The resulting transcriptions were internally circulated among each country team member working on the specific case so to give the team the chance to select the most relevant ones for developing the analysis. In total, 106 interviews were selected (See Table n.2). Then, all selected verbatims were coded, first manually and then using the software identified by each partner as fit (either NVivo or ATLAS.ti).

Table n. 2 offers an overview of the interviews conducted by the partners in the framework of their selected case study.

| Interview type    | Number of interviewees |                          |      |                                                 |                  | Total |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------|
|                   | Italy<br>Housing First | France<br>Les Cinq Toits | UTUD | Spain<br>Agermanament<br>Comunitari<br>Valencià | Sweden<br>Sällbo |       |
| Beneficiaries     | 5                      | 8                        | 10   | 9                                               | 5                | 37    |
| Stakeholders      | 16                     | 21                       | 3    | 11                                              | 8                | 59    |
| Community Members | 2                      | 1                        | 0    | 6                                               | 1                | 10    |
| Total Interviews  | 23                     | 30                       | 13   | 26                                              | 14               | 106   |

**Table n. 2 - Overview of interviews conducted within the scope of WP3**

In the attempt to contribute to the scholar community's understanding of core theoretical constructs such as "integration" and/or "social inclusion" through housing, the data collections were meant to go beyond the single case study, serving as building blocks for future grounded theorization. To avoid conducting qualitative analysis based on mere "impressions and cherry-pick quotes that supported those impressions" (Gehman et al., 2018: 286), each team adopted a methodologically rigorous approach to inductive research grounding on an adaptation of Gioia's methodology to qualitative analysis that would best fit our cases (Gioia et al., 2012).

We first proceeded analysing the collected interviews through an open coding procedure aimed at identifying first order codes. This was an informant-centric process, as we decided to give our informants' terms, codes, and categories of key importance in inspiring the coding procedures. Accordingly, we agreed we would have reduced any attempt to interpret and/or distil our interviewees' information to the minimum so as to account for the meaning they attributed to the experiences they described, while also making justice to the way they described to us the processes these experiences are part of. After that, we started looking for correlations among first order codes, aggregating them into second order themes. This time, however, the process was a researcher-centred one. Indeed, while conceiving our interviews' grid we had reasoned along eight dimensions to be addressed through our qualitative analysis:

1. Project composition, i.e., elements accounting for the nature of the project, its constitutive parts, its goals.
2. Management, i.e., elements accounting for the functions related to administrative aspects, how guidance is provided to the project, and the ways the project is organized, also in financial terms. Here sources of funding are key, as well as the way employees are coordinated towards the project's goals.
3. Services, i.e., elements attesting to the kind of services provided directly and/or indirectly to the project's beneficiaries (including but not limited to housing solutions)
4. Networks, i.e., elements describing the interconnected or interrelated operational chain, group of persons, or institutional system that the project is part of and that make it possible
5. Participatory approach, i.e., elements accounting to whether management and decision-making involve the participation of all the people engaged in the project's activities and/or affected by the services provided within the scope of the assessed project (meaning not only its beneficiaries but also local community members, employees, other connected services, etc.).
6. Beneficiaries, including all the elements that describe or provide information on all those individuals and/or groups who benefit from the services offered by the housing project examined, including the intimate process of "making home".
7. Social integration, i.e., elements describing the processes through which the project aims to improve the social activities of individuals and/or groups — improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of disadvantaged people based on their identity.

8. Assessment, which we defined as instances of judgement emerging from the interviewees both on the functioning of the project per se and on the general context of the project as well as the challenges it must face and the needs it tries to address.

These eight dimensions became our second order themes. NVivo and ATLAS.ti software allowed us to track the most recurring first order codes for each second order themes. We then decided to focus our analysis on the elements emerging from these first order codes as well as their reciprocal connections across second order themes. This allowed for presenting our “research findings in a way that demonstrates the connection among data [and] the emerging concepts” (Gioia et al., 2012: 17) which is a necessary step towards developing grounded theory through inductive research. The critical analysis of each teams’ findings was collected in five reports on case analysis: i.e., respectively the report on “Un Toit est un Droit” (UTUD) case drafted by the University of Rennes 1 (EHESP); the report on “Les Cinq Toits” case drafted by the University of Lyon III - Jean Moulin and by Quatorze; the report on “SällBo” project drafted by the University of Gothenburg (UGOT); the report on the “Agermanament Comunitari Valencià” (ACV) experience drafted by the University of Valencia (UVEG); and the report on the “Housing First Co.Bo.” project drafted by the University of Bologna (UNIBO) and Social Business Earth (SBE). The comparative analysis of these reports constitutes the base for the present synthetic report.

### 2.3 Comparative rationale

Having traced back the methodology steps of WP3’s research activities, we now present and justify the methodological structure of the WP3 comparative report, particularly focusing on the procedures we applied, the challenges we encountered, and the goals we achieved.

As illustrated in the sections above, we developed from the very beginning joint conceptual frameworks providing setting for research which was intended to be common to all partners. However, the many contextual factors that emerged in exploring spatial and temporal trends as well as policy responses to the issue of housing services for immigrants constitute the first challenge we had to face within each local study we conducted. This entailed discrepancies in the institutional and governance contexts, different actors and competences of local and metropolitan authorities, varying NGOs’ exposures, and role as well as diverse forms of civil society’s grassroots engagement on the subject we dealt with. In general, what emerged is that **both formal and informal institutions determine housing practices at local level**. The first recognition deriving from both literature and policy review, as well as exploratory stakeholders’ interviews, revealed that formal institutions mainly concern the legal and administrative fundamentals of spatial and temporal housing measures, while the informal institutions primarily comprise the cognitively anchored patterns of perception, beliefs, shared values, and behaviour of the actors involved in the field. This means that **refugees housing projects are not exclusively dependent on the legal-administrative systems, but also on the different socio-economic, political, and cultural structures and dynamics prevailing in**

**each country, and on how they are articulated at the local level.** Such considerations are significant in shaping problem perceptions/definitions and responses in different national and sub-national settings. For example, ideas about the importance of actively promoting either urban or building re-qualification instead of building ex-novo settlements devoted specific to refugees, may vary from one city to another, based on factors going beyond the social and physical manifestations of such trends.

Moreover, in some contexts, policy debates may be framed in specific terms whose meaning may be rather culturally and context specific, and thus require some extra-explanation to non-domestic audiences. This was sometimes the case also in the communication process involving MERGING national researchers' teams. Grounding on this principle, we developed a particular awareness on the need to consider the different national settings in the interpretation of the local case-studies participating in our national research, focussing therefore on the potential differences within individual countries being researched – for example between regions or cities with different economic, environmental, and social contexts and/or institutional structures. Agreeing with Hantrais (2008), we concluded that most institutional guidelines and implementation policies “are framed at national or supranational level, but they are more often than not implemented at local level, thereby offering scope for identifying regional and local disparities in delivery” (p. 37).

Similarly, in refugee reception's policy and planning, a national policy may play out or alternatively be applied rather differently - and with varied outcomes - in various regional, city, or neighbourhood contexts within the same nation state. Therefore, we decided to go beyond focusing on the national level of analysis as a basis for comparison of refugee reception's systems, aware that they might present themselves differently depending on scales of observation. In fact, albeit the national level plays a role in setting some general framework policy orientations, key competences and tools of implementation are held and exercised at the level of regions and/or municipality.

Since the issue of immigrants' integration through housing is still scarcely investigated by the existing literature, we derived our analytical framework from the empirical data gathered in each case study and from the combination of aspects emerged through the review of the state of art (policies and literature) with the juxtaposition of information collected during interviews we conducted with key stakeholders.

For what concerns the focus on “homing” we refer to Boccagni 's definition (2017), interpreting it as that set of social practices (actions and habits) and relationships through which a subject defines his/her living space as “home”. In his conceptualization, the following aspects are taken into account: personal, social and cultural criteria, generally implicit about what one likes or dislikes about one's home or living space; relational and emotional experiences regarding relationships with roommates; social practices that generate meaning to the domestic environments in which one carries out one's current and original daily life, such as the use of spaces (kitchen, living room, bedroom) and objects in them or that remind of one's home of origin. In order to understand this sense of appropriation of domestic space and the meanings attributed to it, refugees were asked by

the interviewers to take some pictures of the house's rooms/niches and furniture that make them feel at home. During the analysis what emerged discursively from the refugees/beneficiaries' interviews was interpreted also in light of those photos (Giorgi, Fasulo, 2013).

## 2.4 Methods

According to Bereday (1964), whose studies represented a milestone for any subsequent comparative study, a comparative analysis implies four steps: description (or data collection), (context-immanent) interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparative analysis. Following this well recognised scientific approach, we sketched the comparative research framework considering the different steps that are needed to systematically prepare the comparative analysis. Our efforts were oriented to a well-grounded thematic analysis of the empirical data collected during WP2 activities. Preparation began with a descriptive phase, resulting in the production of five reports illustrating local case studies on innovative housing projects for refugees (see previous sections). UNIBO and SBE proposed a detailed structure of the country reports in order to secure from the very beginning the future comparability. Following the comparative Bereday rationale, the second phase has involved the interpretation of the data and the collection of the conceptual information gathered in the single local reports, especially with regard to: 1. the networking between different institutional and not institutional actors constituting the governance of the local housing process; 2. the role of the enacted or missing participatory process either leading or misleading refugees' integration; 3. how innovation is intended in the local projects; 4. to which criticalities it is exposed and which opportunities opens to refugees' integration and community cohesion; 5. how immigrants succeed or fail in transforming their housing need in the feeling of being at home.

## 2.5 The procedure

The work on this comparative report began with a thorough analysis of the country reports on case analysis submitted by each country team to WP3 coordinators (UNIBO and SBE), which was followed by the provision of feedback to the partners by UNIBO and SBE and, at times, by follow-up requests for complementing data that were missing. A comparative structure was then developed that partially reproduces that of the country reports, foreseeing 7 chapters respectively on:

1. State of the art: Refugee integration in the EU
2. Methodology
3. Case Studies
4. Governance regimes of refugees' integration through housing
5. Social Integration Through Housing
6. Emerging issues: between challenges and opportunities
7. Conclusions



The writing process started with the extraction of local data from the case studies reports, which have been then juxtaposed. Therefore, the main parts of the report represent more a juxtaposition of data, rather than comparative analysis. **Juxtaposition of findings allows to identify patterns of differences and similarities between the local areas**, using national contexts as second level of contextualization. We adopted a special care to avoid assuming the direct comparability of specific institutions which exist in different national and regional context. Thus, we have proceeded in studying the different contexts addressing them adequately in terms of the descriptive and analytical accounts they provide. Our aim was - from the very beginning - to produce an accurate picture of the nature of key institutions, policies, programmes, and projects in different countries, that minimises over-simplifications and misplaced assumptions of direct comparability or equivalence.

In adopting such a focused framework we follow the warnings of Sharpe (1975), who remarks that to enhance the feasibility and methodological rigour of cross-national research, it is better to skip the criterion of the “maximum similarity” (like must be compared with like) in favour of the principle of the “maximus discreteness of focus” according to which the focus of the research should be tightly drawn around a discrete issue or policy approach – in order to reduce the complexities of research and the framing of achievable objectives. In this line, in the MERGING project we assumed that it is justifiable to compare cities or areas that are not similar in every way as long as this is acknowledged. Therefore, instead of looking for general constants of culture, administration, and statute - which do not apply in our cases - our comparative analysis contextualises specific findings with regard to different socio-economic and structural contexts.

## 2.6 The challenges

As all transnational research, MERGING is intrinsically comparative as the “gaze” of the researchers’ team from one context, examining how things are done differently in another, is inclined to adopt assumptions, concepts and experiences derived from their own ‘home’ context. Well aware of this risk, we had however considered that MERGING, despite the challenges, needed a comparative perspective for two main reasons, connected with its announced goals:

1. To enable scholars to answer the questions on how and to what extent different institutional structures, discourses and policies perform differently with regard to housing questions and refugees’ integration in the different case-studies conducted in the project.
2. To determine how local, national, and supra-national levels interact, either converging or diverging, and how EU’s intention to promote refugees’ integration is interpreted in the national policies and implemented at the local level across Europe.

Finally, comparison is needed to shed light on the differences and similarities between integration concepts and housing policies’ planning and implementations in relation to the systemic functions they play, and the socio-cultural meanings that are conveyed by the different actors and societal



contexts. Comparison helps to stimulate a wider debate on interventions useful for the promotion of integration which we understood as a two-way process, affecting both the established community and the newly arrived, and requiring their mutual adjustment and participation.

Although designed as an international comparative study, MERGING data do not allow for a comparative analysis in a representative sense, because samples are not representative. Moreover, it also emerged the question of the comparison ‘symmetry’ because of the nature of the data and the hurdles imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection. It was de facto impossible to pursue a similar structure and level of coverage in each case study. With regards to stakeholders, community members, and refugees qualitative and quantitative samples differ significantly among the case studies and cannot therefore be compared directly. Although emerging from the same local housing contexts, the same individuals were not always involved in the different collection of data because of context-immanent difficulties, which were not foreseen in the initial project (planning) phase. The pandemic made it almost impossible to research directly on the field, develop direct contacts with refugees and community members, or organising focus group with stakeholders who were overburdened with emerging social and health challenges. Because of the use of qualitative methods that require building a relationship between researcher and interviewees, especially when the latter are in a highly vulnerable condition, the number of refugees contacted and interviewed for this study was not as large as initially foreseen. Thus, the narratives of 37 beneficiaries in Bologna, Gothenburg, Paris, Rennes, and Valencia collected in our case-studies do not claim to be representative of the situation of all refugees. Nevertheless, we believe they are still demonstrative of the complexity of the processes linked to integration within the considered localities, and conducive to a reflection on how they possibly facilitate it.

## 2.7 The goal

Due to the heterogeneity of the information made available by each case study report and given that the project’s main goal was to fill some knowledge gaps in the existing research on refugees’ integration through innovative housing projects, the present report should be intended more as a starting point and background for the future piloting of innovative housing projects in three cities, Lyon, Gothenburg, and Valencia than as an exhaustive research outcome in itself. Yet, its rich materials may contribute to improve common understandings of what refugee integration actually means. Its comparative approach allows to detect the different conceptualisation of ‘integration’ at the local level (policy level) shedding light on housing paths that could support it, and thus be used as a reference point for other local projects and policy makers interested in planning and/or evaluating housing services for refugees (practice level).

### 3. Case Studies

#### 3.1 A contextual overview

As emerged in the Housing Europe Report 2020 (<https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1323/the-state-of-housing-in-the-eu-2019>), the housing question mirrors the growing social divide taking place in most European societies over the last years, particularly in big cities. This structural problem is due first to the lack of public supported housing schemes, enabling people with economic and social difficulties to access and keep permanent housing, and second to an illiquid and slow-moving rental market. It is therefore not by chance if housing has become key in a widespread populist, anti-immigration agenda, connecting the arrival of asylum seekers and migrants with supply shortage across Europe, while neglecting the pre-existing shortage and missing public-investment. As a result, in many cases this narrative has misdirected the public opinion on who is to blame for the current state of affairs in the housing policy.

As already illustrated in the previous MERGING reports on literature and policies, in France, Italy and Spain the high level of property ownership has justified the delay and sometimes even the absence of public housing policies. Although in Sweden the municipal companies have continually produced housing over the years, nowadays the level of construction has slowed down, while population growth has been high. Therefore, the Swedish housing market is also under pressure and primarily the metropolitan regions are facing a housing shortage (<https://www.sverigesallmannytta.se/in-english/swedish-housing-market/>).

In the four countries, this housing crisis has gone hand in hand with macro factors such as

- the increases in home purchase and rental prices, which have far outpaced wages;
- the job insecurity faced by young people seeking to live independently;
- the gentrification processes;
- the changes in family structure;
- the easier access to credit loans in connection with financial crises.

As a result, accessing housing results less available than in the past for a growing portion of the most vulnerable population.

Considering the local contexts in which we conducted our case studies, the Swedish team chose the city of Helsingborg, the second-largest city in Scania (after Malmö) and ninth largest in Sweden which, according to our interviewees, is suffering a considerable housing shortage, especially for what concerns refugees and migrants. In fact, they find their housing in the second-hand rental housing market, which sometimes includes “black” contracts (informal term for illegal). Another

issue in Helsingborg is that many households in need of housing do not qualify for social support in relation to housing (Stepanova et al., 2021).

Within the first reception period, refugees only receive short-term rental contracts, and the waiting lists are too long to access the public housing after their contract with the municipality has expired. Not to mention, that they are not able to buy apartments or houses due to the very high prices. We were able to verify this is quite a widespread trend also in the other cases we examined. In Sweden, the only support refugees get after the expiration of the municipal contract is a coaching service to “navigate” the private rental market which is unaffordable concerning both the rent costs and the guarantees required by the property owners (a stable well-paid job and recommendation letters from previous property owners). Inaccessibility to the private rental market is an issue in Italy, France, and Spain as well, for some remarkably similar unrealistic requests property owners have for perspective tenants. As it becomes evident, access to housing is not without hurdles and often refugees end up subletting a room in a crowded apartment or they become homeless.

France’s and Italy’s in-depth case studies also showed the centrality of the housing market. One of the French case studies was conducted in Rennes, the Breton capital also facing a housing shortage, especially at the start of each academic year, when many students in the city struggle to find accommodation. Concerning the housing situation of refugees, the interviewees underlined the challenges deriving from the unaffordable prices of the property market creating a sharp tension with the ongoing demographic growth (Pasquier et al., 2021). These factors negatively influence the housing situation of refugees, although many students live in the city centre, as well as a significant representation of the middle classes and intellectual professions, who are more sympathetic towards refugees’ reception than elsewhere.

In Bologna, a wealthy university city in the North of Italy, historically solidarity oriented similarly to Rennes, unfavourable rental conditions in the private real estate market are compounded by the inadequate Italian legislation on housing rights. This can cause distrust and frustration to people who are in housing distress, to the point that - in the most vulnerable cases – many have decided to give up the search for legal housing contracts. Adding to these difficulties that criss-cross vulnerable fragments of the population regardless of their nationality, both the interviewed beneficiaries and the educators working in the projects on which we conducted the case studies highlight the hostility and discrimination perceived when looking for a house, especially by property owners and indirectly by agencies. Indeed, it appears that as soon as they realise perspective tenants are foreigners, both agencies and property owners opt not to let them visit the apartments. This happens even if the beneficiary has a regular status and he/she can guarantee the payment of rent, as well the continuity of the payments thanks to a job contract.

From this point of view, the concrete difficulties of immigrants intersect with psycho-social factors discouraging them to look for institutional paths to housing and remaining in a living condition of permanent flexibility. In extreme cases, the solution is often a forced and overcrowded

cohabitation, in many cases in dwellings without services, in an "informal" housing sector made up of shantytowns and abandoned warehouses, but also of dilapidated houses, i.e., no longer attractive to the ordinary market (Cuconato et al., 2021).

Differently than in Italy, housing is considered a basic need and a constitutional right in Spain. Nevertheless, its provision and allocation are largely delegated to the market, whose profit aim doesn't correspond to that of the Constitution. As in the other case studies, the main problems concerning housing - to be read also here in the framework of a lack of public intervention - are connected to the lack of rental housing and the requirements imposed by the market to access housing (Simó-Noguera et al., 2021).

Having sketched the contextual framework, in the following we present five case studies attempting to experiment new forms of collaborative and participated housing solutions, which go beyond the actual rent out policy, trying to overcome the excluding rules of the real estate market.

### 3.2 Structure and aims of selected cases

A common feature emerging from the comparison, is that the selected projects were made possible by the mobilization of a wide network of partners involving private, social private, and public actors, and often addressing a heterogeneous mix of perspective beneficiaries. Therefore, they represent **multi-target projects that were made possible by the existence of multi-stakeholder networks, while also contributing to enlarging and strengthening them.** In this part of the report, we present the five selected projects, tracing back their origins as well as the peculiarities of the context in which they are located, their target audience, and aims. In so doing, housing will be considered not only as a public "marker" of integration but also as a "means" leading to the building of refugees' social capital, intended both in terms of social bridges and social links construction (see Section 1, p.3 of this Report).

#### **The Swedish SällBo project: a temporary co-housing example of interethnic and intergenerational mix**

**SällBo** is a pilot test project situated in the neighbourhood of Fredriksdal in the North-East area of the municipality of Helsingborg. The end of the project is foreseen in 2022 and then it will be evaluated. The non-profit municipal housing company Helsingborgshem owns and runs SällBo as well as many rental housings in the city. The municipality had bought this old building from the 1960-1970s, which originally housed elderly people in need of medical support. Their intention was to refurbish it and change its original purpose into a safe accommodation for people over 70. Before the renovation began, a large number of refugees arrived in the municipality. Hence, the municipal decision to use the property to host unaccompanied minors instead. And yet, the Helsingborgshem leadership continued to aim for the original goal of opening a place of safety for the elderly. They

then suggested that the property could cater for the needs of both the elderly and refugees, while also hosting a third group, which was to act as a "bridging group" between the elderly and refugees, i.e., young Swedes between the ages of 18 and 25 (see Stepanova and Bousiou 2021). Therefore, **SällBo was born to address demands of social housing solutions from a multi-target audience – i.e., elderly, Swedish born youth, and refugees. Moreover, due to minimally equipped apartments and their smaller size as compared to Swedish common standards, SällBo housing solutions came to occupy a more affordable fragment of the rental housing markets. The project also steps out from the norm ruling that social rental housing shall be distributed to those who can demonstrate a stable income and have accumulated enough points by being in the waiting list long enough. This deviation from the norm allowed refugees to access this kind of collaborative housing and was approved by the Board of Helsingborgshem, which made it legal.**

### **The French Les Cinq Toits project: a temporary housing solution embedded in a community of practices**

**Les Cinq Toits** is a **temporary housing project** located in a former police barracks in the 16th arrondissement in Paris, Ile-de-France's third richest district. The project is designed to provide exiled and vulnerable people not only a house but also a place to heal, to meet and interact with local actors to, finally, acquire their place in the society. The project is very big in comparison to Sällbo as it hosts 350 people: 100 refugees, 150 asylum seekers and 100 isolated people and families. It has mainly single and isolated men as primary target group to counteract the discrimination they suffer under the National Reception Scheme. The objective was to mobilize a vacant building and transform it into social housing, reducing in this way speculation and precarious housing. Another innovation element is that **it also provides start-ups** and NGOs from the social and solidary economy with a place to exert their work. The idea behind this co-habitation of asylum seekers and refugees with **local actors is to create a place of encounters that can lead to the creation of social bridges and links between them**, facilitating the potential socio-professional inclusion of the people housed there. The project's coordinators (thee association Aurore, in partnership with Plateau Urbain) benefit from a recognised experience and expertise in creating and managing such premises. **Moreover, dividing the same place could contribute to** sensitize citizens about migration journeys and raise residents' awareness about ecology and sustainable development.

### **The French Un Toit c'est Un Droit (UTUD) project: a scattered housing project based on grassroots engagement and refugees' activation**

The **UTUD** project was launched in Rennes about ten years ago as a self-managed squatting initiative, which was later recognized by local institutions through the conclusion of agreements between UTUD, municipalities, and property developers to occupy houses until they are

demolished. **The association UTUD aims to provide accommodation to single people or families whose asylum applications have been rejected.** A three-year occupancy agreement is signed with the owners of the premises so **to allow the people housed by the project to find some material security.** The association, on the other hand, undertakes to maintain the premises in a good state or to improve them. The apartment owners accept not to initiate eviction proceedings during the period of the contract. On the other hand, the town council also finances UTUD's work with 7,000 euros per year for the 15 houses it manages. These premises accommodate 152 people, sharing the apartments that are spread throughout the whole Rennes area.

While the Cinq Toits is a large project based on the co-housing principle welcoming approximately **350 residents**, on the opposite, UTUD is a case offering **migrants shared co-housing solutions** in the Rennes area. Contrary to Les Cinq Toits, it is not a collective housing typology but a decentralized one.

### **The Spanish Agermanament Comunitari Valencià (ACV) project: multi-stakeholders' provision of temporary and scattered urban housing solutions**

In the case of the autonomous Valencian Community, the **"Agermanament Comunitari Valencià" (ACV) project offers accommodation to 5 refugee families (23 people) for 24 months.** The families benefiting from the ACV Program are selected among the families that are taken in under the 2018 Spanish National Resettlement Program, which is approved annually. States establish the number of people who can be resettled in their territory. Resettled persons still hold international protection in Spain (Refugee status / Beneficiary of subsidiary protection). Hence, the beneficiaries of the ACV Program have a residence and work permit in Spain. The project is implemented in 5 different big to medium-sized municipalities spread across the Valencian Community autonomous region with the objective of fully integrating its beneficiaries in the corresponding local communities. **The Third Sector entities to participate in the ACV Program are those that provide housing for the beneficiaries.** For example, the Jesuit Migrant Service owns the houses in which the families live in València and Alaquàs. Reflecting the objectives of Les Cinq Toit in Paris and SällBo in Helsingborg, the ACV Program in Valencia aims to **develop a model for the reception and integration of refugees** in which, through various forms of association, self-organization and collective involvement, society assumes a direct responsibility in the processes of reception and integration of these people, facilitating a rapid local inclusion. In a wider sense, the project aims to contribute to a **positive narrative regarding the situation of refugees at the local level through the participation of local groups**, facilitating a harmonious coexistence in the social context in which refugees have been hosted.

### **The Italian Housing First Co.Bo: multi-targeted and educationally-lead scattered housing solutions**



As for **Housing First Co.Bo.**, a project located in the Bologna Municipality inspired by the typical Housing First model born in the 1980s In North America, housing solutions in shared flats are offered to homeless people together with individually tailored educational support co-designed with the beneficiaries following the capability approach. The mix in the support offered includes a team leader who is a qualified practitioner, a psychiatrist with a supervisory role and a team of three educators (focused on social support and integration), a social worker, and a psychologist. The project's **target** is therefore **heterogeneous, for it includes people with a migration background, but it is more generally addressed to homeless persons, often diagnosed with psychiatric diseases and/or addictions to drugs or alcohol, regardless of their citizenship but provided that they are legally residing in the territory of Bologna.** In particular, Housing First Co. Bo. is aimed at **adults between 45-50 and 55-60 years of age.** Currently it hosts 73 beneficiaries, of which 19 are refugees or immigrants. Beneficiaries not only live in conditions of severe marginalization, but they are very often people who have experienced the chronicisation of the homeless status, for they have either been living in the streets or used the city's dormitories for at least two years. Making housing available is what Housing First projects do before anything else, which is why it is called "Housing First". As mentioned by a unit coordinator, the housing project's main objective consists of **"housing as an instrument and not as the end point of a planning process"** [OSTA 1, Housing First, Bologna].

| PROJECT'S NAME                                 | TEMPORALITY                                                      | INDIVIDUAL/SHARED                                        | SCATTERED HOUSING |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| SällBo -Helsingborg                            | Refugees have temporary contracts                                | Shared co-housing solutions                              |                   |
| Les Cinq Toits - Paris                         | Temporary housing project                                        | Shared co-housing solutions                              |                   |
| UTUD - Rennes                                  | Three-year occupancy agreement                                   | Shared co-housing solutions                              | ✓                 |
| Agermanament Comunitari Valencià (ACV) - Spain | Housing solutions lasting for the project's duration (24 months) | Individual Housing solutions (one house for each family) | ✓                 |
| Housing First Co. Bo. – Italy                  | No-time limit to housing solution offered                        | Both                                                     | ✓                 |

**Table n. 3 – Structure and objectives overview of the selected cases**



### 3.3 Project based or scattered housing projects: from urban centrality to regional dissemination

The projects we analysed are articulated alongside **two main approaches to the provision of housing: on the one hand, spatially dispersed/scattered projects** offer housing solutions catered from the private real estate market essentially through rental intermediation models and, **on the other hand, spatially “projects-based housing”** resting on the implementing actors’ management of real estate assets that are usually owned by institutional actors.

**SällBo and Le Cinq Toits are characterized by the use of a single collective property, within which different apartments are provided.** SällBo participates in the municipal social housing program. Indeed, it is owned and managed by the municipality through its public housing company, Helsingborgshem. Accordingly, refugees and migrants are housed among other groups of vulnerable subjects. Instead, Les Cinq Toits is materially supported by the Paris city hall and Paris Habitat (providers of the building), and financially supported by the state, regional authorities, foundations and by the contributions of partner organisations. In 2018, the Paris central city hall issued a mandate to implementing actors coming from the world of associations and the private social sector (Plateau Urbain and Aurore) to create a temporary housing facility within a vacant building.

**SällBo’s apartments consist of one building comprising 51 apartments.** However, only 10 apartments are dedicated to housing for refugees (20%). Most of the apartments (31 out of 51) are rented to elderly (60%). Whilst the remaining 10 apartments are rented to Swedish born youths between 18-25 years old (20%). These apartments have been recently renovated and usually consist of two rooms. Each apartment has a small kitchen with all the necessary equipment, a sitting room united with kitchen, a separate bedroom, and a bathroom with a shower. All tenants also have access to approximately 580 square meters of common areas that include common kitchens on each of the three floors, large living rooms, exercise rooms, scrapbook and sewing studios, a workshop, games room and a library. There are also common laundry rooms and cleaning rooms on each floor. A “guest room” is also available, that the tenants may book in advance if they have visitors who can stay for maximum a week at a time. The facility has a large common patio on the ground floor – that can be used for outdoor gatherings and celebrations - and a well-trimmed garden that the tenants take care of themselves. SällBo is in a quiet neighbourhood with 3-4 story houses from the 1960s-1970s with plenty of green spaces and lawns between the buildings. It is surrounded by apartment buildings, some of which are for rent while others are privately owned apartments. There are no cafés or restaurants in the immediate neighbourhood, no small shops or other retail activities, therefore no areas for social encounters. There is a grocery store within 200-300 meters as well as public transport routes. SällBo is well connected to the public transportation system. It takes only 10 minutes by bus or 5 minutes by car to reach the city center. Except housing SällBo does not provide any additional integration services to the tenants. This task lays within the responsibility of Social Administration in the municipality of Helsingborg. SällBo and Helsingborgshem at large work

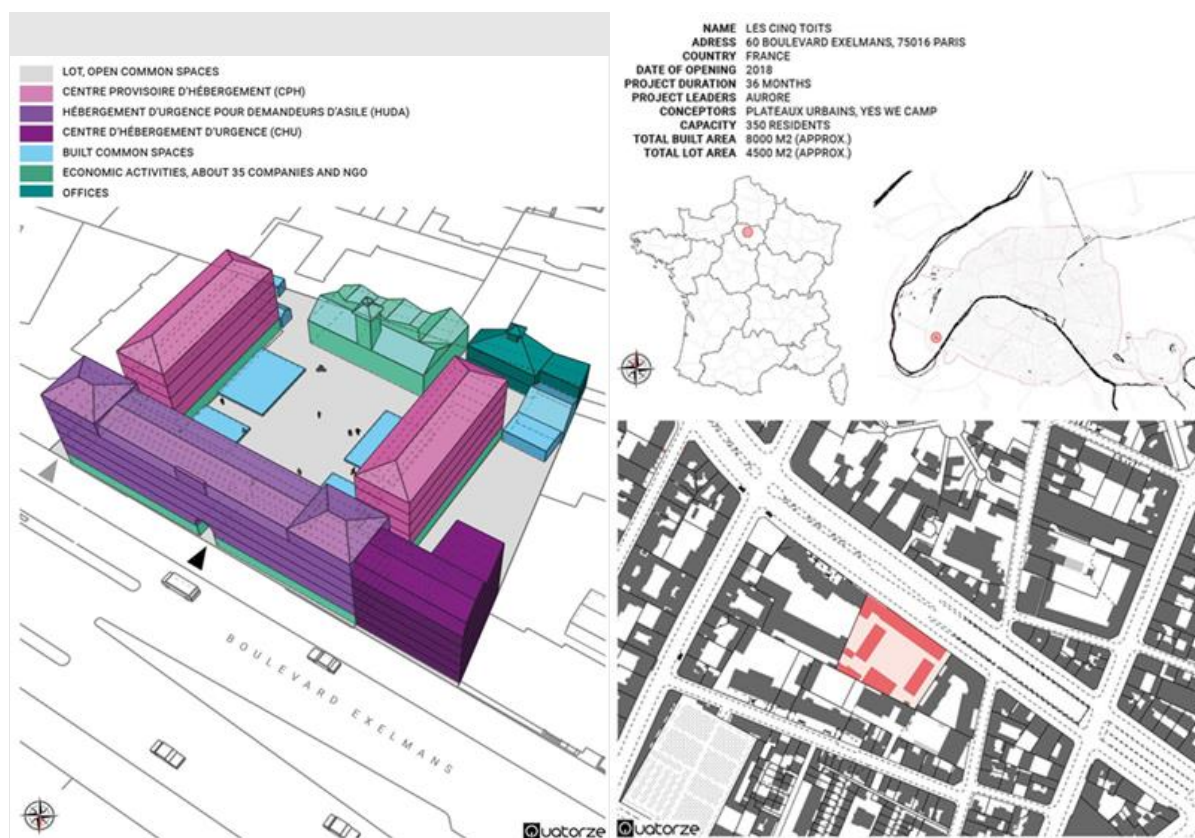


in close contact with different administrations and departments in the city but do not provide any social services.



**Figure n. 1- View from the street entrance of SällBo's apartments.**  
**Source: Stepanova and Bousiou (2021), p. 16**

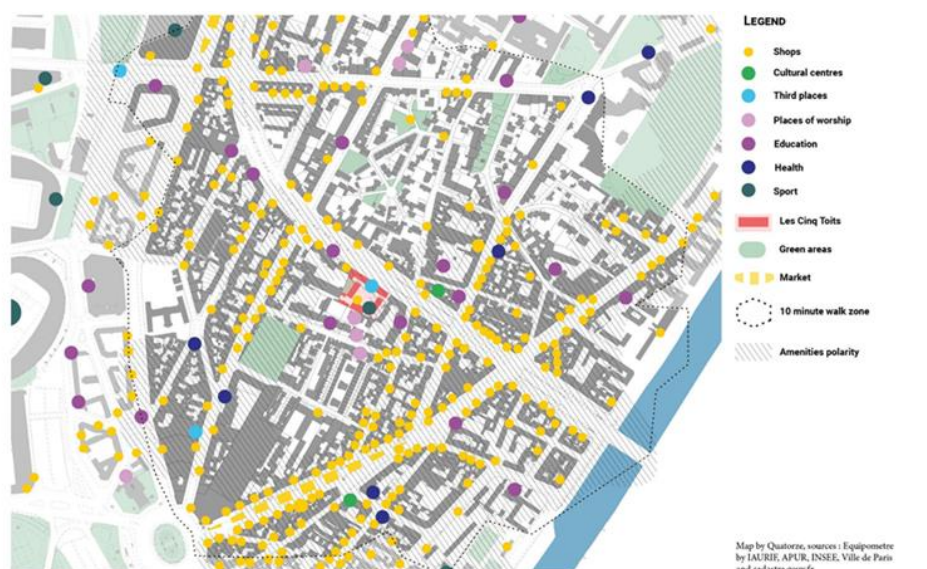
Regarding **Le Cinq Toits**, the former police barracks is made up of four large buildings (housing), in the middle of which the courtyard is situated. Beneficiaries are hosted in shared apartments with 5 to 9 other residents. Each apartment is made of a collective kitchen, a collective bathroom, and 3 to 5 twin rooms, each shared by 2 residents. The facilities also accommodate a supportive restaurant (le RECHO), a community garden, terraces, a cycling centre, and a shared workshop.



**Figure n.2 - Mixing functionalities within The Cinq Toits.**

**Source: Dominguez N., Mercier-Suissa C., Hamdani S., Huelvan M., Loncle P., Maunaye E., Accoroni D., Cascant E., Dixon L., Mugel E., Pinchon P., Ottaviano N. (2021), p. 13**

Within a 10-minute walk from the project's building, a number of diverse activities and services are offered and close access to public transport enables its inhabitants to reach additional basic services. Although there are many stores around Les Cinq Toits (yellow dots on the map), the building occupies an emptier patch with the equipment polarity area as defined by the IAURIF and APUR, two institutions of urban studies dedicated to the Region and Paris itself. The activities that the project offers may potentially fill in a gap.



**Figure n.3 – Urban centrality of “Le Cinq Toits” project.**

**Source: Dominguez et al. (2021), p. 18**

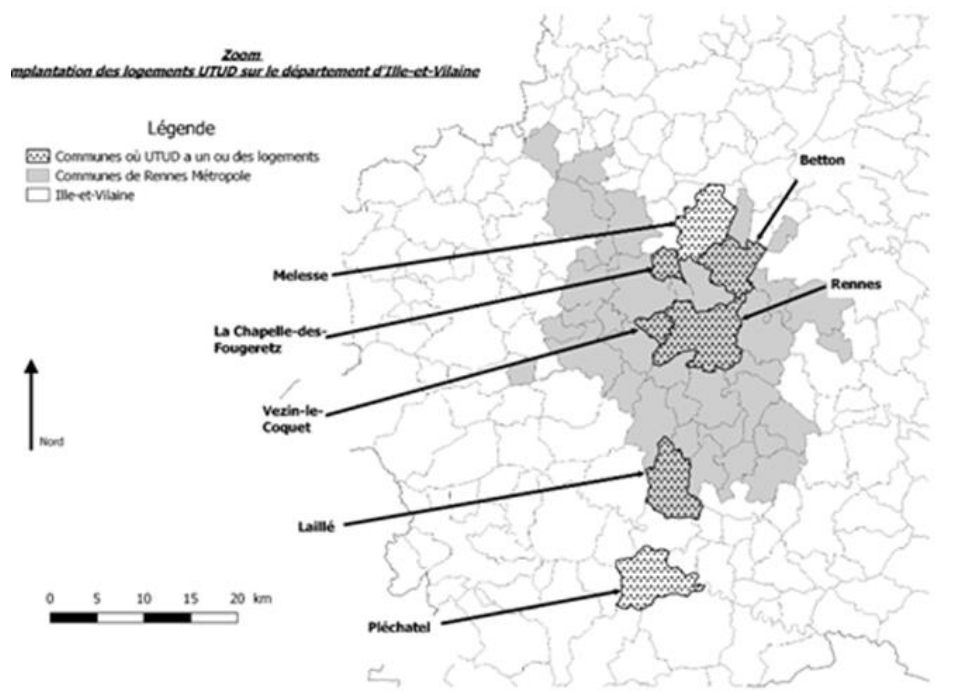
With the aim to become a cultural mixed space, the Cinq Toits fills in a noticeable gap:

The 16th district is quite divided. How I felt about it, it's quite astonishing, is that, in terms of services, yes, it's a good district, it's not a popular district. Despite everything, in terms of cultural offer, of places that are a bit alternative, a bit nice, that you find a lot in the north-east of Paris, there's nothing here, in any case, for young people, it's not active, it's dead. It's residential here (Plateau urbain, Le cinq Toits, Paris).

Creating a project of this kind in an area that is full of services but lacks a cultural offer, can be regarded as an asset not only for the people hosted by the project but for the neighbourhood and the community as a whole.

**Both Housing First Co. Bo and UTUD projects deliver housing solutions in different and scattered locations in the city (unlike Les Cinq Toits and SällBo that are project based in a single area).** Indeed, they emphasize housing that is spread across ordinary neighbourhoods as the means through which beneficiaries can better and more autonomously achieve social integration.

As of 2020, **UTUD** comprises 8 houses in Rennes in and outside the Rennes metropolitan area. The houses are often located in neighbourhoods where mainly middle or upper social classes live and are usually occupied by about ten people. A room is assigned to each family. The project's beneficiaries share common areas: the kitchen, the living room, the garden. The houses are furnished thanks to the recovery of furniture and utensils, and the people are fed and clothed thanks to donations organised by charities such as the Restos du Cœur or Secours populaire.



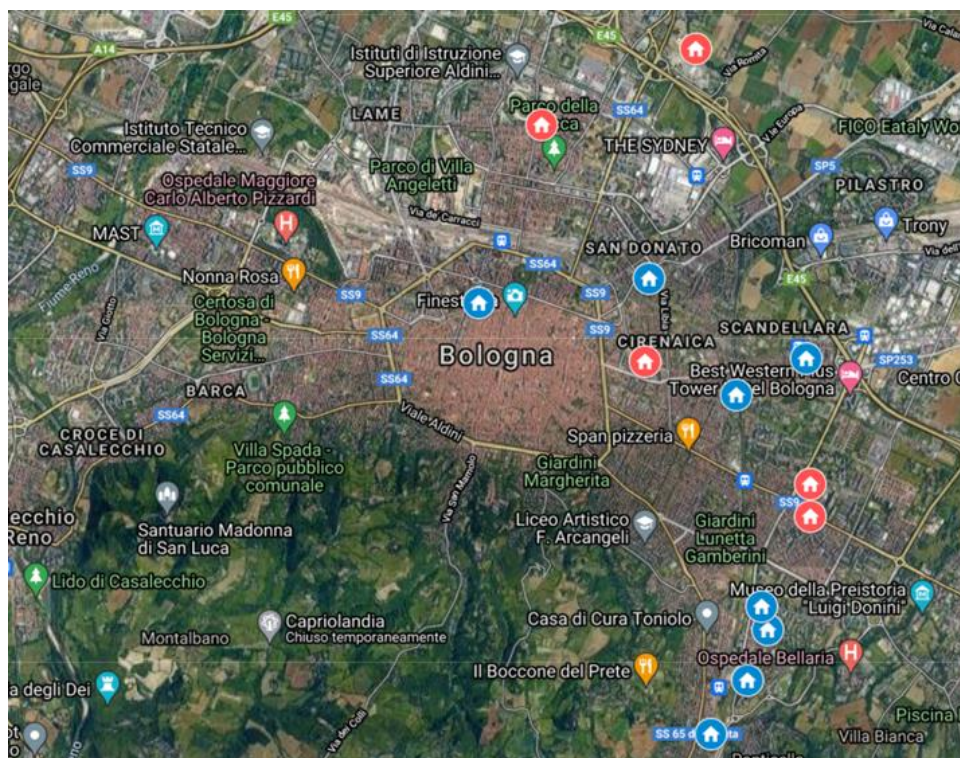
**Figure n. 4 – Decentralized locations in the Rennes area.**

Source: Loncle et al. (2021), p. 19.

**Housing First Co.Bo.** project is mainly sustained by funding from the Bologna's Municipality Company for services to persons allocated to it by relying on PON Metro funds (170 euros to each participant who lives in a single room)<sup>2</sup>. Also, **the project benefits from apartments made available by the City of Bologna**. Specifically, the project it is made up of 35 apartments, 7 are provided by the City of Bologna while 28 are rented by Piazza Grande, mainly through private owners, which in turn allocates them to the beneficiaries through a signed contract (Bolognesi et al., 2021). Piazza Grande is the social cooperative that won the tender to manage Housing First Co.Bo. Beneficiaries contribute to rent by paying a symbolic contribution to the project's expenses. The apartments are occupied by 2/3/4 people usually with a single room for each beneficiary. Users share the common areas: the kitchen, the living room, the garden or the balcony.

<sup>2</sup> The Multi-fund National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020 (PON METRO) implements one part of the initiatives conceived in the framework of European Urban Agenda for cohesion policies, born with the aim of strengthening the role of the big cities and their territories. The program, dedicated to sustainable urban development, aims to improve the quality of services and to promote social inclusion in 14 metropolitan areas (Turin, Genoa, Milan, Bologna, Venice, Florence, Rome, Bari, Naples, Reggio Calabria, Cagliari, Catania, Messina and Palermo). The interventions are proposed by the same cities within an overall strategic framework and on the basis of a series of criteria defined by the National programming Authority. Therefore, Housing First Co.Bo. was preliminary submitted to the evaluation criteria set by the authorities managing the implementation of PON Metro at the national, regional, and metropolitan levels.





**Figure n. 5- Decentralized locations in the Bologna area.**

**Source: Cuconato et al. (2021), p. 31**

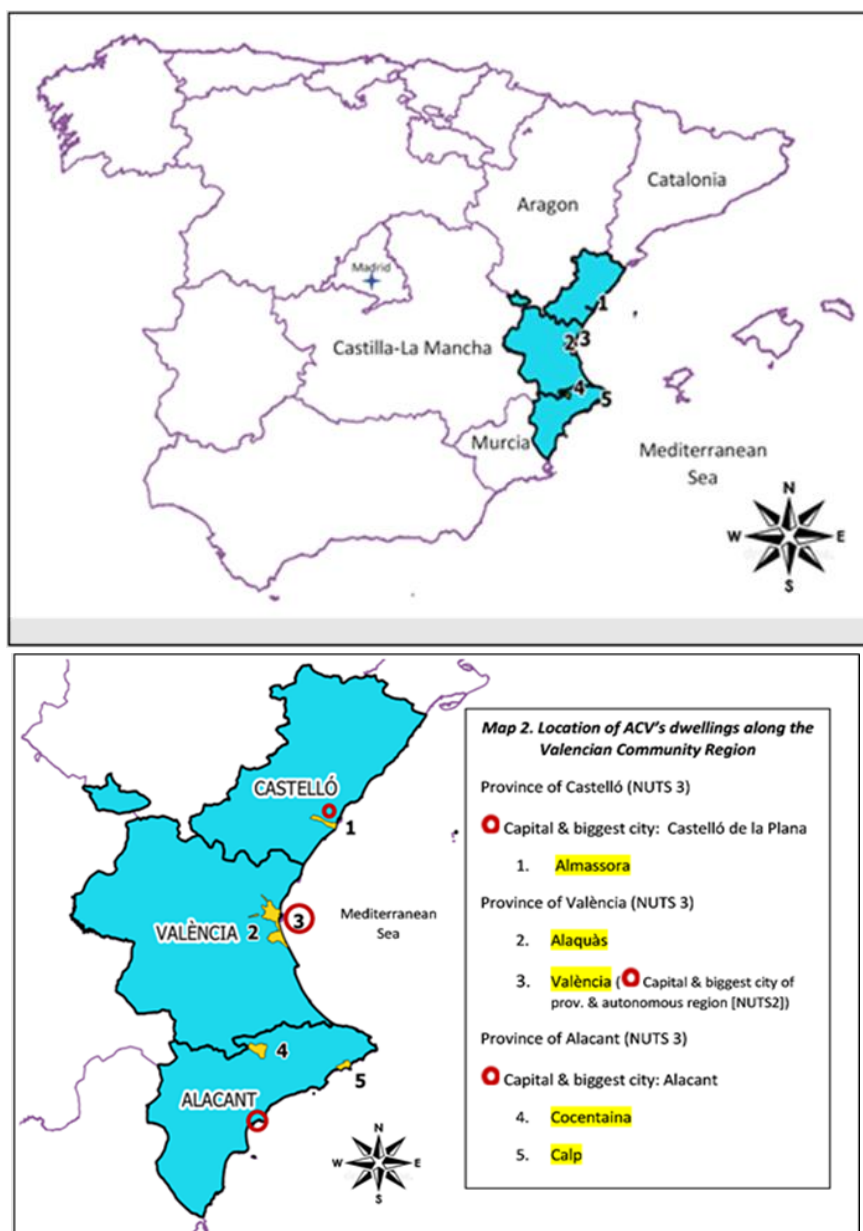
Housing First Co. Bo. emphasises the role of housing by initiating a process in which the homeless and other vulnerable beneficiaries like immigrants, who often have complex needs, are able to live in a community and feel part of the society, thus avoiding urban and social segregation. As explained by the project coordinator:

What we are trying to avoid is creating ghetto neighbourhoods, as there may be in other areas with a high density and presence of homeless people only. It is one of HF's key points to find flats that are part of a territorial context that is as heterogeneous as possible, precisely to avoid connotations or ghetto neighbourhoods. The homeless already continue to frequent the same social circuits, i.e., soup kitchens, Caritas, food and clothing collections. So even to unite all the people in a single neighbourhood or building, or in places very close to each other, would further increase the condition of the homeless (OSTA 1, Housing First, Bologna).

Another interesting **example of scattered housing** is the **Spanish case, but this time at regional level**.

**The Agermanament Comunitari Valencià** project hosts 5 refugee families (23 people). A family made up of 5 beneficiaries is housed in the València municipality, while three other families of 5 live in the municipalities of Alagàs, Almassora, and Calp respectively. Lastly, a family of 4 is housed in

the municipality of Cocentaina. The social entities participating in the program provide and assign the apartments according to the characteristics of each family, who utilize a portion of the monthly allowance given to them by the project to contribute to the rent expenses.



**Figure n. 6 – Location of ACV's dwellings along the Valencian Community Region**  
 Source: Simó-Noguera et al. (2021), p. 28.

In particular, the diversification between municipalities concerns their socio-economic contextualisation, as well as their upper political-administrative levels. In this case, the concept of urban network is intended as social and political actors involved in the project.

As we can note, the **housing location within an urban centre or scattered at local/regional level produces different effects on refugees' integration**. On the one hand, when the location of the housing project for refugees is within existing neighbourhoods, it could have positive implications in terms of social learning and building competency for social integration. Les Cinq Toits is a clear example of that, as it strives to open the heart of the city (Paris) to marginality. **On the other hand, the "project-based housing" could determine factors as ghettoization**, as argued by Housing First Co. Bo and UTUD.

#### 4. Governance regimes of refugees' integration through housing

The transformation of the States' role in increasingly complex societies have made the category of public administration currently unfit to comprehensively assess contemporary public management strategies, as well as coordination and networking practices, economic development mechanisms, international institutions, and corporate actors (Rhodes, 1997; Kooiman, 2003; Pierre, 2000). As a result, the rational model of public policies<sup>3</sup> suggested by Hill (1997) is no longer a viable tool of analysis to account for the role and autonomy of the increasing number of actors that nowadays affect the production of public policies through both social work and services to the person. Contemporary scholarships thus study the production of these policies as well as the provision of these services in terms of governance rather than public administration.

Addressing the governance of specific social processes requires an approach that goes from identifying the organizational strategy of such processes (i.e., the factors that orient and facilitate their management by defining their goals) to accounting for the roles that need to be covered to achieve these processes' aims, as well as the distribution of responsibility among the involved actors and the instruments to be used to make these processes work. Governance is indeed to be intended as **what should be done** to manage a given process - being it a social, political, or economic process - **and how it should be done** (Paim and Flexa, 2011).

Our research has shown that, for all the cases we have examined, processes aimed at fostering refugees' social inclusion through housing requires the emergence of peculiar forms of governance concerning both the realms of social works and services to the persons. Moreover, this has involved a plurality of institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, as well as actors coming from both the private and the social-private sector, each country's civil society and/or individual citizens. If social works "engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhancing wellbeing"

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<sup>3</sup> The rational model is articulated into a series of steps initiated and managed within the realm of state public administration: 1. identification of a problem; 2. political resolution to act to find a solution to the problem; 3. the definition of an action programme to solve this problem accompanied by the identification of objectives, resources, legislative means as well as the administrative actors in charge of implementing the programme; 4. Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the programme.



(International Federation of Social Workers, 2014), services to the persons constitute the concrete channels and actions through which social workers operate while pursuing the collective wellbeing. Our comparative reflection showed **several governance styles in addressing immigrant integration through housing both as a process and as a service to the persons** in Italy, Spain, Sweden, and France, which will be addressed as follows.

#### 4.1 Multilevel and vertical governance approaches

The cases we examined showed that, if intended as processes, both the phenomena of refugees' integration and social housing are currently the object of **multilevel governance** (Schakel, Hooghe, Marks, 2014). **States remain the ultimate arbiters of the allocation of decision-making rights** for the planning and implementation of such initiatives, and thus maintain essentially vertical governance regimes. However, **actual governance competences have been decentralized to subnational governments**, namely regional and, especially, municipal ones. These are the actors that make binding and legitimate decisions in the field of social care services.

According to the most recent scholarships, depending on whether social care policies are initiated and controlled by the state or by the society through self-governance and internal coordination, we will talk of forms of **vertical** or **horizontal governance** respectively (Torfing, Guy Peters, Pierre, Sørensen, 2012). And yet, most of the cases we analyzed do not constitute "pure" examples of neither vertical nor horizontal governance. Rather, they are situated at different points of a continuum whose opposite ends are vertical and horizontal forms of governance (see image n. 1). Overall, **institutional actors ultimately maintain control over most of the housing projects observed**, except for UTUD, as they tend to define the societal goals through which the implementing actors (non-profit, private, cooperatives, etc...) develop their organizational strategies. Moreover, either the EU, state-level or local level institutional actors remain the main sources of funding. In most cases, national and/or international, but also municipal institutions are also responsible for beneficiaries' referral to the projects' manager(s). Finally, even those projects' that had initially started as independent and sometimes even opposed to institutional stakeholders (see the case of UTUD) eventually had to come to terms with seeking the latter's legal recognition to continue functioning in the medium term.

All these considered, most of the examined cases must be intended as more consistent with forms of **partnership-based vertical governance** (Enjolras, 2010: 20). Indeed, they respond to social needs identified by institutional actors - either autonomously or because of participatory processes involving the civil society - and are implemented by non-institutional networked organizations consistently with partnership agreements initiated by the very institutional actors that also allocate funding or physical resources to the project. Pure horizontal governance of services to the person,

instead, would have required an absolute self-organization of housing projects and their complete independence from institutionally established performance criteria for assessing and guaranteeing the economic sustainability of the services provided. **In cases of horizontal governance, indeed, forms of networked cooperation shall be present**, which are supposed to be based on an ethic of coordination inspired by principles of reciprocity and trust among the actors participating to it (Enjolras, 2010: 23). In these cases, the housing project should be the result of the relations existing among the actors participating in the network, rather than of an action designed at the institutional level and implemented by networked actors of the civil society and/or the economic sector according to partnership-agreements and/or contracts for the provision of certain services. In this latter case, in fact, we are still in the realm of vertical governance, albeit **varying degrees of horizontal management at the level of the single projects implemented can internally exist**. This does not mean the State, or its delocalized institutions must be excluded from the networks horizontally governing the self-organized provision of services to the person. However, to achieve pure horizontal governance these processes should have been the result of primarily citizens' networked initiatives. Institutions should have only intervened for facilitating the creation and enhanced coordination of the network, allowing for the mobilization of innovative expertise and initiatives, and generating synergies at the territorial level. From this standpoint, also those projects born from co-design activity we observed, such as it is the case for *Housing First Co.Bo.*, the Agermanament Comunitari Valencià and Les Cinq Toits, do not account for a purely horizontal governance of the processes of social inclusion through housing. Moreover, even a housing project initially born from an informal collective's squatting experience, such as UTUD in Rennes, had to eventually adjust to signing formal agreements with property developers or the municipality to occupy the houses concerned for a period of three years, until they will be demolished.

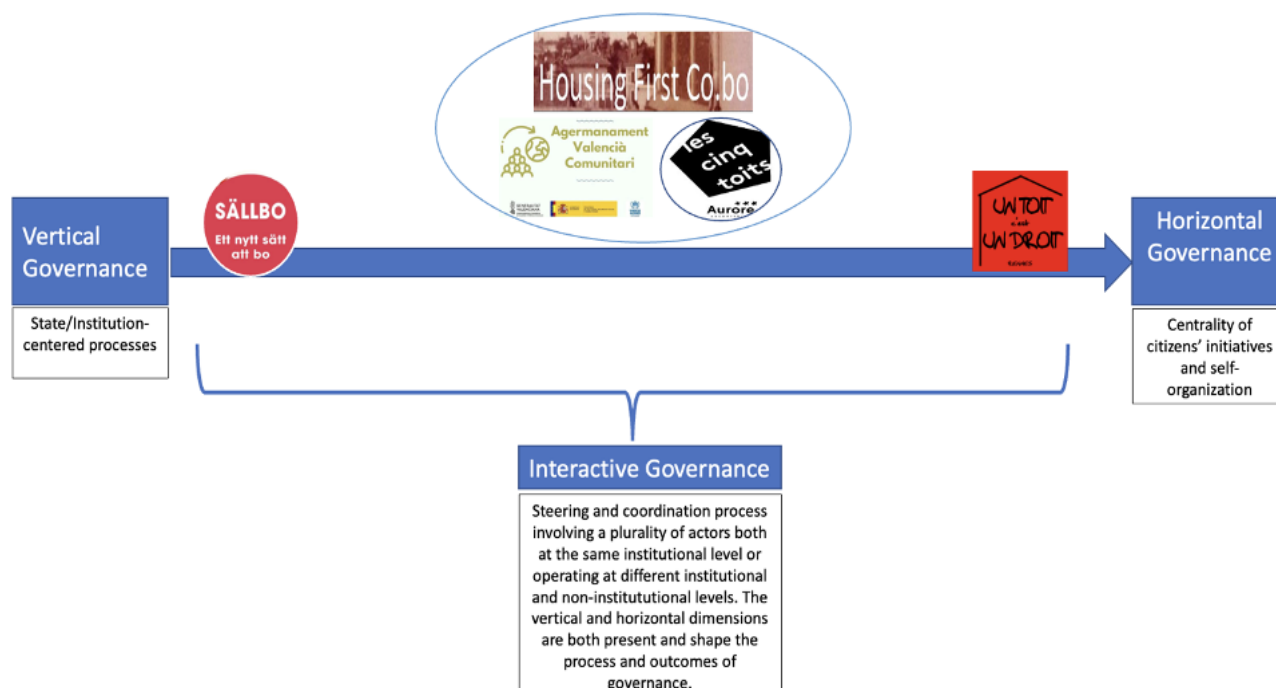


Image n. 1 – An interactive governance: between vertical and horizontal approaches

## 4.2 Interactive governance of multi-stakeholder networks

**SällBo case** is the closest one to a purely vertically organized project. Helsingborgshem, the municipal non-profit housing company, owns and runs the project and works in close collaboration with different departments of the municipality, e.g., Social Administration. Helsingborgshem's Steering group is entrusted with addressing issues strategic to the functioning of the project, there is a separate senior manager for specific geographic areas, a manager for social housing, business developers, and a project leader responsible for the realization of SällBo project's idea and for selecting tenants. Managers from different areas of responsibility, SällBo's project manager, and the building's so-called security guard are all involved in the Steering group and thus take part in strategic decision-making while also complying with their more specific work tasks.

Even though SällBo's management is described as "rather decentralized and not strictly formal" (see Stepanova and Bousiou, 2021), it mostly depends on the so-called Leadership group (CEO, CFO/economy top manager, construction manager, business area manager), whose members are all employed by the Municipality's non-profit housing company. Helsingborgshem has entrusted the project manager with conducting personal interviews with SällBo's perspective tenants and decide whether a candidate is suitable for the project, based on his/her interests and personality, the willingness to interact with other social groups, and share common spaces on the premises. **The**

**actions taken to grant the functioning of the housing experience, while favoring refugees' integration** through it, are thus quite **vertically organized**.

The **organization of co-habitation within the co-housing *per se*, on the contrary, leaves much more space for a horizontal governance** of common spaces and activities by the project's beneficiaries. **All activities and rules of conduct are formulated and run by the tenants, and they are voluntary.** The only meetings that are organized by the SällBo staff are monthly meetings where the tenants are required to show up and their attendance is registered. The goal of these meetings is to encourage tenants to share problems, discuss initiatives, come up with suggestions and new ideas. Tenants can also organize a few hobby groups where interactions happen (See Stepanova and Bousiou, 2021).

Notwithstanding its verticalized approach to addressing refugees' integration through housing, the case of SällBo can still be intended as an example of **interactive governance of social processes** (Torfing, Guy Peters, Pierre, Sørensen, 2012). Indeed, it required the activation of steering and coordination processes connecting policies, decided at national level, to the institutional actors implementing concrete actions at the municipal one, also through the intervention of municipally owned non-profit companies such as Helsingborgshem.

However, recent scholarships have shown **that social processes and services to the person provided by the sole public administrations are usually organized around functions** (e.g., work, housing, health etc.) **rather than problems** (e.g., social exclusion) (Desmarchelier, Djellal, Gallouj, 2019). As a result, the integration of these functions is usually weak and limits the institutional capacity of intervening to **provide effective responses to cross-cutting social issues such as refugees integration and their social inclusion** into European societies. **The effectiveness of public policies in this field thus highly depends on the mobilization of a plurality of actors and their cooperation**, which in the case of SällBo is apparently extremely limited, as it only includes Helsingborgshem and the co-housing beneficiaries. And indeed, all the other projects we examined show higher and more complex levels of interactive governance, with **varying degrees of involvement of multi-stakeholder networks** encompassing state institutions, local institutions, the private and social-private sector, individual citizens, or citizens' collectives. All these actors are either concomitantly or alternatively involved as social workers and/or in the provision of social services aimed at refugees' integration through housing. Mostly non-institutional actors took over the implementation of housing services aimed at the beneficiaries' social inclusion, yet with different levels of dependency on processes managed at the level of state, regional, or municipal institutions. If state institutions still control considerable power and resources, which are functional to the projects' implementation, the diverse forms of vertical and partnership-based governance put in place constitute examples of the many possible declinations of interactive governance.

In the **case of "Agermanament Comunitari Valencià"**, the Community Sponsorship pilot experience was implemented by a network of organizations comprising both institutional and non-institutional actors such as the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (Spanish Government); the Vice Presidency and Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies (Valencia Government); UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees); Jesuit Service to Migrants Spain (JSMS) for the municipalities of València and Alaquàs; and Diocesan Caritas of Orihuela-Alacant in the municipality of Calp, Diocesan Caritas of Segorbe-Castelló in the municipality of Almassora and Diocesan Caritas of València in the municipality of Cocentaina. The **tasks, coordination, and participation of the stakeholders involved are regulated by an agreement** signed by all parties, which determines the functions of each of them in the implementation of the projects' three phases: 1. initial reception, 2. deployment of the pilot experience and 3. autonomy.

As we can read in the Spanish country report on case analysis, the Government of Spain participates in this pilot experience through the State Secretariat for Migration of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration as well as the former's Directorate-General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Assistance. The regional Vice-presidency and Ministry of Equality and Inclusive Policies of the Generalitat Valenciana (Valencian Government) participates through its Directorate-General for Equality within Diversity. This case's peculiarity concerns the involvement of a humanitarian international organization, i.e., UNHCR, entrusted with selecting the beneficiaries eligible for relocation to Spain, and thus supporting the development of this pilot project as part of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI).

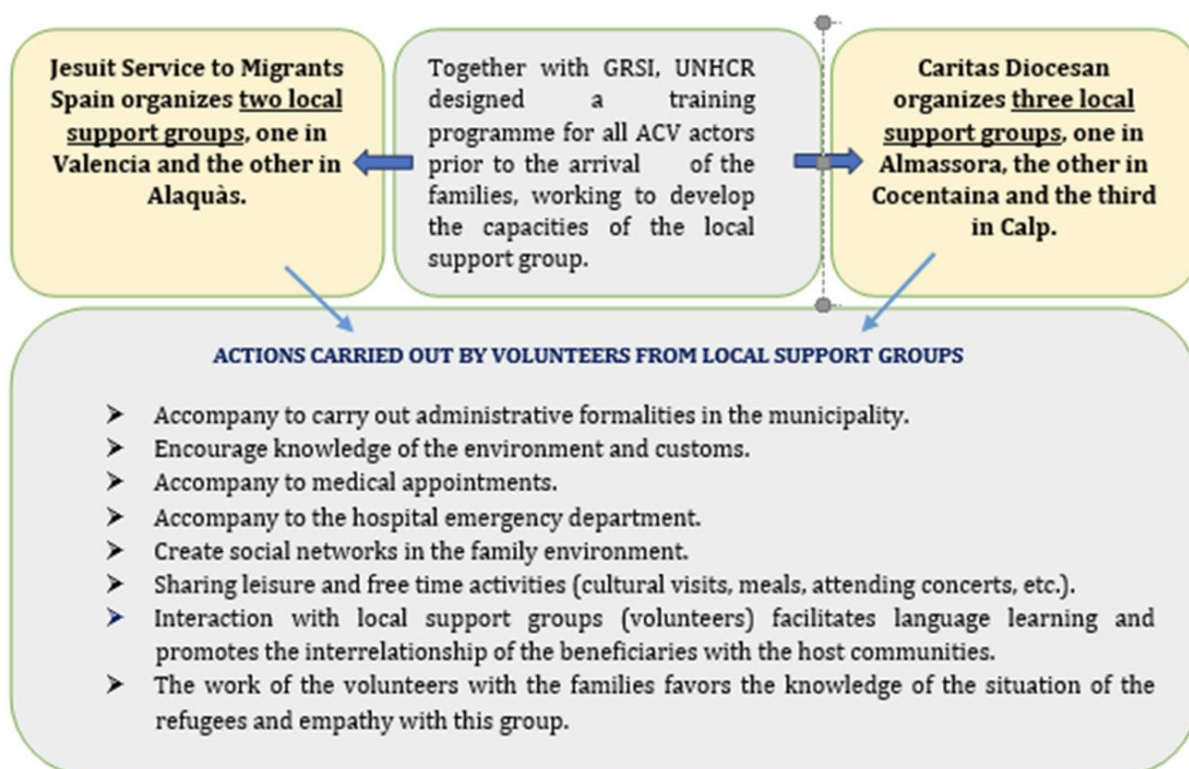
The Valencian Jesuit Migrant Service Spain, Diocesan Caritas of Orihuela-Alacant, Diocesan Caritas of Segorbe-Castelló and Diocesan Caritas of València were the promoters of the initiative and act as implementing organizations. Municipalities, local support groups and refugees themselves also participate in the project's functioning. However, they are not part of the implementing agreement that regulates it. **Beneficiaries enter the project according to a referral mechanism managed by UNHCR in collaboration with the national and local institutional actors involved in the process.** The social entities participating in the program are responsible for providing beneficiaries with a home according to the characteristics of each of the families. Indeed, these families receive a monthly aid of €1,200 during the program, which they are required to autonomously manage taking into consideration that they shall also be able to pay a monthly contribution far below market prices for renting the home in which they reside.

## Regional Level – Valencian Community

**Vice-Presidency and Department of Equality and Inclusive Policies of the Generalitat Valenciana**

- ✓ **Identifies social entities** that will form the local support groups.

## Local Level – 5 Local Community Sponsorship Groups



**Image n. 2 – Multi-stakeholder network implementing ACV programme**

Source : Simó-Noguera et al. 2021, p. 59

Beneficiaries of international protection who have been welcomed in a Valencian municipality within the framework of this pilot experience are “invited to consider themselves as protagonists of their adaptation to the local reality” (Simó-Noguera et al. 2021, p. 53). This is enabled through the bottom-up usual follow-up of the beneficiaries’ concerns and queries and their smooth communication with their local NGO acquaintances. Thus, their needs and demands are either explicitly manifested by the beneficiaries themselves or identified by the local support group members or the local NGO coordinators. If needed in terms of attribution, those demands might be funnelled up to the incumbent authorities of the local, regional or national administration



(depending on the issue, it may or may not go first through the decision-making formal structure of the project).

Volunteers are described as key actors to the project's functioning, as they proved instrumental in the process of integrating the beneficiaries in the labour market and the host community. Indeed, their personal social networks were also mobilized to raise awareness of the situation of refugees among the host communities and the municipalities where they live. The volunteers and social entities implementing the project inform them of their rights and obligations, as well as of the effort that will be required from them to achieve the **objectives of adaptation and autonomy**. Moreover, their participation in decision-making processes by consensus is encouraged, as well as their participation in the meetings that may be held to share their experience.

Beneficiaries are thus supposed to participate in the adoption of important decisions on issues that directly affect them. The interviews confirmed that some beneficiaries consider themselves as the ones who make the decisions about their integration path (Simó-Noguera et al. 2021, p. 53). The social entities that manage the ACV program, together with the volunteers of the local support groups, follow-up on beneficiaries' requests to select cultural activities, training and language courses, schools, etc that fit their needs the most.

Other than guiding the implementation of intermediation services for renting houses in the real estate market, **horizontal approaches are mostly adopted in selecting corollary activities that shall serve beneficiaries' integration in the host societies**. Some degree of horizontality is also achieved by the project thanks to the role played by **volunteers in acting as a bridge between the beneficiaries and the host community**.

The experience of the case study in Bologna, **Housing First Co.Bo.**, tells us the story of an initiative that started autonomously and was gradually institutionalized by municipal authorities through the exercise of interactive governance. Indeed, the **origins of the project's implementation date back to 2012, when "Piazza Grande" social cooperative launched an independent, self-managed, and self-funded housing project for both national and non-national homeless persons**, which was then called "Tutti a casa" (i.e., "All at home"). Subsequently, the initiative **evolved into a "program, not just a project"** (Project coordinator, Housing First, Bologna) **based on co-design principles and owned by the Municipality of Bologna. The number of actors involved in the network that contributes to the management and operations of Housing First Co.Bo. is remarkably higher compared to other projects such as SällBo and the Agermanement Comunitarià Valencià**. Indeed, other than receiving funding from a multiplicity of EU, national and municipal sources at the institutional level, Housing First Co. Bo. must scout for perspective flats to rent in the private market. Therefore, it should dialogue with property owners, real estate agencies, and municipal services. Since, consistently with the capability approach, housing is considered as the first step of an individualized educational program **aimed at clients' autonomy and social inclusion**, the

multidisciplinary équipe of Housing First Co.Bo. opted for the adoption of an **Intensive Case Management approach** (ICM). Similarly, to other forms of “high intensity management”, the ICM approach requires the project’s multidisciplinary team to **facilitate connections between the project’s beneficiaries and other services available at the municipal level**: e.g., those dealing with health, training and education, social animation, and recreational activities, etc. (Cuconato et al. 2021, p. 33).

Housing First Co.Bo. can thus be understood as a networked organization (Kenis & Raab, 2020), which at the internal level involves three blocks of actors linked through hierarchical ties (Ahuja et al., 2012): 1. the municipality – which promotes the project and facilitates its sponsorship through PON Metro funds, while also serving as a referral system for beneficiaries who can enter the program; 2. Bologna’s ASP, which oversees the management of the project; 3. the “L’Arcolaio” consortium of cooperatives – whose projects on employment, housing, and psychology services are mobilized by Housing First Co.Bo.’s multidisciplinary team in case the beneficiaries need or wish to access them.

These networked organizations implement forms of task division and information sharing (Kenis & Raab, 2020) by relying on: shared communication tools, such as a document (called “scheda d’Angella”) which is filled together by Housing First Co. Bo.’s educators, social assistants of the municipality or educators in accommodation/reception structures dealing with the beneficiaries. This tool reconstructs the history of the immigrant – and other beneficiaries as well - addresses his/her skills, motivations, achievements, or problems. It is therefore a diagnostic tool which is co-designed with the beneficiaries, Housing First Co. Bo., and the other actors involved in the process. The project also provides for regular checkpoints (1) within the Housing First Co. Bo.’s team (équipe meetings, taking place every week); (2) with ASP’s service for housing (équipe meetings, taking place every two weeks; and bi-monthly reports); (3) with the municipality (occasional) to provide updates about the program.

The project also has a wide **external network** that comprises actors outside the hierarchical organizational structure described above, and it is developed and maintained by Housing First Co. Bo. and its employees. There are several instances through which Housing First Co. Bo. resorts to consultancies for specialistic advice in the domain of migration (e.g., the “Avvocato di strada” association or “Street Lawyer Association” in Italian). Moreover, **networks involving locally distributed services allow beneficiaries to establish links to the neighbourhood**, which are important for integration because “the person changes his/her status from homeless to citizen, therefore as a person with a place and ties to the territory” (Project coordinator, Housing First, Bologna). Finally, the Catholic church functions as a catalyzer of people in need and maintains a relationship with Housing First Co. Bo., sometimes offering aggregation spaces.

**LES CINQ TOITS**

**GOUVERNANCE**

- Internal partners
- Clock Council\*\*
- \* La Concorde Solidaire, Le RECHO, Egems...
- \*\* Artists, craftsmen, social workers, neighbors, NGOs, residents

**INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS**

- Central City Hall
- OFIL, Prefecture, Samu Social

**COORDINATORS**

- Plateau Urbain
- Aurore
- Yes We Camp

**Residents**

**Mediation team**

**Social workers**

**Diversity Teams\***

- \* Social workers, interns, civilian workers, volunteers, citizens

**External Partners\***

- \* Lawyers, medics, psychologists...

**LEGEND**

- Professional actors mandated by the government
- Professional actors without official mandate (social workers)
- Teams and groups created within Les Cinq Toits
- Professional actors engaging in civil actions (professional activism)

**Source : Dominguez et al. 2021, p. 26**

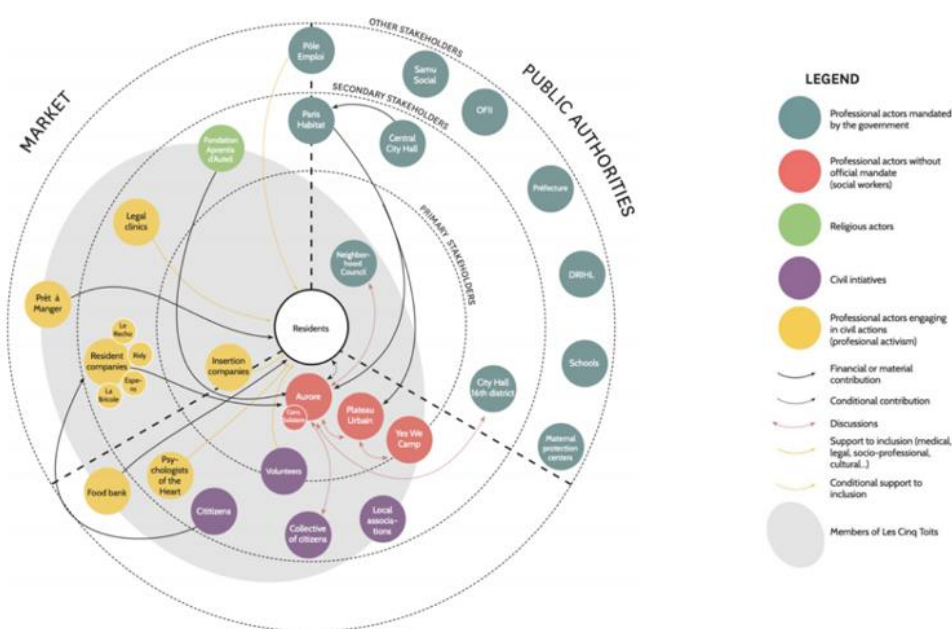
The two associations Plateau Urbain and Yes We Camp are the project coordinators together with *Aurore* and oversee the project management. Aurore prepared a code of conduct that must be signed by all residents at their entry into the facilities as it is intended as the main tool to rule the

daily life at Les Cinq Toits. Besides respecting the code of conduct in case they earn at least the equivalent of a full Active Solidarity Income (RSA), residents are asked to actively participate to the project sustainability by paying a 10% of their monthly income. Plateau Urbain, on the other hand, called for applications to offer workshops in the courtyard of the old barracks to dozens of artists, craftsmen, social entrepreneurs, and associative actors to develop their activities in the premises of Les Cinq Toits. The approximately 40 selected ones currently share the project's spaces with the housing project's beneficiaries, except for the spaces of the buildings devoted to housing *per se*, which are instead inaccessible to all unauthorized persons and/or external visitors.

In January 2019, the "Clock Council" was created, to which the project governance is now entrusted. This organism oversees a **horizontal governance of the spaces** where the project is implemented. It is made of artisans, artists, social entrepreneurs, migrants, and associative actors who moved into the premises. It was set up to facilitate meetings, exchanges, and collectively address the subjects specific to the functioning of the place and to living together. It takes place every month and brings together the social teams of the accommodation centres and the occupants of the premises.

As shown by image n. 4, the project internal partners (Le RECHO, la Conciergerie solidaire, Espero, La Bricole, etc.) financially contribute to the project, while also guaranteeing its openness to the municipal and city context. They act for the professional and social inclusion of the residents, together with insertion companies, Prêt à Manger, Psychologist of the Hearth association, several volunteers, collective of citizens and individual citizens, local associations, and religious actors such as the Fondations Apprentis d'Autei.

Cultural activities are organized by the project coordinators to also guarantee the space's openness to the host community, together with the diversity team, which is composed of social workers, interns, civilian services, volunteers, and citizens. More specific meetings and activities are promoted by the project's implementing partners together with external partners such as lawyers' associations, medics, psychologists, etc...These actors also provide residents with social, legal, and medical assistance. Lastly, the Mediation team helps residents solve any eventual tension.



**Image n. 4 – Networks and their impact on the project**  
 Source : Dominguez et al. 2021, p. 31

Les Cinq Toits shows an even larger network of directly and actively involved actors as compared to Housing First Co.Bo. Indeed, it goes beyond the sector of the services to the person offered by municipal authorities and stakeholders belonging to the non-profit sector, and involves private partners to the project, which partake spaces with refugees and asylum seekers benefitting from the emergency housing solutions offered by the project.

The **UTUD** project is the one whose governance shows the **highest levels of horizontality**. Its internal management is strongly participatory as it is governed by the people housed in the apartments either originally occupied or later obtained by the project, and the volunteers of the UTUD association - that sometimes also include some of the persons accommodated by the initiative. UTUD volunteers' original group was composed by an informal collective of citizens, who had started squatting actions in the municipality of Rennes, coalescing in solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers who had been excluded from the State's protection system, and mobilizing against the national as well as EU restrictive regimes of asylum.

The highly horizontal management of the project has been detected both at the level of housing solutions (renovation, maintenance work and management) and at the association level (administrative duties, translation work, and mentoring for the new arrival). UTUD interviewees, indeed, declared their aim is to get all the hosted people involved in the association board of directors (Loncle et al. 2021, section 5.2).

UTUD is part of a network comprising three main stakeholders with different roles:

1. a **network of several types of non-profit organisations** whose aim is to support exiles in the region (associations, collectives, foundations, trade unions and political parties);
2. an **institutional network** between the Rennes City Council, Rennes Métropole and the Brittany Region;
3. a **network made up of stakeholders from the private sector** that is mainly composed by property developers

Regardless of the project's autonomous and to some extent radical history, nowadays **the municipality is the main funder of UTUD** and pays a lump sum subsidy (mainly for water and energy utilities) **within the framework of an agreed partnership**. **Rennes Métropole** also pays a subsidy for energy and provides accommodation for UTUD. **The Region** also provides a house. The **Abbé Pierre Foundation** acted as a bridge, namely by introducing UTUD to developers and mayors. Moreover, it also **finances part of the work undertaken to improve the refugees' housing**. The latter are largely entrusted to the UTUD partner association "**Les Compagnons Bâisseurs**", which **carries out the renovation on the houses together with the future inhabitants and the association's volunteers**. The network of property developers provides for a large part of the houses managed by UTUD, consistently with the provisions of the **comodat agreement** it signs with it.

Notwithstanding the progressive formalization of the relations connecting all the actors whose interest are at stake in the project, the higher level of horizontality of the UTUD project probably is at the root of what the interviewed stakeholders describe as a **remarkably more conflictual interactive governance of refugees' integration through housing compared to the others we encountered in our comparative study**. Indeed, UTUD is part of a network of non-profit organizations that militantly campaign for refugees' rights.

Therefore, a **controversial relation between UTUD and the Rennes City Council persists** as the first claims a mission to "fight politically for housing for all", pressing the state and local authorities to meet with "their legal obligations in terms of reception, housing and accommodation" (Loncle et al. 2021, p. 22). A tension thus comes to the fore due to power struggles confronting local institutions and militant actors of the civil society, and the (forced) collaboration they need to pursue for the UTUD project to continue functioning. Frictions also emerge between UTUD and property developers, who are accused by the former to be only interested in joining the project to change their brand image rather than really providing houses for people in need (Loncle et al. 2021, p. 23).



## 5. Social Integration Through Housing

As already mentioned in the introduction and the state of the art of this Report, pursuing integration's goals implies to reflect concretely on the interplay of those factors emerging at the micro (individual experiences), meso (services and institutions) and macro (migration policies and immigrant flows) levels. To this aim, it should be also highlighted the mutual interconnection of integrative practices and housing policies, which are fundamental in shaping processes of inclusion that are key for the definition of future societies. An important factor impacting on these processes is the spatial distribution of the housing projects, that can be either spread throughout a territory or integrated into the urban area.

In this regard, the juxtaposition of the case studies reveals differences but also interesting similarities that converge towards two dimensions. The specificities of some case studies, as we already stated, suggest the importance of the house as a "springboard" - starting point - for the integration of refugees in the city (e.g., Housing First Co. Bo in Italy). Other cases focus more on the outdoor space's organisation, promoting cohabitation by experimenting with a mix of audiences/stakeholders and activities. However, if analyzed from a wider perspective, all cases seem interested in reconstructing the meanings of an open and more inclusive "community" (with the beneficiary at the centre of the integration process). In this sense, the emerging idea of integration as a broad and concrete possibility to promote substantial and effective equality within increasingly multi-ethnic societies, takes shape through the *promotion of empowerment processes towards autonomy* and *the enhancement of participatory processes*. In the following paragraphs we will assess how these two significant dimensions of integration are pursued in each individual case.

### 5.1 Empowering processes towards autonomy

The innovative intergenerational and inter-ethnic housing solution piloted in the SällBo project allows the beneficiaries to bypass the common social rental policy, according to which social rental housing is distributed to people with a stable income and enough points in the corresponding waiting list. This helps them in the path towards autonomy, avoiding the risk of housing precariousness and even homelessness, which endanger the refugees also in Sweden. Moreover, SällBo claims to promote integration of refugees into the Swedish society through everyday interactions, and social activities. The refugees are encouraged to learn and speak the language as they need it to communicate with their neighbors, to attend and actively participate in monthly meetings, to join, and enjoy hobby-groups. The tenants must agree with certain rules when entering SällBo, for instance they are required to interact and socialize with other tenants at least a couple of hours per month. This experience reinforces relationships and a sense of belonging through the power of relationships, as stated by a member of Sällbo's staff:

We hear that it is one of the older men (in SällBo) who helps one of the younger men (refugees) with his driver's license for example, and to get the opportunity to understand what type of traffic signs we have here in Sweden, or what... how the process of getting a driver's license goes. We also have other examples, and I think that is great. Then it is the language, that you always have those who speak a lot of Swedish in the corridors and at the coffee machine or similar as well as you get the opportunity to sit down to talk to (native speakers), that there is an access to it automatically (Stakeholder, Sällbo, Helsingborg).

This may be done just by frequenting the common spaces, both indoors and outdoors, (one may sit and read, have a coffee etc.) or participating in some common activities, e.g. monthly meetings where all tenants are expected to be present, common celebrations, e.g., Christmas, Midsummer. There are also a few hobby groups organized by the tenants where interactions happen, e.g., a gardening group, a choir and a band, a group for outdoor walking, scrapbooking group etc. In this way, SällBo promotes and stimulates a concept of integration that is based on the psycho-social aspects, connected to social bridging. Living together, using the same spaces, interacting on an everyday basis creates meaningful, long-lasting encounters and conversations, that build a history and, equally importantly, continuity.

In the case of Les Cinq Toits, the beneficiaries' path towards autonomy and integration is more holistic than that of SällBo's, focusing not only on the construction of social bridging **in the project thanks to the mixed population** but also on the creation of social links between the beneficiaries and the outside world thanks to the French language and cultural classes offered, which are also attended by the neighbourhood. Due to the location of the project and the fact that its surrounding area has a strong dotation in public services, notably healthcare and educational facilities, refugees have the opportunity to access them easily. The central city council (Paris City Hall) offers classes for adults willing to take up or go back to studying, to train, etc. These classes are accessible to all residents in Paris, regardless of their nationality.

Through the offer of French classes, innovative teaching techniques have also been developed, aiming at making classes less formal, more interactive, and professionally oriented. Facilitation in accessing the labor market is granted by the presence within the facilities of insertion companies (such as La Conciergerie Solidaire, La Bricole, Espero and Ridy) offering residents opportunities to develop professional competencies.

The goal is for them to feel comfortable there, to rebuild themselves as best they can and to have a place where they can gather. Afterwards, I think it's important that they can still have other ties so that, even for us, when the center closes, it won't be a catastrophe for everyone and that people have points of reference, people have other ties that allow them to become independent (Stakeholder, Les Cinq Toits, Paris).

A special focus is set on activities related to sustainability issues as well as those in which there is a demand for workforce. The empowering process had been set in motion from the very beginning as

the renovation of the building was handled by professionals but in collaboration with volunteers and future residents of the housing projects.

UTUD's approach adopted **accompaniment as the principal tool to encourage autonomy**. Aiming at helping asylum seekers to integrate into the local area despite the difficulties inherent to their status, the association's volunteers support the hosted people in dealing with the administrative procedures regarding their everyday life (obtaining papers, enrolling their children in school, enrolling in university, medical follow-up, joining various associations, etc.). To create social links, UTUD encourages the hosted people to join its Board of directors. However, as stated by the only association employee and former volunteer, this is not an easy task because *"they have a lot of problems, their heads are full of problems, they often have pathologies. There's also the problem of the bank, when you have a meeting... it's complicated when you don't speak French..."*.

Also in the Spanish ACV, volunteers have been key in supporting the integration process of the beneficiaries, who are all Syrian refugees. Building a social bond locally has been limited due to the few countrymen in the Valencian Community. Therefore, the families' closest relationships are with local groups. From the Spanish report, it has emerged that open attitude of the volunteers and their social networks are essential in helping the hosted refugees to create those social bridges that make them closer to local traditions, holidays, food, cultural spaces and emblematic places. These encounters and the community outreach made by the volunteers help to raise awareness of the situation of refugees and sympathise with them, contributing to their integration in the labour market.

The Italian case study Housing First Co. Bo. focuses on promoting people's independent living in their own home as members of the community, while supporting also the improvement of their level of health and well-being. Rather than being compulsorily placed in a care programme or having to complete a pathway to access housing as required by other services for homeless people, the Housing First Co. Bo. beneficiaries may access housing without any particular pre-condition, if they accept to follow certain rules once they are assigned a house. The project provides a mix of direct support and case management thanks to a multidisciplinary team. The support is flexible and thus adaptable to different needs. As stated by one stakeholder of the project:

HF has this very innovative strategy, according to which there is no longer a methodology that proceeds step by step, that means: street, low threshold facility, ordinary facility and then home. Even street services are enabled to make a direct report, allowing a subject's transition straight from the street to housing. This is the original policy of Housing First also in the American model. [...]. However [...] even this is an assessment that is done case by case (Stakeholder, Housing First, Bologna).

The intensity of support can either increase or decrease according to people's requests: it can be either on a day-to-day basis or "on demand" for example in case of issues related to cohabitation and shared management of living spaces. Support lasts as long as it is necessary, as confirmed by the coordinator of the project:

We work on educational intensities. According to the characteristics of the persons and how much autonomy they have, basically, there is an educational intensity. So it could be that there is a person with 6-8 hours, a high intensity, where the relationship with the operator is more intense compared to a person with only two hours. It surely depends on how many times that person needs to meet with the operator (Project coordinator, Housing First, Bologna).

The beneficiaries can reach a level where he/she no longer needs Housing First services and can live with a lighter type of support or completely independently:

Obviously, the perspective is to get to zero intensity, which means that the person no longer needs the social worker and is autonomous and it is understood if he/she stays in Housing First, if he/she finds a flat on his/her own with our support, if he/she enters a social housing (Project Coordinator, Housing First, Bologna).

Moreover, if beneficiaries lose their home, they are not left alone and the Housing First service remains 'engaged', helping them to find a new accommodation.

## 5.2 Participatory process between housing and creation of social bridging

In the five projects under analysis, the link between participation and integration is developed in different ways as we illustrate in the following.

In Rennes, the UTUD housing project is participatory as it is jointly governed by the volunteers and the people housed (who are sometimes volunteers themselves) with regards both to the management of the houses and the daily life of the association.

Aiming at making the residents autonomous, the association wants the houses to be managed internally, with the support of volunteers and residents. House referents (volunteers) have been appointed to govern the daily house activities, to ensure that it is well organised and to point out and solve, where possible, any technical or human problems that may arise.

The houses acquired by UTUD always require renovation work and when it is feasible UTUD tries to execute this work without external experts and through the people who will be housed by the project and the volunteers. Some of the residents participate also in the other missions of the association, taking care of UTUD's administrative duties, welcoming and introducing new arrivals in the environment or helping when translations are needed in case they are bilingual.

The other French project Les Cinq Toits, located in Paris, promotes multicultural and multi-actors coexistence by experimenting with a mix of audiences, spaces and activities. This results in the implementation of **participatory approaches at different stages of the project, involving different**

**actors.** During the starting phase of Les Cinq Toits, beneficiaries actively participated in the transformation of the gendarmerie barracks into an accommodation centre, as well as in the installation of the workshop 'La Bricole' in the facilities. The project also aims to activate the participatory process between residents, citizens and organizations. In fact, the site is open 7 days a week. During the day, visitors are invited to take advantage of the outdoor spaces as if they were a village square to meet, have a picnic, use the outdoor games, play chess, participate in the urban agriculture activities, etc.

Mixing housing and professional spaces constitutes an economic, social, and cultural fabric promoting integration through a participative approach, that finds its formal expression in the Clock Council:

We have a council, which we call the Clock Council, which takes place every month [...] All the partner structures on site, the social teams and the residents are invited. The residents don't come too much, but they are invited. We debate and vote on certain budgets [...]. If we have points to raise, if there are things that concern us, if we want to propose projects, this is a place for everyone to express themselves. Afterwards, there are minutes so if we are not there, we can read them again and we can make remarks (Stakeholder, Les Cinq Toits, Paris).

As emerged in the interview, despite being invited, residents are often absent from these meetings. It can be assumed that the language barrier, the lack of communication and perhaps a lacking confidence with this kind of procedure, a mismatch of goals and interests between the refugees and the wider audience of the project, impact negatively on their participation.

Finally, Les Cinq Toits points to the key role of outdoor spaces and equipment in supporting the participation and inclusion processes of residents. Indeed, the collected data revealed two main advantages of the common outdoor spaces. First, they contribute to improving the sense of well-being at both physical and mental levels (as residents are not confined indoors). When tensions emerge (notably between residents sharing the same apartment, or within families in distress), outdoor spaces offer a healing bubble and contribute to maintaining harmony. Second, they facilitate meetings, dialogues, and joint activities between the different types of public.

In a different way, participation activities and initiatives of the tenants are cornerstones of SällBo's concept of co-living, albeit in a less structured way. In this case the **participatory approach promoted is less focused on external social spaces and oriented towards the operational organisation of living and sharing internal spaces** as confirmed by one of the hosted refugees:

Why I like it here in Sällbo - it is the people. You know, like neighbours where you can go to each other (flats) and have a cup of coffee or have a drink or eat together maybe. That feels at home to me, because right now I have many friends who I go visit and then have a cup of coffee. We sit together in apartments and drink some coffee or maybe we go shopping for some chips and stuff and then we watch movies, you know. That's what feels home to me, not just coming home and being alone all the time. So it's kind of a connection. That's what I feel at home (Refugee, SällBo, Helsenberg).

The participatory process in the Housing First Co.Bo project includes actors that are directly and indirectly involved with distinct roles and functions at several levels. It develops as a practice of collaboration in the management and organization of the service between the different social actors (municipality, social cooperatives, social service, health services, etc.), which entails a taking in charge tailored to each beneficiary, and the construction of a solid relationship between the individual client and the social worker entrusted with his/her case.

Housing First Co. Bo. **acts as a facilitator** between the beneficiaries and the services offered by the local community (health, education, employment, cultural etc.). Such an approach is intended to foster the integration process without substituting the beneficiary him/herself. Indeed, only when beneficiaries express the need to get in touch with a specific service, the Housing First Co.Bo. team activates to make the connection. As a stakeholder told us:

Housing [First] really has different relationships, being also affiliated with Piazza Grande cooperative [...], it has many relationships with associations, committees, [...] at the local level there is a great collaboration also to be able to activate matches that are somewhat personalized and not resources that somewhat enable a procedural insertion but [everything is organized] precisely, depending on your interest, we are active and try to find [the solution] (Stakeholder, Housing First, Bologna).

A participatory approach aims to build meaningful relationships between the tenants sharing the apartments and to encourage through dissemination actions the active involvement of citizens with the project. Housing First Co. Bo. is characterized by a **multi-actor participatory approach**. It means, for example, that the provision of Italian courses, similarly to other types of services and activities that facilitate integration, are not offered directly by Housing First Co.Bo. but the project **acts as a bridge between immigrants and education** services, connecting them whenever the immigrants show an interest in them.

Likewise, in the Spanish case study the participation of beneficiaries is promoted through the **creation of social bridging (see the previous section in this report)**. From the social entities that manage the ACV program, together with the volunteers of the local support groups, different options are selected (according to the requests of the beneficiaries) in relation to: cultural activities, training and language courses, schools, etc. The beneficiaries are the ones who must make the decisions and select the options that best suit their interests (for example, the proximity of their home to the school, the type of training that suits their interests for their insertion in the labour market, etc.).

By comparing the different way of interpreting participation in the five projects, some others basic values emerge underpinning the social practice enacted in them, that can be framed within the theory of Sociocultural Animation and Community Development (Alkire and Deneulin, 2009; Castrignanò, 2012). These values are: social action, culture, education, democracy, culture, empathy and all together mobilizing resources, promoting conviviality, building capacities and equal



opportunities, embracing human rights, promoting creativity under a positive approach, expecting commitment from its several actors and partners. In the five projects, we can identify a participatory approach that crosses social actions - communicating, learning, animating - and the development of citizenship skills within three dimensions:

- the "home dimension" (the domestic dimension).
- the "internal" - or local - social dimension (e.g., that of the condominium or the built-up outdoor area, as in the case of Les Cinq Toits)
- the "external" social dimension (school, work, park, etc.),

The concept of participation emerging from the comparison could be situated at the crossroad between these dimensions.

In the case of SällBo, the domestic dimension and the internal social dimension are privileged according to a clear project objective, which places the intergenerational relationship first in the integration process. The success of the intergenerational relationships with the over-70s and their life experiences (also as native of the local context) seems to facilitate the refugees' participation to the wider social dimension external to the project.

Les Cinq Toits focuses on the mixing of living and professional spaces for the development of participatory approaches at various stages of the project, involving different actors. In this perspective, the French case study promotes a participatory socialization deeply grounded in the local and domestic dimension of the project. In this sense, the goal of this housing project becomes "the recovery of public space" with a function determined to promote the integration of the spaces of "local", everyday living (Ciaffi, Mela, 2006).

We have also observed another kind of participatory style that, in the Italian case as well as in the Spanish one, we have named the multilevel participatory approach. In this case, the operators act as a bridge so that the beneficiaries are able to independently connect the "subjective" dimension to the public dimension, while educators facilitate the relationship with the domestic dimension (especially in co-housing) when needed.

By providing housing as the starting point, Housing First Co. Bo. focuses its efforts on empowering its beneficiaries towards autonomy rather than engaging them in participatory processes. Similarly, Spain calls on and encourages beneficiaries to choose and direct their own life choices. UTUD, even more determinedly, encourages in-house expertise before calling on people from outside the association, even though it includes them in the participatory process both at the home and association levels. This could mean that while Les Cinq Toits seems to reflect on the community-participation nexus, the other three cases - to different degrees and in different ways - seem aligned and more focused on considering the beneficiaries (with the accompaniment of volunteers, stakeholders, etc.) the protagonists of their participatory process.

Trying to summarize, from the intersection of the participatory processes promoted by the case studies, two main factors are to be pointed out:

- the relevance of everyday life as a context for participatory action (through recreational activities, language courses, etc.) oriented towards the operational organization of living and sharing internal spaces (and the consequent relevance of the sense of belonging to the places where I live);
- the relevance of intermediation between the beneficiary and the local community and society.

### 5.3 Perception and challenges of “making home”

The refugees’ everyday living conditions change according to the housing contexts, however in the following we attempt to analyze some common aspects that emerge from the pictures they took and the comments they made on their living spaces expressed during the interviews. Moreover, it should be remarked that only a few of the interviewees agreed to take pictures of their spaces. This reluctance could be due to the fact that this type of research (Boccagni, 2017), explores sensitive issues concerning people’s intimate lives and implies a level of mutual confidence between interviewees and researchers. Unfortunately, we were not able to establish such confidence with the interviewees as we lacked the possibility to meet them face to face due to the COVID-19 pandemic’s safety measures during the time of our field work. Moreover, our requests gave also rise to many respondents’ fear and mistrust as they did not want their location to be known or recognised, as they were sometimes in illegal situations. Some of them also feared that these photos would be passed on to the judicial or police authorities (as in the UTUD case). To overcome this reluctance, the three French teams in Paris and Rennes organized workshops to create photo frames, used polaroid cameras to take instant photos, and set up a photo exhibition, during which the projects’ beneficiaries could choose the photos they wanted to show. Despite the small number of people (men and women) who accepted to photograph their preferred domestic spaces, it is important to report the meaning of their reflections and the images they collected as they allow the introduction of new interpretive elements that enrich the analysis and understanding of refugees’ integration through housing. Image informs, elucidates, documents, and adds a personal value to a question that goes beyond the material need, being also characterized by emotions, feelings, perceptions, and opinion.

“Feeling at home” is not an easy emotional conquest for people who were in one way or another forced to live their home country and their home. Our respondents generally feel at home when in the new domestic space that was assigned to them, and not chosen by them, they can feel a sense of security and intimacy, i.e., they can find their own place with familiar objects and furniture. Concerning intimacy, the first emerging challenge that refugees have to face is co-habitation. In fact, each of them lives in shared apartments with other tenants, having his/her own sleeping space while sharing the common space with others, usually the kitchen. Despite this, all respondents expressed appreciation towards the house and the space or room assigned to them.

I<sup>4</sup>.: And which room, which place do you like in this home? the kitchen, bedroom?

R.: I love my bedroom ... it's my room where I stay and do anything I want to do inside [...]

(Refugee, Housing First Co.Bo., Italy)

For refugees in the Sällbo project, “making home” means having people around with whom they can interact, talk every day, share a meal and do activities together. Some of them linked this feeling of closeness with housemates to typical ways of living in their home country (Stepanova et al., 2021). Here is what one refugee states:

"We meet (our neighbours) often, you know. Not just once, but often. There we have contact with each other and we get to know each other better. You establish contact with everyone".

(Refugee, SällBo, Hellsingborg)

Several photos depict the bed and the objects surrounding it, which is certainly perceived as the most intimate and personal space of the house. Below are some pictures with comments from the interviewees.

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<sup>4</sup> In the following, I will stand for “interviewer” and R for “refugee”.

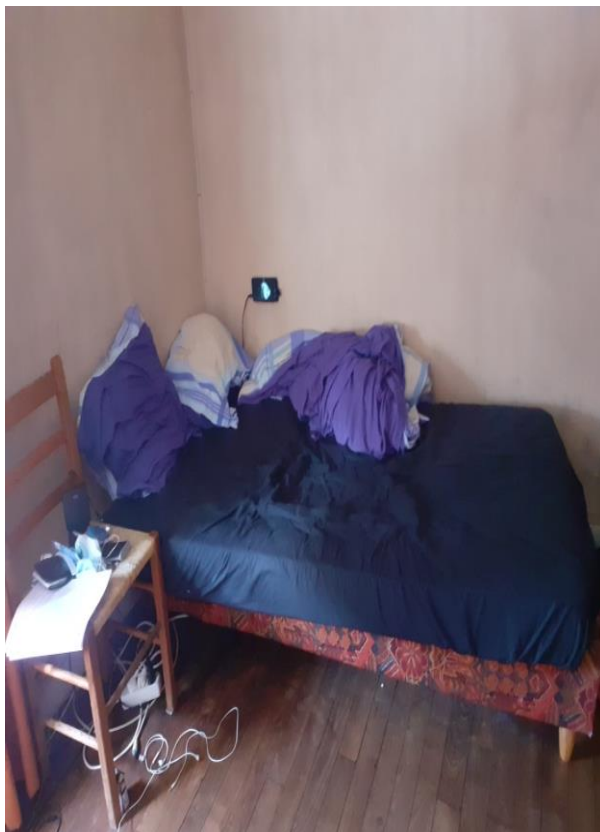


Photo 1- Interviewees' photograph, UTUD  
Source: Loncle et al. (2021), p.35

"I chose this place in the house where I live which is dear to me: my bed, sheltered, which allows me to rest and to be able to think of something else to move on" (Loncle et al., 2021, p. 35)



Photo 2- Room corners. Interviewees' photograph, Les 5 Toits.  
 Source: Dominguez et al. (2021), p.82

In these pictures, the placement of objects and images (e.g., mobile phone attached to the wall which acts as a TV screen; flag hanging on the wall, photos, etc.) is particularly important, as it helps to personalize the space, making it different from all the others. Intimacy is also provided by the possibility of finding a place to rest, rediscovering one's own objects and the individual meaning attached to them.

In addition, some other photos of objects or images of the house have been taken to underline the pleasure that comes from seeing them on a daily basis as they are considered beautiful and soothing.



Photo 3 - Interviewees' photograph, UTUD  
Source: Loncle et al. (2021), p.35

“This sideboard is in the kitchen of one respondent. She wanted to photograph this sideboard because she thought it very nice” (Loncle et al., 2021, p. 35)





Photo 4 - Kitchen of a HF beneficiary, Housing First  
Source: Cuconato et al. (2021), p. 61

R: It's this one here, look at this one, I feel calm.

I: Which one?

R: That one, that part, it's beautiful, I feel good even this sofa, the tv  
(...)

R: Half a bottle of water for life, a flower on the table...  
(Refugee, Housing First Co. Bo., Italy)

The description of her current house leads one respondent to compare it with the houses in her home country.

R: So, I liked the houses in Italy.

I: Why? What are the differences?

R: There are so many differences, so many differences. Here you always live in the house, you don't have the one who used to live near you and make a mess, people sit outside... it's not like here, understand? Here it's calmer and quieter  
(Refugee, Housing First Co.Bo., Bologna)

This memory is of particular emotional density. The beneficiary describes the different life habits adopted between the house in her native country and the current one in Italy: the noise, the sitting outside the house is part of her identity roots.

Despite the good conditions and locations of the flats, from the ACV interviews it emerges the common wish of the beneficiaries to have a private outdoor space such as patio and garden in which they can grow vegetables and herbs and their children can play. They were used to have such a outdoor space in the houses they left in Syria and now they miss it their ACV flats.

I don't mind living in flats, but I really missed having a garden for myself, wherever it is. Some place where I can grow some vegetables or grill a barbecue. Here [in Almassora], if we want to go for a barbecue we have to go to designated public areas". (Refugee, ACV, Valencia)

I feel very comfortable in this house, I have all I need. However, in Syria we had a garden and patios and here we don't have any of those" (Refugee, ACV, Valencia)

As more general remarks, for what concern the Spanish case study, it is worth stressing the fact that having a normalised, decent and well-located housing where they can live and conduct their lives independently, is highly valued by all of the families, particularly comparing with the housing they had before being resettled. If we add to that the fact that, when it was deemed necessary, the volunteering local groups further furnished and did some little repairs for the dwellings to be the most homey and comfortable as possible upon the arrival of the families, the appreciation and attachment of the families to their current flat grows. Beneficiaries usually connote "home" as a place they can rely on to be comfortable and relaxed with their family (Simó-Noguera et al. 2021).



Photo 5 - Almassora

Dining table in the living room use for the children to do their homework, ACV.  
 Source: Simó-Noguera et al. (2021)



Photo 6 -Cocentaina

Balcony with a couch and sun-drying peppers and aromatic herbs, ACV.  
Balconies are often used and appreciated by the beneficiaries.  
Source: Simó-Noguera et al. (2021)



Photo 7 - Almassora

Kitchen of a ACV beneficiaries, ACV  
Source: Simó-Noguera et al. (2021)

Interestingly, the refugees living in Les Cinq Toits' chose to take pictures of the doors of the building in which they live.

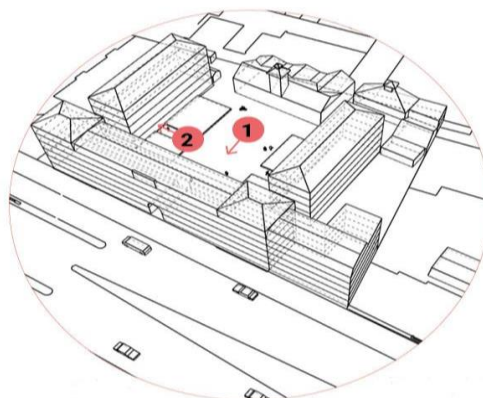


Photo 8- The doors of the building, Le Cinq Toits  
Source: Dominguez et al., (2021), p. 81

"Picture number one shows the main gate looking out from the courtyard towards boulevard Exelmans. This is the main entry point to Les Cinq Toits, the place that everyone crosses to enter and exit the premises. Image number two focuses on a gate in the courtyard that opens onto the stairs and leads to the units. It is a filter towards the place where the interviewee lives, it is a threshold" (Dominguez et al., 2021, p. 81).

The doors, as well expressed by the authors of the report, mark a passageway that can be a link between two spaces, one internal and one external and that, if crossed, can lead inside the domestic space or outside it. Therefore, the doors, in relation to these functions, can be connected by the subject to a plurality of meanings and interpretations that, however, have not been explored in depth with the authors of the photos so far. Nonetheless, the authors interpreted some beneficiary's choice of photographing the doors as a symbol of the house and a "strong statement on the right of access to a space" (Dominguez et al., 2021, p. 81).

Several beneficiaries testified how living together with other people can be extremely difficult, and that conflicts often arise in the everyday management of co-housing solutions: cleaning, sharing spaces, difficulties in communicating with housemates with a different cultural background. As showed by the interviews' excerpts that follow, cleaning is the activity that generates most conflicts:

[...] And the cleaning... They don't clean. It is very complicated but I'm looking for another apartment. Because I want to be alone. I started like this. But, here, in the housing facilities, I must ask our friends and the guardian. He said: 'You are eight persons in the unit, no friends, no wife, no girlfriend. It's tough.'  
 (Refugee, Les Cinq Toits, Paris)

Interestingly, some refugees claim that conflicts arise because of the different ethnic background of the people living together, perceiving that culture influences the way in which the daily tasks that allow the domestic group to survive are managed and distributed.

[...] Why don't they put Romania together? Because I have already seen, they don't put Nigeria with Moroccan, they put Moroccan and Moroccan together. But we Nigeria, why don't they put Nigeria, Nigeria together? Zingri, Zingri [gypsies, ed.] together. This and this together. Why so many people, problem. Because there is so much problem is not to joke... because much problem.  
 (Refugee, Housing First Co. Bo., Bologna)

[...] My space is my bed. It is my room, because I live in my room because the other common spaces we find more difficult to live in, do you understand? We are different. And this is a problem that we are confronting to find a solution. For the moment we haven't succeeded yet.  
 (Refugee, Housing First Co. Bo., Bologna)

However, as suggested in an interview conducted at Le Cinq Toits, the acceptance of the many difficulties also depends on how the person imagines his/her future. In some cases, the perspective of the future depends also on the idea of living in a temporary house that can lead to a lack of involvement in the organisation of living together and in the management of the common spaces. And, perhaps, it may be the sense of precariousness that makes more difficult the sense of appropriation of the house spaces.

"Maybe I have to leave soon. I don't know where I will go. [...] It will be in Paris. [...] It depends on... I asked for a council house. But it's not... I don't know when, maybe next month, maybe in three months, maybe two, maybe longer, it depends".  
 (Refugee, Les Cinq Toits, Paris).

"I am a Dubliner, so I am waiting for a court decision to become [a] normal [refugee]. I can stay here for 18 months (as a Dubliner), but after that I have to leave the Cinq Toits, and I don't know where to go. I also talked to my social worker because I really want to work".  
 (Asylum seeker, Les Cinq Toits, Paris)



From this first photos' interpretation of domestic spaces, it emerges the attempt of refugees to create personal spaces characterized by objects and images that express their search for intimacy, although the contact with the outside (photos of doors and terraces) remains open as possibility of dialogue between people living together or for a family (as in case of ACV).

This initial, albeit limited, analysis of images allows us to reflect on how the study of domestic spaces could be a fruitful tool for understanding the individual aspect of migrants' integration processes, that is crucial for identifying criteria and suggestions to be used in the planning and implementation of more tailored housing projects.

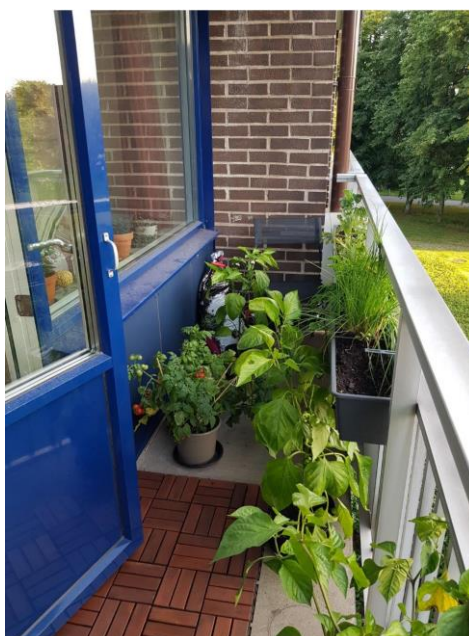


Photo 9 - Balconies are often used and appreciated by the tenants, SällBo  
 Source: Stepanova and Bousiou (2021), p. 40.

## 6. Emerging issues: between challenges and opportunities

Most of the housing projects we analysed are currently **pilot projects** (Agermanement Comunitari Valencià, SällBo, Les Cinq Toits). This demonstrates the fairly new engagement of **local institutions in Italy, Spain, France, and Sweden in providing, together with the third sector and private stakeholders, services to refugees among other population groups, promoting social works coupling social housing and/or co-housing solutions** - i.e., fighting homelessness and severe adult marginalization - **with wider processes aimed at enhancing social inclusion**, and addressing multi-target audiences. **The housing projects we examined are seldom restricted to the target group of refugees**, except for the case of the Agermanement Comunitari Valencià, but they **include them among their beneficiaries**.



The case of Housing First Co.Bo. shows that, regardless of their citizenship, **marginalized adults** have to cope with **multifaceted challenges in accessing housing, and thus individual and/or family autonomy, due to the lack of economic guarantees as well as both primary and secondary community support networks (i.e., those deriving from material and immaterial support that can be mobilized within the extended family or those deriving from wider nets connecting the individual and or its family with the local community thanks to acquaintances developed at work, in the neighbourhood, thanks to hobbies, amical ties, etc.)**. In this framework, refugees or **holders of international protection are confronted with harder challenges as they are perceived as foreigners rather than as rights bearing citizens**. And indeed, even those projects which are no longer piloted are either addressed to irregular migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees who - for one reason or another – are left out of the reception circuit and essentially abandoned to homelessness by local institutions in the case of Rennes, or people with a history of chronic street life (two years or more as homeless persons), including refugees, in the case of Bologna.

Hence, **the first challenge that all the projects have to face is that national asylum policies are often at the origin of social categorization in terms of otherness and subalternity that place refugees and holders of international protection in a niche of marginality that is difficult to counteract** as refugees depend on state subsidies for their livelihoods and, consequently, are unreliable in the rental market. Therefore, the need of supporting them either in term of direct housing provision (SällBo and Les Cinq Toits) or providing guarantees and intermediation services that consent them the access to housing solution available in the private rental market (AVC, Housing First Co.Bo., and UTUD).

Some of the projects resulted from bottom-up initiative promoted either by third sector actors or citizens' collectives, which were then supported by the local institutions (Housing First Co. Bo, Agermanement Comunitari Valencia and UTUD). Others derived from institutional initiatives providing social housing at municipal level through the work of public non-profit companies (SällBo) or by outsourcing services and multi-stakeholders networking activities to private sector and private-social actors (Les Cinq Toits). **The peculiarities of the local contexts and the pre-existing social capital**, therefore, determined the different nature and approach of the different projects. In the following we present the **case-specific challenges and opportunities characterizing the single projects**.

### *SällBo*

In the case of Sällbo, the fact that Helsingborgshem had already bought a disused building that was in **quite good structural condition**, created an incentive to launch the pilot project. In addition, the opportunity to host a **diverse target group composed of elderly and young refugees as well as Swedish young citizens** worked as an incentive for the Municipal Administration to remove previous restrictions for refugees to access social housing services.

However, the opportunities for social interactions offered to the beneficiaries of this project are mainly limited to the premises. SällBo is located in a quiet neighbourhood with plenty of green spaces surrounded by apartment buildings, but there are no cafés or restaurants, nor small shops or other retail activities within easy reach, this means that the only socialisation opportunities are those offered **by the common spaces within the project**. Moreover, consistently with the Swedish system of asylum, **refugees are not entitled to choose the place in which they will be hosted. Perhaps, many of them did not choose Helsingborg as their destination**. Therefore, although SällBo is well connected to the city centre through the public transportation system, the refugees hosted there might have other places of interest elsewhere in Sweden. For instance, albeit appreciating the opportunity to have a place he can call home, one of the interviewed refugees said that every day he commutes three hours to reach the school he attends (Stepanova and Bousiou 2021, p. 36).

The level of employment in Helsingborg is consistently lower than in the rest of the country, which can be challenging in terms of refugees' opportunities to access the job market. Moreover, contrary to the elderly, the refugees' rental contract in SällBo will expire at the end of the project. This means that **the project offers them only a temporary solution**, which puts them at **risk of going back to the previous condition of housing precariousness or even homelessness once the project ends**. Moreover, the **COVID-19** pandemic has had negative effects on this type of collaborative housing, affecting **negatively the group activities** of the refugees and the other target groups.

Another challenge in SällBo's functioning depends on its piloting phase, which makes **long-term planning** uncertain. The composition of tenants and staff is very case-specific and may not be possible to reproduce in other contexts. Therefore, the **scarce potential replicability of the project elsewhere** is another element of vulnerability, as the project is very dependent on the political will of local politicians, stakeholders and individuals, as well as on the engagement of the employees, and the choices made by the project's top management. Individual attitudes and commitment of both the managers and beneficiaries also play a significant role in making such a project work.

Another potential vulnerability concerns the **economic sustainability** of the project, and especially the possibility to keep the rent affordable in case the project would be replicated elsewhere. In the case of SällBo this was possible because Helsingborgshem had already bought the building and did not need to invest much in renovating it. Otherwise, the rents would have been higher, limiting the opportunities of the target groups to afford this kind of social housing.

Architectural preconditions were also decisive for the project's success. The original building had already the large open spaces that are vital for the collaborative living concept adopted by SällBo. Elsewhere, a building with a different architectural form would need to be adapted to have such open social spaces and this would affect the costs. Lastly, the project is currently **rather small in scale**. This has helped guarantee the beneficiaries' security as well as supporting refugees in their

path towards integration. However, it is not clear what implications a potential upscaling of the project would have on its goals and outcomes.

#### *Agermanement Comunitari València*

As we can read in the UVEG report on case analysis (pp. 54-57), the ACV programme provides refugee families who enter it with the opportunity to enjoy **a certain degree of housing stability** from the very moment they reach the host community. Indeed, the project's beneficiaries remain in their assigned housing for the entire duration of the program, which is expected to be of **24 months**. The **involvement of volunteers** in the integration process of refugees through the action of so-called "local support groups" **facilitates the interrelation between the beneficiaries and the members of the host community**. And yet, regardless of the opportunities that the AVC programme provides to its beneficiaries, the latter still lamented the **high requirements they must meet to apply for family reunion**, even after they have entered the programme. Moreover, they also underlined the **impossibility to participate in the process of selecting their country of relocation** as one of the project's shortcomings. As explained by a refugee:

I'm worried about family reunion because we haven't been able to do it yet and once the program ends and we are on our own it might be more difficult. [...] Other families in other programs and countries tell me that they have been able to bring their relatives. This is something that makes me very anxious, knowing what the situation is in Syria and Lebanon (Refugee, ACV, Valencia).

Usually people get to choose where they want to be resettled to, like they get to choose between 3 countries. That was not our case. We were directly informed that we were going to be resettled in Spain, with no other option. (Refugee, ACV, Valencia).

The programme facilitates beneficiaries' access to housing in the private rental market. Yet, **the programme's lifestyle does not correspond to the actual costs of autonomous livelihoods**. For instance, the project asks beneficiaries to pay a portion of the monthly allowance they are provided with as a contribution to housing expenses. And yet, this contribution does not correspond to prices in the free market. As a result, albeit easing their integration path through housing, the gap between the cost of housing within the project and the cost of housing in the free market **hampers the project's beneficiaries path towards autonomy, as well as their possibility to get to know the real available options for securing housing of their own**.

Whilst homologated basic studies are considered a prerequisite for specific professional training offered at the local level to residents - both citizens and non-citizens - the **project beneficiaries are not provided with learning materials in their own language that would be useful to help them obtain some important certificates such as an EU driving license**.

All the coordinators of the NGOs involved in the implementation of the project agree that the **24-month duration of the project is not enough** to put beneficiaries in the condition of autonomously providing for themselves. They also consider **the time they are put in contact with the refugee families assigned to their programme insufficient to develop a solid knowledge of their needs prior to their arrival, and in order for local support groups to be accordingly activated in the most effective way possible**. Local support groups should be activated as soon as the person/family is assigned to the place of resettlement to allow the third-sector organization implementing the project to organize periodic online meet-and-greets and presentations of the town, the flat and the surrounding areas. **Beneficiaries could then provide early feedback on their needs and demands, long before they arrive.**

Finally, interviewees from local support groups highlighted the importance of involving the social milieu more in building up the support network. For instance, **workplaces, cultural and leisure associations, professional training centres, etc. are not involved enough**. As mentioned by a member of the local support groups:

I wish that the scope would be broaden to other usual places of socialisation for refugees to be accompanied at. It is fundamental to have a sense of broad community support, whether it comes directly from the volunteers of the NGO, the university or vocational training centre, the building and town neighbours, a group of friends or a festivity association. As far as I know, in Canada all kinds of groups can be encompassed to become welcoming and accompaniment assets. (Local support member, ACV, Valencia)

They also complained about a **lack of awareness of the project and the status of its beneficiaries by some public administrators and the providers of local social services more broadly**. This can hinder beneficiaries' integration on several levels, as explained by another member:

When the project began the resources and publicity were limited and the quite limited time to get it going. Plus, the regional government wanted to be the one to fully oversee the program. Thus, at the local level there wasn't an integrative approach to include the municipal services and authorities in the project and therefore the town council itself is not really very well aware about the project, its goals and needs. (Local support member, ACV, Valencia)

### *Les Cinq Toits*

The three **implementing actors** in charge for the project **have worked hard to turn "Les Cinq Toits" into a pole of attraction for many associations, civil society organizations, social-private firms, and artistic collectives**. Located in one of the most prestigious neighbourhoods of Paris, and benefitting of the political and material support of the City Hall and the arrondissement administration, this project could seem like the ideal solution for providing its numerous beneficiaries not only with accommodation but also with a number of options to pursue the integration path that is most

suitable for them. Indeed, **state authorities provide all the necessary funding to guarantee the project's sustainability as far as the housing services are concerned.** Only residents who can afford it, are asked to pay a rent corresponding to 10% of their monthly income to make them feel empowered by the opportunity to contributing to the project. Moreover, the fact that the premises are free of charge makes the project economically easier to sustain: no lease payment is due to the property owner, and the project's implementing partners received both public and private support to transform the original building into its current state and develop social and professional activities to offer to the beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, **the first challenge beneficiaries must face is cohabitation.** According to the project's employees, tensions emerge between residents due to cultural differences, mental health issues, misunderstandings, respect of codes of conduct or cleanliness (Dominguez et al. 2021, p. 68).

As explained by a resident:

8 people in an apartment, it is a bit difficult. Also 2 people in the room, it is a bit complicated because there is too much noise, but it is France. In the courtyard, there are people coming and making music. It's noisy and when you work at night, and if you want to sleep during the day, it's difficult (Refugee, Les Cinq Toits, Paris).

Even though most of the residents suffer from mental and physical traumas due to their migration journey, **accessing mental and physical care remains a long and complex process, due to the lack of resources** (human and material). The housing project was created to provide a safe and quiet place and to give beneficiaries the opportunity to heal from a traumatizing migration journey. However, **cohabitation is imposed on the beneficiaries and managing it can be extremely challenging.**

Some interviewees raised concerns on the **risk that the project's organization might create a form of dependency of residents to the place**, as it does not fully allow them to understand the realities of the local housing market. Since **the project is temporary in nature, this can result in making the relocation to another individual social housing difficult once the project duration expires.**

The **residents' administrative/legal status and their expectations concerning the project can also generate tensions.** Some residents have the legal right to access training and work while others do not. This has led **some residents** to constantly **perceive they are living in a state of emergency**, as their legal status might force them to jump from one activity to another, without being able to stabilize. **This factor disincentives some beneficiaries from participating in the activities organized locally** (Dominguez et al. 2021, p. 68).

Despite the project's design is intended to be as open as possible to the local community, **interactions between residents and neighbours remain limited** - even when the latter frequent the facilities. **Language and cultural barriers, shyness and lack of time** only partially explain this

phenomenon (Dominguez et al. 2021, p. 67). Another reason could lie in the **in the offer of activities that is sometimes perceived as not attuned to the residents' needs and their real lives** (Dominguez et al. 2021, pp. 69-70).

Local **tensions remain both among residents and between some citizens and the housing project managers** despite the efforts made by the managers and their partners to mediate within the premises as well as with the neighbourhood.

When the project was launched, the lack of time negatively impacted the NGOs' ability to involve the neighbourhood in a participatory discussion on the nature and characteristics of the project. This possibly contributed to the initial tensions and, in order to overcome these time-related issues, the decision was made to open the facilities to the public, so to convey the idea that the project wanted to be as transparent as possible and gain local citizens' trust. However, **the physical structure of the place, combined with the high density and vulnerability of people living there generate tensions**, notably due to noise pollution.

Moreover, the **citizens living in the area are often from a wealthy status and may rely on their connections with high-rank decision makers and political actors to address some of the project's challenges**. Therefore, **their ability to mobilize these actors can jeopardize the project and make it sometimes difficult for social workers to operate freely** (Dominguez et al. 2021, p. 67).

Time constraints also deeply affected the social and management teams, which had limited time to restore the building and prepare to receive the first beneficiaries.

#### *Housing First Co.Bo.*

The City of Bologna has recently committed to guaranteeing the fundamental social right to housing through a diverse range of mechanisms activated at the level of municipal welfare. This political orientation constitutes one of the main opportunities offered to beneficiaries of Housing First Co.Bo., both citizens and non-citizens. Indeed, as far as the local housing policy is concerned, **Bologna has a great cooperative tradition**, and the municipality is trying to bring the concept of sharing and solidarity back to the centre of housing policy through different strategies. **Migrants and refugees, however, are not the target of a specific housing policy** as they are considered to **share their housing distress with the most fragile groups of the population living in Bologna**. As stated by the manager of housing services in the company managing services to people on behalf of the Municipality (ASP):

One thing was clear when we started to work on housing emergency: maybe we did not know what the housing emergency was really there [...] The families we assisted also helped us to define typologies and to understand which methodology and approach to use. We invented it a little bit, also looking around and trying to understand as professionals how to intervene. [...] In the first three years of work [...] we started to build a **diversified [housing] system**. An important level of awareness was reached that



"housing is a transversal theme [...] as well as work [...], but above all housing [...] autonomy" and yet what housing autonomy means "is something extremely subjective" (Stakeholder, Housing First, Bologna).

The stakeholders involved at the municipal level in the provision of services to the people related to housing realized the key importance that subjective and differentiated needs have in taking action to help their clients pursue societal integration. Consistently with this approach, but also the Housing First philosophy more generally, Housing First Co.Bo. operates recognizing the centrality of the person and the fact **that beneficiaries do not have to be "ready" to autonomously manage their house to be accepted in the project**. Housing First, indeed, combines the mere provision of housing solutions to an educational teamwork tailored on each client and aimed at the very maintenance of the house, within the scope of co-constructed individual plans whose goal shall be the beneficiaries' autonomy. Each path towards social integration must start from an autonomous choice of the beneficiary and **the project has to function as a support net and a bridging factor the client can rely on to better connect with the wider local community**. Through a mix of direct support and case management, Housing First Co.Bo. works to **ensure that networks are created between beneficiaries and local services, while also fostering the creation of networks among the stakeholders involved**, which are equally important.

Albeit compulsory, **contribution to the rent by the beneficiary is tailored to each individual case. The project's organization scouts for housing in the private market or obtain apartments from Bologna's ASP, thus overcoming the obstacle of clients' lack of guarantees for the real estate private market**. Housing First Co.Bo.'s approach provides **long-term housing solutions**, and users can stay for a lifetime if they wish and follow the three basic conditions to enter the program (1. Contributing to the rent; 2. Maintaining a relationship with the social worker; 3. Following coexistence and condominium rules). As mentioned by one of the project's caseworkers:

Housing for people is forever if they want to stay. This is already a step...[...] you don't have a deadline here: this is your house, if you want to stay [...] (Caseworker 1, Housing First, Bologna).

This constitutes an innovative element in the context of housing for immigrants, where usually solutions are short- or medium-term, and provide clients with the opportunity to **overcome the feeling of precariousness and insecurity that can negatively impact their path towards autonomy and social inclusion**. Nevertheless, both the project's beneficiaries and the caseworkers entrusted with their cases mentioned that, since cohabitation in shared flats (at times rooms) is not a choice of the beneficiaries, **managing co-habitation proves extremely challenging** and most people housed in Housing First Co.Bo. apartments aim to find an autonomous accommodation, out of the project. As explained by a caseworker:

The recurring theme is always how people stay at home and the respect they have for each other. This is why the problem of co-housing [...] on which we work, takes a lot of time away from you for very trivial matters: cleaning, the issue of cleaning is a crucial issue, as if it were the most serious thing that could

happen and the most difficult to manage, because, while, trivially, in another apartment people take turns cleaning and everyone gets settled, in many other situations this creates a very strong conflict, aggression, an important conflict between people that leads them not to talk to each other anymore or in any case to the intervention of the operator" [...] (Caseworker 2, Housing First, Bologna).

The emergence of these conflicts leads to a wider problem, which is a **widespread frustration in living with other people and an unsatisfied desire to live alone**. This is also due to the fact that beneficiaries link their perception of intimacy more to their bedroom or even their bed than to the house itself. In this vein, the words of a beneficiary are very exhaustive: "The space I have is my bed. It's my room because I live in my room" (Refugee 4, Housing First, Bologna).

**Apartments** managed by Housing First Co.Bo. **are located in neighborhoods with diverse social characteristics, and usually neighbors do not really perceive there is a house for marginalized persons** - both homeless refugees and homeless nationals - **next to them**. This "invisibility" is intended to **avoid the stigmatization of beneficiaries, allowing them to live like everyone else** and blend into everyday life. A number of criticalities regards the serious discrimination of beneficiaries and the barriers when entering the private market. This makes the step towards autonomy overly complex for the project's users, regardless of how successful their individual programme is. Indeed, even the **community members** who decide to rent their flats to Housing First Co. Bo. **usually establish relationships directly with the administrators of the project**, often based on altruistic motivations, however **they seldom establish direct relations with the project beneficiaries** who inhabit their houses. The people who maintain positive relations with the project beneficiaries, non-nationals included, are members of the neighbourhood who share common spaces in the condominium with Housing First Co.Bo.'s users. The fact that Housing First Co. Bo. acts as intermediary for the rent ensures a certain degree of control over the conditions in which people keep the apartment. This, however, does not help in solving **the lack of apartments made available to the beneficiaries of Housing First Co.Bo. to autonomously rent them. This kept surfacing as a key issue** throughout all the interviews (Cuconato et al. 2021, pp. 44-48).

The long history of the Housing First model, which dates back to the 1990's, and its implementation in many countries around the world, especially in Europe, proves that **the project is replicable. The project is not financially self-sustaining** as it relies only on public funding, and this aspect can endanger its sustainability in the long-term. In addition, the project does not have clear and specific Key Performance Indicators, which could influence accessing additional funding from other sources.

#### *UTUD*

**UTUD has promoted an approach to "hospitality"** that is remarkably different from reception as it considers "helping a stranger in an inter-individual relationship" (Babel, 2019) as a multi-dimensional activity encompassing individual, communal, associative, and private sector forms of socio-political mobilization. The housing facilities it provides are thus **considered as a service and**

an opportunity for the community at large, which are **not restricted to the housed beneficiaries only**. Moreover, UTUD accommodates people with an **unconditional reception criterion**, which resulted in hosting people **who cannot benefit from the common law measures offered by the State** (reception centres for asylum seekers, etc.) (Loncle et al. 2021, p. 30). Despite this, UTUD has not refused to negotiate with institutional actors, as well as with actors of the private real estate market. Indeed, the informal association of volunteers that runs the UTUD project has been developing **targeted contacts with municipalities and building developers' associations, also relying on the mediating role of the Abbé Pierre Foundation**. Nevertheless, this has not prevented UTUD's team members from continuing to promote a highly militant engagement in favor of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Relations with the town hall, indeed, are described as "complicated". One of the association's volunteers explained:

It's really between the two, it's both collaboration and partnerships, because at some point that's what it is, we've signed and then we're in direct contact with them. And at the same time, it's still a power struggle, because it's still the Town Hall, it's still an institution, and there's always the fear within the association that the Town Hall will gradually nibble away at us and force us to do things that we don't want to do. And at the same time, there is also the idea that we are an association, we shouldn't have to do what we do. [...] So, there's always this tension between power and collaboration, so to speak. (Volunteer, UTUD, Rennes).

It seems that the association is currently considering its future and that the volunteers are faced with an **alternative: either to reinforce the militant orientations and think more about the nature of the support offered to people; or to accept to become more professional by making more use of public aid** (Loncle et al. 2021, p. 15). Moreover, since **the association is currently short of volunteers, the quality of housing services provided has necessarily decreased** (Loncle et al. 2021, p. 29).

If the decision of initiating dialogue with municipal institutions and developers' organization allowed UTUD to sign loan for use agreements legalizing previous occupations for a maximum of three years, **some tenancies are now about to end**, and beneficiaries must move out **without any viable alternative** in a context in which the demand for accommodation is still increasing. The **temporality of the housing solutions** achieved through complex mediation and the **persistent lack of effective public policies to provide current beneficiaries with viable housing solutions in the long term** thus constitute one of the structural challenges that UTUD must face, while also making beneficiaries feel extremely precarious (Loncle et al. 2021, p. 28). Having a house, indeed, is a crucial precondition for newly arrived person to find the internal resources they need to undertake their own personal integration journey with their times and to the best of their abilities. As one of the beneficiaries commented:

It is a bit reassuring, because you think, at least there is a time limit, you do not say weeks or months, at least you say a year ago, two years ago. And afterwards, it depends on the landlords... on what, on the

property developer, when he will start demolishing the houses, but we don't know. But at least it is in the long term, but at least it calms people down a bit, and that is why we are trying to think about what we can do during this time. At least, it allows you to have this desire to find an occupation that will also fit. Yes, because you cannot start something long if you do not have the confidence to know where to put your head (Asylum seeker, UTUD, Rennes).

Moreover, a steady increase in the demand for UTUD services at the territorial level risks to overburden the association. As explained by the association employee:

In 2020, we will have 152 people accommodated by the association, in 14 units [...]. So that's quite a lot of people, bearing in mind that at the general meeting in 2020, we decided that this was the maximum. Given the militant strength of the association and the state of its finances, we can't go any further (Employee, UTUD, Rennes).

It is beyond doubt that having an accommodation allows exiled persons to settle down, after prolonged periods jumping from temporary accommodation to the street, or from squat to squat. However, due to the temporary nature of the housing solutions we analysed (Housing First Co.Bo. is the only exception), beneficiaries risk being exposed once again to precarious housing conditions, or even homelessness after the end of the project. Overcoming this time connected vulnerability should be therefore put as a priority in the agenda of any innovative future approach to the provision of refugees housing.

## Conclusions

The juxtaposition of data collected by MERGING partners shows a severe lack of structured welfare services targeting immigrants who have benefitted from reception services while applying for asylum, and currently need to access housing as autonomous individuals once recognized with the refugee status or other forms of international protection. Most of the examined experiences are still at their pilot stage and offer only temporary housing solutions, which are very often detrimental to triggering effective integration processes that need protracted time and a sense of stability that is missing in the case studies we conducted. Even immigrants who holds a legal residence permit and possibly a regular and sometimes even stable working contract, is characterized by a feeling of precariousness for what concerns housing.

Many of the examined experiences showed how institutional and non-institutional actors - either just a few (as in the case of SällBo) or many (Les Cinq Toits being the most extreme case) - interact with each other for providing housing services at the local level according to their organizational and/or personal stakes, interests, knowledge, resources, and networking capability. Our projects' governance makes greater effort of interconnections than the more traditional governance regimes that stipulate some generic form of interaction between the actors involved in the provision of a given social services and/or the management of given social processes. Indeed, "agency [...] crisscrosses among levels, whilst interactions are extremely context-dependent and sometimes informal" (Torfing, Guy Peters, Pierre, Sørensen, 2012). Therefore, vertical and horizontal approaches coexist in shaping the examined projects' processes and outcomes. And yet, whether these processes actually achieve beneficiaries' integration through the provision of housing is all but self-evident.

Most of the examined experiences pursue integration essentially by interpreting dignified housing as the necessary trigger of beneficiaries' empowerment towards autonomy. In fact, housing is considered as the sole precondition that can turn beneficiaries into proper residents, and thus right-bearing citizens rather than guests. Leveraging on the enhancement of participatory processes is also key to fulfill this aim. However, the examined projects' participatory approach seems generally restricted to the internal dimension, as it mostly pertains the joint management of common spaces among the individuals and group actors involved in each project's functioning. A lot of effort is put into managing co-habitation, mediating tensions that might arise, accompanying individual beneficiaries in pursuing autonomy. And yet, for most of them, autonomy is far from being achieved. None of the projects has been in place for enough time to evaluate whether beneficiaries will achieve both housing autonomy and societal inclusion.

Beneficiaries' activation and self-esteem is key in fostering their social inclusion. Therefore, both processes are encouraged by asking beneficiaries to contribute to rental expenses proportionally to their economic possibilities and/or monthly income (ACV, Les Cinq Toits, SällBo and Housing First Co.Bo.). In most cases also signing cohabitation agreements plays a crucial role, as well as either complying with already available cohabitations protocols or drafting them as a result of co-produced decision-making procedures. Some projects involved beneficiaries in the renovation works needed to make the place habitable and comfortable (Les Cinq Toits and SällBo). At times, mandatory participation to periodical common meeting is required to solicit beneficiaries' participation to activities consistent with the principles of social housing. Elective social activities aimed at involving the possibly diverse targets of the projects and creating stronger links among them are also encouraged (SällBo). They can promote social bridging processes and, thus, benefit immigrant beneficiaries' integration. According to such an approach, living together, using the same spaces, and interacting on an everyday basis is the key for creating meaningful, long-lasting encounters and dialogs, which have history and can guarantee continuity.

In other cases, challenging experiences of co-housing within shared apartments for both national and immigrant persons are seen as a potential starting point for an educating path toward societal (re)integration of people who were victims of harsh adult marginalization. Indeed, they act towards the beneficiaries' (re)socialization to common rules and pursue their progressive adhesion to these rules from a relatively safe position, which they gain from the very fact of not having to confront the hurdles of homelessness (Housing First Co.Bo.). These approaches are more holistic, as they are not restricted to provide beneficiaries with housing solutions, but also pursue their health and well-being. To this end, enhancing social bridging within the project is not their only focus. In fact, the building of social links between the beneficiaries and the outside world is also pursued by the actors implementing these projects, who introduce beneficiaries to services and opportunities provided at the municipal level as well as at the level of the neighborhood. In the case of Les Cinq Toits this also meant the promotion of French language and cultural classes, as well as involving the neighborhood in the project's initiatives by offering services that result in opening up the project's spaces to the local community.

The Spanish case showed that volunteers are often key actors of these processes. Indeed, by mobilizing their own social networks, they prove instrumental to the creation of social bridges that can help hosted refugees getting closer to local communities and becoming an active part of it. The experience of UTUD, in Rennes, showed that people housed by such projects can be involved in participatory moments by becoming volunteers themselves as well as actively contributing to the management of the houses, and the life of the association more generally. Indeed, all in-house skills are mobilized before calling on people from outside the association to intervene.



While Les Cinq Toits seems to reflect the community-participation core, the other four cases - to different degrees and in different ways - seem aligned and more focused on considering the beneficiaries (despite the on-demand support given by volunteers, stakeholders, etc.) as the main protagonists of their participatory process. In all cases, however, beneficiaries' social inclusion is overall pursued through their involvement into participatory processes at the level of managing housing facilities' spaces or in relation to the wider neighborhood, which are aimed at creating social bridging. The third sector or specifically charities often function as network builders and provide beneficiaries with the secondary social networks they may need to act within the host community as any other resident connected to the territory.

In order not to force participation onto beneficiaries, most of the activities organized are elective. Yet, scarce levels of beneficiaries' participation were detected in most cases, because of either other more pressing issues they face in their daily lives, or the offer of unsuitable activities to their actual needs and interests. These scarce levels might be connected to their state of permanent precariousness, which these projects hardly manage to deal with. The idea of living in a temporary house, indeed, can lead to a lack of involvement in the organization of co-habitation as well as in the management of shared spaces. Moreover, interviews with beneficiaries seem to suggest this sense of precariousness makes the process of home making more challenging. And indeed, the interviewees often restrict their feeling at home to the spaces of their bedrooms or even to their beds rather than the projects' apartments or facilities. On the other hand, some of the activities offered within the integration paths might not correctly target the actual competences and the cultural differences existing in the project's participants. As an example, in Les Cinq Trois the issue of waste disposal remains a concern exactly because of its different cultural perception.

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