

THE GREAT CHALLENGE *by Michele Buono*

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI, IN THE STUDIO

This evening's investigative report is also a proposal: to tap into the richness that exists in our cities' run-down places that are seen as nothing more than incubators of class conflict. But how? We'll start by looking at some positive examples. We travelled around the world. Let's look at some concrete ways to help improve quality of life.

THOMAS MIORIN – REBUILD-ENERGIESPRONG ITALIA

Italian families spend 42 billion euros a year on bills. That is money we could use to redevelop the neighborhoods on the outskirts of our cities. We spend about 30 billion a year on maintenance, to keep the buildings on our cities' outskirts inefficient and addicted to continual maintenance.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The Netherlands. Energiesprong is an independent task force, promoted and funded by the government. Its aim is the innovation of the housing construction market. On the strength of its proven development model, it made a proposal to twenty-six affordable housing organizations.

RON VAN ERCK – PROJECT MANAGER, ENERGIESPRONG NETHERLANDS

We upgrade your existing homes and cut energy consumption. You pay us with what you save on energy bills. That's how we finance the work we do.

SJOERD KLEIN VELDERMAN - ENDULE CONSTRUCTION

We have to upgrade 96 homes and it's taking us two weeks to do each. That's too long! But there was a setback. We found asbestos. Normally, it takes us one day.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Everything is built at the factory: entire finished façades complete with insulated framing and roofs complete with fixtures.

JAN WILLEM SLOOF – RENOLUTION GROUP

We've designed a snap-in-place mechanism that allows us to hang the new façades on top of the old ones very quickly.

MICHELE BUONO

Can you do the same thing with larger buildings?

JAN WILLEM SLOOF – RENOLUTION GROUP

Of course. We work on ten-floor apartment buildings, with the same energy efficiency guarantee. They become homes with an energy consumption of practically zero.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI, IN THE STUDIO

Transforming a crisis into an opportunity! That is what the Dutch government did, and it set the whole housing industry in motion. By 2050, according to the EU, in order to lower our CO2 emissions, we [Italians] will have to make 18 million apartments more efficient. Well, we've seen how it can be done. We could start right away and even finish on time, we could get the entire housing sector and its allied industries involved. The idea remains the same: to learn to recognize and make the most of the wealth we already possess. But how? A large part of life happens within urban areas. Everyone is concentrated there, but most people live on the cities' outskirts, areas

which are viewed more as problems than as sources of potential. However, given the proper direction, they could become an asset, an enormous resource. How? Our Michele Buono travelled around the world in search of positive examples. He established links between skills, needs, and funding, then put all those things together into a huge project, which he took to the European Commission. And they took us seriously! Our story starts far away.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

April 2015. Freddy Gray, age 25, died in a cell a few hours after this.

BOY'S MOTHER

He's my only son and I don't want him to end up like Freddy Gray.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Over one hundred cars destroyed, entire buildings torched, windows broken, looting. It happens pretty often around here. In 1968, it went on like this for ten days after Martin Luther King [Jr.] was killed.

LEON PINKETT – BALTIMORE CITY COUNCILMAN

These communities are sending out warning signals but no one is listening, so now they're raising their voices. For our part, we have funded a lot of projects to improve these neighborhoods, but we've gone about it the wrong way. Now it's absolutely necessary that we assure the people who live here that better times are coming for them, too.

KALEB TSHAMBA - ARCH SOCIAL CLUB, BALTIMORE

This is still a poor neighborhood. It will improve when we succeed in attracting shops and businesses.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Putting an end to poverty is the project Baltimore's government has embarked on, and Kaleb and his partner have responded by fixing up their business, at this Pennsylvania Avenue intersection. A lot of things have happened on this street corner, but, over one-hundred years later, the Arch Social Club is still here.

VAN ANDERSON - ARCH SOCIAL CLUB, BALTIMORE

There was a time you might have run into Billie Holiday here. She lived in these parts. It was the era of segregation, and the founders of the club purchased this building to offer the black community a place to gather without risking ending up in prison.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

To sing this song, however, was out of the question. It was forbidden, but she wasn't the sort to let herself be intimidated.

KALEB TSHAMBA - ARCH SOCIAL CLUB, BALTIMORE

"Strange Fruit" was a protest song, and Billie got death threats, because she kept on singing it.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The "strange fruit" were the black men hanged from trees and lynched after slavery had ended. Billie Holiday eventually left for New York to seek her fortune. The rest is history. All that remains of her here is her picture on the Arch Social Club in Baltimore and these two old friends, who keep the club alive.

VAN ANDERSON - ARCH SOCIAL CLUB, BALTIMORE

This area's just for drinking. If you want to dance and listen to music, the orchestra is in the back room.

LEON PINKETT - BALTIMORE CITY COUNCILMAN

It's our job to make private businesses understand that it's smart to invest in these neighborhoods. How? By first investing in them ourselves. But these projects have to come from the grass roots up, from the community.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Knowing how to draft a development plan is essential.

JENNIFER GOOLD - NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER, BALTIMORE

That's our job. Government funding tends to end up in areas that are already developed, because there they understand the procedures. We focus on those areas where people don't even know that these calls for tenders and development projects exist.

VAN ANDERSON - ARCH SOCIAL CLUB, BALTIMORE

They helped us to obtain the funds we needed to renovate the club and they put architects and engineers at our disposal.

JENNIFER GOOLD - NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER, BALTIMORE

The value of the buildings themselves and the human wealth that exists in the poor neighborhoods of Baltimore offer enormous social and economic potential. All we have to do is unlock it.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

These are architects, engineers, landscape architects, city planners – and they're volunteers.

MICHELE BUONO

Who funds you?

JENNIFER GOOLD - NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER, BALTIMORE

The city government, private foundations, and we receive a lot of donations.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The idea that urban quality is a driver of social and economic growth is the starting point.

LEON PINKETT – BALTIMORE CITY COUNCILMAN

We don't want a single community to be left behind.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

So, they've strengthened the infrastructure that organizes residents' requests by neighborhood.

ROSCOE JOHNSON - DRUID HEIGHTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Community development corporations are non-profit organizations that allow residents to get directly involved and to establish relationships with departments or private foundations.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Neighborhood residents meet every 3 weeks to make proposals and follow up on the progress of ongoing projects. So, you identify the strong points of a neighborhood and develop them.

RICK GWYNALLEN – RESERVOIR HILL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

A school for the 21st Century will be ready by January 2018. A good quality school! That's the important thing. It will definitely attract a lot of kids from other neighborhoods, and that is a way to break down barriers. We're convinced of this.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The Department of Planning brings in additional money for the improvement of streets, sidewalks, lighting and gardens. Then there's an after-school program, so that no one gets left out, and kids can make decisions about redevelopment, too. That way the neighborhood will belong to them, and it's unlikely they'll want to burn it down.

JOHNNY MACON - ARCHITECT

Today we're going to look at plans for the park. Who wants to go first? Go ahead.

CHILD 1

My favorite is the one where we can ride bikes and skateboards.

JOHNNY MACON - ARCHITECT

All right, so, this one here.

CHILD 2

It would be better to put the basketball court here. That way they'd lay cement and they'd finally get rid of all the trash.

CHILD 3

I like the project with the low walls near the benches, so you can tell right away which part's the playground and which is for playing soccer.

CHILD 4

Careful! Here it's not level.

JOHNNY MACON - ARCHITECT

Okay, okay...

JOHNNY MACON - ARCHITECT

This way they learn the procedures and I, as a designer, learn about aspects I would never have taken into consideration without their help.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Once the revival of these neighborhoods was underway, the residents asked for a public transportation plan.

ZACH KISSELL – MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

That project was crucial! Because not long after, a federal call for tenders was announced, with a submission window of only two months, and we already had a plan! A plan that everyone had agreed on! In the end, we obtained ten million dollars in funding.

MICHELE BUONO

When do you start?

VALORIE LACOUR – MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Very soon. We're going to start with some engineering projects that will allow us to create a multimodal link between the eastern and western parts of the city.

MICHELE BUONO

What sort of impact will that have?

VALORIE LACOUR – MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

It will bring the neighborhoods closer together. We foresee an increase in family-run businesses as well as big business, and people will no longer notice any difference between one area of the city and another.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

It's like with ecosystems in nature. If all the living creatures have a good relationship with their environment, then they can produce, like in a factory, everything that they require for their survival and well-being. Otherwise, they stop functioning and end up destroying themselves. Let's go to Milan.

RENATO GALLIANO – DEPT. OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, CITY OF MILAN

The real challenge is to create a city that is polycentric in nature, where even areas that aren't very close to Piazza Duomo can discover their own central character, on productive and social levels. There can't be neighborhoods that are travelling at 100 km per hour and others that are limping along.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Quarto Oggiaro, on the northwestern outskirts of Milan. Where once there were drug dealers and even shootings, now the city is installing new spaces, investing resources, working on an idea: to transform young people's projects into businesses and job opportunities. Teachers and experts work with the neighborhood's youth, who are learning how to put together business plans and turn ideas into businesses.

MARCO POZZI - FABRIQ

The training course, which includes developing their ideas, culminates in a sort of "investors' day", when the startup developers are called to present their ideas to a panel of investors and given a chance to lay out their business ideas in the hope of securing funding.

ANTONIO DELL'ATTI - FABRIQ

These aren't necessarily Silicon Valley-style super-innovative businesses, but they're places created by them whose purpose is to provide them with an income, with a certain degree of innovation.

FRANCESCA VIDALI

Meet Francesca Vidali, co-founder of Ugo, an innovative startup with a social mission.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Her idea persuaded the investors. Ugo is a personal assistant. You summon him with a click, but only when you need him: to drive your car if you're tired, to help if you're having trouble getting around in a place you don't know, if you need a hand. Trials began in Quarto Oggiaro, and they involved an association that supplies volunteers.

GIANLUCA ALFANO - AGORÀ ASSOCIATION

We couldn't respond to all the requests we were receiving for helpers.

UGO OPERATOR

Let's say a man or woman has trouble getting around, and has to go shopping but can't carry the groceries, we can help on foot or with a cart.

USER

I went to the clinic, at Villa Esperia, Bonola, for some treatments, and so did he.

UGO OPERATOR

Physical therapy.

USER

And for 10 days we had to go there and back, but we don't have a car anymore.

USER

We spend 13 euros round trip, and he actually waits there for us.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

This creation of a coordinated network combining all of the area's energy and resources is working. In the middle of the neighborhood buildings, there's an abandoned space.

GIANLUCA ALFANO - Agorà Association

The idea of redeveloping this area was ours, but the idea of how to do it was theirs.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The residents wanted to make a community garden, and the City of Milan told them: if you believe in the project, put it up online for crowdfunding. If you can collect 10 thousand euros, we'll match that.

ELISA CANCIAN - ACLI (Christian Association of Italian Workers), MILAN

On average, people were donating about twenty euros each, online micro-donations.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The goal was met, and the owner granted the residents a loan for use free of charge. Now residents can count on having those twenty thousand euros to build a playground, a space for live shows and a chance to improve their neighborhood. In Lorenteggio Giambellino, it wasn't residents but local business owners who made a deal. The municipal market was falling to pieces, losing customers and merchant stalls, and the city wouldn't demolish it.

VITO LANDILLO – PRESIDENT, LORENTEGGIO MARKET CONSORTIUM

The deal we made with the city was for a 15-year concession, the likes of which had never been granted for a public market. The commitment undertaken by the consortium was to modernize it, renovate it.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

It was recommended that they partner with a cultural association.

VITO LANDILLO – PRESIDENT, LORENTEGGIO MARKET CONSORTIUM

They helped us in so many ways. They motivated us to do things that were unusual for us merchants.

ERICA LAZZARINO – DYNAMOSCOPIO CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

This market has the potential to be a sort of indoor town square, in a neighborhood that doesn't have any large squares for people to gather in.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The market works now. Merchants are selling. On the board are recipes from different cultures and notices about cultural events.

MERCHANT

There are people who come to look at books, do their shopping, so it's a way for us to make ourselves known.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

At this point, a banking foundation entered the picture and the renewal of the entire neighborhood got underway.

ANDREA REBAGLIO - CARIPLIO FOUNDATION

We've invested over 12 million euros, but we have plans for additional investments in the outskirts of our cities.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

This is Parco Sud, an abandoned farmstead at the edge of the city. This farmstead will become a center for research and food production, not to mention highly technological agricultural activities like aquaponic farming.

DAVIDE BALBI – IMPATTO ZERO (ZERO IMPACT)

A natural ecosystem, in symbiosis between fish and plants, 100% organic, that uses 80% less water than conventional farming and no chemical [fertilizers](#) or pesticides.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

They're installations like this one, but on an industrial scale: farming fish and cultivating plants, and the plants are organically fertilized with the filtered water. This project won the European competition for Urban Innovative Actions.

MICHELE BUONO

How much money did they get?

CRISTINA TAJANI – MILAN CITY COUNCILLOR FOR LABOR POLICIES AND PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

About 6 million euros, which covers the total cost of the project, so no paltry sum.

MICHELE BUONO

What has this set in motion?

CRISTINA TAJANI – MILAN CITY COUNCILLOR FOR LABOR POLICIES AND PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

It boosts the area's appeal, not only for the people who work there, but for the people who live there or will move there as a result of its redevelopment.

MICHELE BUONO

How is the financial plan structured?

LUCIA SCOPELLITI

To the 6 million from Open Agri we can add the resources allocated from the city-outskirts program, so the Corvetto neighborhood is going to benefit from a whole range of different projects...

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

From the farming area we move to the edge of the city: the neighborhoods of Corvetto and Porto di Mare. Where old manufacturing plants once existed, the renewal has already begun. Here there was a soap factory. When it closed, it was replaced by a printing works, then a glassworks, and after that, nothing.

DAVIDE AGOSTINI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, LIBERIDI

At that time it was practically deserted, because all the businesses had either gone under or moved away. In 2013, when we moved in, we were the only ones here.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

To start this place up again, what was needed were new businesses. Competitions and incentives paved the way.

LAURA BERNI – ARCHITECT, LASCIALASCIA

A studio for temporary architecture, a FabLab and an acrobatic dance school.

We work together with the FabLab on some commissions, mostly with laser cutting and sometimes with the 3D machine, and we've done a number of joint projects with the acrobatic dance school. For instance, we designed and created set design elements that they'll be using in a show they're putting on in New York. Together we can create and offer a variety of services, in addition to providing a space for coworking. Actually, anyone can come and use our studio as though it were their own studio, their own office.

MICHELE BUONO

What is the return on these investments?

CRISTINA TAJANI – MILAN CITY COUNCILLOR FOR LABOR POLICIES AND PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

We've seen that, for every euro invested by the municipal government, over 40 have been generated in the local area. We've estimated that over 5000 people are now employed in jobs created by startups. Plus, they've redeveloped a great many square meters of space, rescuing them from neglect and restoring them to the city.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI, IN THE STUDIO

And they're going even further. The Milan city government passed a resolution a few days ago, to bring manufacturing firms with zero environmental impact back into the city. We're talking about fashion and design firms, but also auto body shops, which

used to be polluting, but once converted, thanks to the use of the latest 3D printers will be able to print auto body parts made from carbon fiber. Now, all this works only if the entire supply chain gets involved. A high-quality supply chain, because the production and the business sides must be on the same page in terms of quality. That's why a new platform for digital manufacturing will be opening in Milan, a 1500-square-meter indoor space co-managed with Luiss University, where a large part of the space will be dedicated to projects from programs that combine study and work experiences. Stay with us, because after this commercial break comes a discovery – a brilliant idea that, in retrospect, seems obvious – to help unlock the wealth of our cities' outskirts.

COMMERCIAL BREAK SIGFRIDO RANUCCI, IN THE STUDIO

Welcome back. Doing away with urban decay and social differences could unlock the potential of an enormous resource. How? Let's look at some examples that have worked. We visited Canada, where they are developing a massive intelligent mapping system for the country's real estate assets, then Germany, where they've created a virtual design platform for the construction industry that prevents errors, waste and theft. Then we went to the Netherlands where, even just by copying them, we could make our 18 million properties efficient without spending a single extra euro and get our housing market moving again. These are just a few of the concrete examples that are part of Report's proposal: to introduce a new production model that incorporates social inclusion. So that no one feels left behind. This time, our simulation begins on the outskirts of Rome.

OFF-CAMERA VOICE

It's like a person wearing a nice suit. It's undoubtedly expensive and unquestionably well-tailored. And the shoes – you can tell at a glance – are the handmade kind. But what would we think if we looked at that person's underwear and discovered that they were unpresentable? What would we think of such a person? That's no different than the relationship between our cities' centers and their outskirts.

The challenge? Tearing down the differences.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Rome. Tor Sapienza, eastern outskirts. It's still Rome. This used to be a blue-collar neighborhood. It had factories, prosperity, immigrants from Apulia, Umbria and Le Marche. Then the factories closed, and other immigrants arrived, this time from much further away.

TOR SAPIENZA DEMONSTRATOR

We pay the State for the police force, we Italians, and whom do you protect? You protect them, the ones destroying our cities.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

And if the amount of wealth increased? We came up with a plan: to discover these areas' strong points and build a system to generate wealth. In this neighborhood, there's a school that teaches chemistry and electronics. It has laboratories and equipment.

ANNA DALL'ACQUA - MATH TEACHER, I.T.I.S. (Public Technological and Industrial Institute) GIOVANNI XXIII

Right now the students are involved in a program that combines study and work experiences.

ARTURO MARCELLO ALLEGA - DIRECTOR, I.T.I.S. GIOVANNI XXIII

So, chemistry joins forces with electronics, electronics join forces with marketing, marketing joins forces with our high school and the kids can get a 360° education that covers a variety of subjects.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Let's create a link between this school and the Italian Institute of Technology in Genoa. This is a center for research into artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, physics and the chemistry of materials. It's funded by the state and its mission is to promote Italy's economic development.

MICHELE BUONO

Would you open a lab on the outskirts of Rome, where you'd work together with students?

ROBERTO CINGOLANI - SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

I'd definitely take into serious consideration the idea of moving a research and pre-production lab for plastic objects and plastic composite materials made from plant waste there.

ATHANASSIA ATHANASSIOU - ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

This, for instance, is a material made from cacao, cacao waste products, and this from coffee. This is a plastic made from radicchio, and it transfers all of radicchio's antioxidant properties on to the plastic. If the food goes bad, this changes color and you can see that the food should be thrown out.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

So, we have two concrete possibilities: we can train the students on the outskirts of Rome and pass these technologies on to them and we can design new objects made from plant-derived plastics to promote the development of industry.

ROBERTO CINGOLANI - SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

This is where design comes in, the concept of a product that is useful for the home. In some cases, we could even work towards producing objects that have never before been imagined using plastic.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

What we need is a factory to manufacture the ideas being developed. This is Novamont, in Novara. They produce everyday items from plant and organic waste products.

GIULIA GREGORI – STRATEGIC PLANNING MANAGER, NOVAMONT

We study how bioplastics behave at the end of their life cycles. Basically, they go back to being organic carbon, to being the carbon we find in the soil, in compost or in water.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The company's prospectus reads: "We repurpose industrial sites that are no longer competitive and set up biorefineries." Rome's Tor Sapienza neighborhood is home to industrial areas that are no longer in operation.

MICHELE BUONO

Could this type of factory exist within an urban system?

GIULIA GREGORI – STRATEGIC PLANNING MANAGER, NOVAMONT

We are integrated within this area and, since we work using processes that have an extremely limited impact, we believe we can exist in an urban environment.

MICHELE BUONO

Are there residences nearby?

GIULIA GREGORI – STRATEGIC PLANNING MANAGER, NOVAMONT

There are residences right across from our company's main entrance.

MICHELE BUONO

So the two things can coexist?

GIULIA GREGORI – STRATEGIC PLANNING MANAGER, NOVAMONT

They can coexist.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

We present the company with our plan for the outskirts of Rome. Would you be a part of it, too?

ANDREA DI STEFANO – STRATEGIC PLANNING MANAGER, NOVAMONT

We can explore the different options, from a research center to an actual manufacturing plant, and immediately provide opportunities in terms of employment and, eventually, production in the area.

MICHELE BUONO

The manufacturing plant has signed on. Would you be responsible for the scientific training?

ROBERTO CINGOLANI - SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The answer is yes, absolutely. We'd keep them up-to-date and ensure we could systematically inform them of future trends and directions in science and technology.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Well then, let's get started. Rome, Giovanni XXIII Technological and Industrial Institute.

ARTURO MARCELLO ALLEGA - DIRECTOR, I.T.I.S. GIOVANNI XXIII

The main objective is to create a value chain that runs through everything that surrounds the school and everything in the local area.

ROBERTO CINGOLANI - SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Parsley? We only pluck the leaves, but the bulk of it is a stem that gets thrown away. That object is full of this polymer because it is cellulose.

GIRL

These plant-based plastics, like the ones made from orange rinds, you said they are made from orange rinds and an acid. This acid, what kind is it?

ROBERTO CINGOLANI - SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Using plants, we could replace all of the plastics currently in use in the market.

GIRL

How can we convince the industrial sector to use them, since they cost less to buy?

ROBERTO CINGOLANI - SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

That's a great question. Simply imagine the supply chain for vegans, who go crazy for materials of non-animal origin. That opens up a market.

MICHELE BUONO

What sort of objects would you like to manufacture?

MIRELA REBECA CARME

I would be very happy to take on a project for water bottles, to start, because that's a small step towards a big change for humanity.

DAVIDE FIGLIOLINI

Products for everyday use, I suppose, because so many people use them, and if we could make them biodegradable it would definitely help our planet, first and foremost.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

What we need now is an incubator to help these businesses come into being. Impact Hub is a worldwide network of spaces shared by entrepreneurs and professionals from business and creative sectors, with one objective: economic returns and social impact. This is their Rome office.

PAOLO DI CESARE - IMPACT HUB, ROME

What we see in our space is that sometimes we get individuals or small startups of different sorts that meet each other in here. Then the magic happens, because from that moment on, after that first meeting, they start to come up with a new third idea or a fourth idea. So we get this multiplication effect.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

That is what we need for the Tor Sapienza system.

DARIO CARRERA - IMPACT HUB, ROME

Yes, absolutely yes. Build the community and then guide its expertise in the direction of entrepreneurship with a social impact. Turn ideas into realities, turn those into projects and into business initiatives for the non-profit sector.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

It takes training to get a startup off the ground. This is the Giacomo Brodolini Foundation. What contribution could you make?

FABIO SGARAGLI - GIACOMO BRODOLINI FOUNDATION

We can definitely provide technical and managerial training for running micro- or small businesses. We could call in different experts or trainers for different topics,

ranging from marketing or finance to more advanced subjects, like exploring how to take on international markets.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Let's go ahead and run a test. Milan, Cariplo Factory. This is a space that encourages exchanges between big corporations and innovative startups.

CARLO MANGO - MANAGING DIRECTOR, CARIPLO FACTORY

One of the things we do here is precisely what we call scaling-up. In other words, growing businesses which otherwise risk remaining small and limited. Here, the idea is to set up opportunities for growth, in part through collaborations with bigger companies, and to set up international networks, because one factor we can put into play is the creation of opportunities for cross-fertilization with other businesses, perhaps with other situations similar to the one in Tor Sapienza, and we can go looking for these around Europe, sharing methods.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

So, to summarize: a school links up with a research institute. Together, they link up with a bioplastics factory, which moves to the local area. Young people start businesses, and places open up where they can get the training they need. The result: new jobs, not to mention an allied logistics infrastructure for the collection of the plant and coffee waste needed to make the bioplastics.

SANDRO RAMOVIC – COLLECTOR

First, I'd have to make deals with people who own the bars and markets, stores, supermarkets. Recycle this stuff and bring it to them. Coordinate with other people. It would be a nice job. A good job, yeah.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Now we need to find the spaces.

CARLO CELLAMARE – PROFESSOR OF URBAN PLANNING AND ENGINEERING, "LA SAPIENZA" UNIVERSITY OF ROME

The laboratory for new plastics could ideally be located inside the old meat-packing facility, alongside the Novamont plant, where you'd also have the manufacturing operations. That would effectively allow for proximity between the place where the research is happening and the production plant.

ADRIANA GONI MAZZITELLI – SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

This market down here is under-utilized and so we've asked to create a business incubator there, but most importantly a place to train young people. Then, down here are two twin schools, one that's in use and the other, the Vittorini school, that isn't. This spot isn't far from these services and it's not far from the railway.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI, IN THE STUDIO

So, our Michele Buono has also found the under-utilized properties where we could put the research labs, the bioplastics factory, and the training schools, too. Well, if you go looking for a property, and you want to know what kind of use classification it has and what condition it's in, that information isn't always available. You have to go fumbling your way through a thousand administrative offices. That makes it difficult to plan out development. If you don't manage an area, it's likely that, before too long, neglect and social conflict will creep in. That's one of the reasons why Canada's national statistical agency, considered the best in the world, has launched a project

for the intelligent mapping of the country's real estate assets, and it has created an open, digital platform, where it is the citizens themselves who enter the information. It may seem like a trivial thing, but participatory tools lie at the heart of a city's development.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

This is the city of Ottawa. Canada's national statistics agency is testing out a system for building census data for the country's real estate assets, accessible to everyone and able to be updated in real time.

SYLVIE MICHAUD - STATISTICS CANADA (STATCAN)

Thanks to open and public systems like Street Maps, we're developing an application that will allow our citizens to provide us with statistical data directly.

ALESSANDRO ALASIA - STATISTICS CANADA (STATCAN)

The name of the project is participatory mapping. Simply click on a building on the map and a form appears where you can enter information about that building. First, you have to create an account, which is automatically linked to an identification system, in order to guarantee data quality.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Let's have an example: I live in this neighborhood and I want to provide some information about that building behind you.

ALESSANDRO ALASIA - STATISTICS CANADA (STATCAN)

With an application, you can see the satellite image on a map and enter the name, address and even the building's use classification: whether it houses a restaurant or a company, and what sort of company or business. Let's say that this building here used to house a school, but that school has moved. You can update that information in real time.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Where is this data collected and how do you go about consulting it?

ALESSANDRO ALASIA - STATISTICS CANADA (STATCAN)

It gets aggregated onto a single public platform where it is available to everyone, from the Statistics Canada institute to municipal governments and individual users.

MICHELE BUONO

What will be the impact of this innovation?

SYLVIE MICHAUD - STATISTICS CANADA (STATCAN)

To understand how cities are transforming in real time offers an opportunity for their administrations. In order to develop programs, policy makers need data, and what we have here is very detailed data. It's useful to us for statistical purposes and for the economic development of our towns and cities.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

In comparison with traditional systems, what has changed as a result of residents' direct participation?

ALESSANDRO ALASIA - STATISTICS CANADA (STATCAN)

The people who live in a neighborhood are the ones who know it best and they notice immediately when something changes. The information they provide is priceless to us.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

In Rome's Tor Sapienza and in the rest of Italy, we could do the same.

ALFREDINO DI FANTE - SECRETARY OF THE "AGENZIA QUARTIERE TOR SAPIENZA ROMA" ASSOCIATION

Caserma Cerimant, 33 hectares of land, completely abandoned. The former Abete Grafica manufacturing plant, private property. The municipal market, three manufacturing plants in the Tor Cervara area, all the buildings along via Costi, a former Revenue and Excise Police building, all completely abandoned, derelict. The meat-packing facility, public property, is an area of about 4 hectares and only partially used.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

What could happen if you acted without having this type of data?

GIOVANNI BARBIERI – GENERAL DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC STATISTICS, ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics)

Recent decades saw a wave of so-called "territorial pacts", local development projects, of which perhaps the majority did not succeed. Having more specific information would probably have brought to light potential obstacles that, instead, remained undetected.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Well, then, let's get the Engineering Department at "La Sapienza" University involved. Would you collaborate on the construction of a real estate database?

CARLO CELLAMARE – PROFESSOR OF URBAN PLANNING AND ENGINEERING, "LA SAPIENZA" UNIVERSITY OF ROME

We could form an ad hoc working group. We'd be willing to invest in this field, which is definitely of great importance for our city, not only for gathering knowledge but also in terms of project design and for determining the nature of future projects.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

We, too, could map our properties, perhaps entering data on their condition and energy efficiency classification, so as to formulate an industrial redevelopment plan.

THOMAS MIORIN – REBUILD-ENERGIESPRONG ITALIA

Italian families spend 42 billion euros a year on bills. That is money we could use to redevelop the [neighborhoods](#) on the outskirts of our cities. We spend about 30 billion a year on maintenance, to keep the buildings on our cities' outskirts inefficient and addicted to continual maintenance.

MICHELE BUONO

So, what needs to be done?

THOMAS MIORIN – REBUILD-ENERGIESPRONG ITALIA

We need to develop the construction industry.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Because there are millions of homes in need of refurbishment, and that calls for efficient organization. The process begins at the design stage. BIM (Building Information Modeling) is a system that allows every department to share all of its data. Any worker, using an app on his tablet, can provide information on the state of progress directly to the virtual model's database.

SIEGFREIED WERNIK - ARCHITECT

In this way, the works supervisor can monitor timetables and the quality of the work being performed, and suppliers can accurately schedule shipments of materials to the job site, without waste or downtime.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

The virtual model contains information such as the type of steel used, measurements of the external walls, the weight of the completed building, and users can see all of the building's systems with their associated data.

SIEGFREIED WERNIK - ARCHITECT

Here! Using traditional methods, this error would only have come to light on the job site, but thanks to this system we can correct it before it happens.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

With this method, costs are already being cut during the design stage, and actual job site productivity increases. The Netherlands. Energiesprong is an independent task force, promoted and funded by the government. Its aim is the innovation of the housing construction market. On the strength of its proven development model, it made a proposal to twenty-six affordable housing organizations.

RON VAN ERCK – PROJECT MANAGER, ENERGIESPRONG NETHERLANDS

We upgrade your existing homes and cut energy consumption. You pay us with what you save on energy bills. That's how we finance the work we do.

MICHELE BUONO

What was their answer?

RON VAN ERCK – PROJECT MANAGER, ENERGIESPRONG NETHERLANDS

"Let's try with 11,000 homes. If the system works, there are 100,000 more that need fixing." We've already upgraded 8,000 homes and gotten our housing market moving again.

SJOERD KLEIN VELDERMAN – ENDULE CONSTRUCTION

We have to upgrade 96 homes and it's taking us two weeks to do each. That's too long! But we had a setback. We found asbestos.

MICHELE BUONO

Two weeks isn't very long for a renovation.

SJOERD KLEIN VELDERMAN – ENDULE CONSTRUCTION

It is, it's a long time. It normally takes us one day.

MICHELE BUONO

How do you do it?

SJOERD KLEIN VELDERMAN – ENDULE CONSTRUCTION

We've shifted most of the work from the job site to the design studios and the manufacturing plants. All the workmen have to do here is assemble the product.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Everything is built at the factory: entire finished façades complete with insulated framing and roofs complete with fixtures.

JAN WILLEM SLOOF – RENOLUTION GROUP

We've designed a snap-in-place mechanism that allows us to hang the new façades on top of the old ones very quickly.

RICHARD SENGER - TEHA

This is our logistics division. The houses are arranged in order from start to finish.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

On the job site, roofs and tiles are removed. The new siding is hung on the façade to hermetically protect the building against wind and water.

JAN WILLEM SLOOF – RENOLUTION GROUP

We renew the interiors and, in two days at the most, the home has been completely upgraded.

MICHELE BUONO

Can you do the same thing with larger buildings?

JAN WILLEM SLOOF – RENOLUTION GROUP

Of course. We work on ten-floor apartment buildings, with the same energy efficiency guarantee. They become homes with an energy consumption of practically zero.

THOMAS MIORIN – REBUILD-ENERGIESPRONG ITALIA

The property assets that belong to Italian families are worth 4 times the country's GDP. So, not only is it technically possible to do the same thing in our country, but it also offers an enormous opportunity, much more so than for the Dutch.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Why can't we do the same thing in Italy?

ALFREDO MARTINI – EDITOR, "CIVILTÀ DI CANTIERE" MAGAZINE

What we don't have are projects for the real estate sector in which we could put these new property development processes to the test.

MICHELE BUONO

Would 500 apartments be enough to start with, maybe on the outskirts of Rome?

ALFREDO MARTINI – EDITOR, "CIVILTÀ DI CANTIERE" MAGAZINE

Yes, that would absolutely be suitable for an innovative housing development project.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Technicians and other types of workers would need training in new technologies. This is the Lazio association of construction companies. Would you be willing to handle training?

STEFANO PETRUCCI – PRESIDENT, ANCE (Italian National Association of Construction Companies), LAZIO BRANCH

We have traditionally offered schools for construction, schools for training in specific building professions. So, definitely, yes.

MICHELE BUONO

And can our companies cope with transformations at the industry's organizational level?

STEFANO PETRUCCI – PRESIDENT, ANCE (Italian National Association of Construction Companies), LAZIO BRANCH

In a time of crisis like the one we've experienced in recent years, forward-looking companies understand that they have to reposition themselves on the market, which is changing, transforming, and so they are definitely ready to take on this challenge.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

On the condition that we can generate demand. If we renew an area and new businesses are created, then the demand for services grows.

FRANCESCA DANESE – VOLUNTEER SERVICES CENTER, LAZIO

Being able to have access to basic health services, with flexible hours, because a lot of people go to work "in the city", as they put it... To be able to provide a solution for this issue would be crucial.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Let's test the possibilities. Milan. The Santagostino Health Clinic offers basic healthcare services at the cost of a National Healthcare Service copay. It's a business with a social impact, in other words, it offers a public service without taking money from the regional coffers. Could you open a facility on the outskirts of Rome?

LUCIANO BALBO – PRESIDENT, OLTRE VENTURE CAPITAL

We definitely could. There's an opportunity to fill the holes or replace parts of in the healthcare system, like we already do in Milan in part.

OPERATOR

Santagostino Health Clinic, Raffaella speaking...

LUCIANO BALBO – PRESIDENT, OLTRE VENTURE CAPITAL

The reception desk, the phone operators, all these things can be done with local hires.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

If the number of businesses in a neighborhood grows, so does the number of workers, and new people move into the neighborhood and they require services. What kind of investments could you foresee there being?

LUCIANO BALBO – PRESIDENT, OLTRE VENTURE CAPITAL

Cafés, restaurants, which are the simplest things that can pave the way for other new businesses to come in. To finance this, we could consider microcredit. We've started a company to help people get these things off the ground...

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

What impact could it have on the neighborhood?

ROMILDA SALVATI - "AGENZIA DI QUARTIERE TOR SAPIENZA ROMA" ASSOCIATION

Definitely a revival of our neighborhood's small business fabric, which is in complete crisis at the moment. And, most importantly, a decrease in unemployment, which affects the young age groups in our area most of all. Job training.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Knowing how to communicate and share one's experiences can form the basis for developing an area. What we need are journalists. Two associations have understood this. Radio3 Rai has entered the picture and organized a course in radio broadcast journalism.

CRISTINA GERARDO - "ANTROPOS" ASSOCIATION

Our mission is to create young people who can have opportunities, even in places where there often are none to be found.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

All that the students have to do is study. There's no fee.

MONICA PEPE - "ZEROVIOLENZA" NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION

We are able to offer this course for free, because we won a competition for funds from income taxes that had been devolved to the charitable association of the Union of Methodist and Waldensian Churches - which, obviously, believes in projects with a social and cultural value, like this one.

PIETRO DEL SOLDÀ - RADIO HOST, RADIO 3 RAI

It's a place where everyone can be on the same level and talk. They can interview people, even the greatest experts, the people with the best skills, anywhere they are in the world, at a cost of nearly zero.

How many Trumps?

GIRL

The law was rejected in 2013.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

We simulate broadcasting studios, interviews, live broadcasts, as if it were a real radio station.

AZZURRA

Hello, I'm Azzurra Di Giuliano with Tor Sapienza Radio. We've been focusing chiefly on the towns that were hit by the earthquake.

GIRL

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask you a few questions while you're here...

BOY

This law proposal has been approved by the senate...

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

These kids are learning the profession of journalism. A radio station, perhaps a web-based one, could help to stimulate growth in this neighborhood.

GIRL

And maybe tell stories that aren't just about its negative aspects...

ELECTRICIAN

News that other people won't have heard about...

GIRL 2

The journalists' side of the story, the story told by people who want to tell the truth and aren't afraid.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

How could you help them now?

PIETRO DEL SOLDÀ – RADIO HOST, RADIO 3 RAI

What help we can give, and will certainly be able to give – we, as Radio3 – we'll give it when the time comes, in the ways that we can give it, to the voices of the Tor Sapienza web radio station, if it should come into being... to give this small station the chance to become a real voice in the national conversation, why not?

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

For this to happen, we'll need money. Money for the radio station and for the students at the Giovanni XXIII Institute. I ask the CEO of Eppela, an online crowdfunding platform, to come and visit Rome's Tor Sapienza neighborhood. What contribution could you make?

NICOLA LENCIONI – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, EPELA

We could give up the 5% commission we usually take on projects with successful outcomes.

MICHELE BUONO

What do you, the Eppela platform, contribute to projects?

NICOLA LENCIONI – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, EPELA

We follow their progress, give kids a hand putting their project presentations together, launch them, promote them. Then, after that, we can see if there are ideas that can be developed commercially and brought into the company.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

We have entrepreneurs willing to invest, by providing funding and even as partners. There's money from the government's scheme for the city outskirts as well. Let's do one last test, to see if our operation holds water for the markets.

MARCELLO MINENNA – ECONOMIST, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

I see that you have all the necessary prerequisites to make a structured funding proposal to the markets to redevelop your project area.

MICHELE BUONO

Why? What is it you see?

MARCELLO MINENNA – ECONOMIST, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Because these are all productive investments. So, by generating wealth they can also create that revenue which, if kept appropriately segregated, can repay investors.

MICHELE BUONO, OFF-CAMERA

Brussels. Here, there's additional money. Structural funds for local development. We submitted our project to the European Commission. Does it meet the requirements for financing?

JACUB ADAMOWICZ – SPOKESPERSON FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

A simulation that's going in this direction, it would be encouraging to see it go forward.

It includes several thematic priorities and objectives, such as social inclusion, that fit in with the strategy established by Italy and the EU Commission. Plus, you've identified your partners for the project, who's going to do what, and identified the steps to take in the direction of a new revolution in industry, which is one of the priorities of the Juncker Commission.

MICHELE BUONO

In our simulation we looked for projects that would build a network of different activities, a network to create quality jobs and provide training in these new technologies.

JACUB ADAMOWICZ – SPOKESPERSON FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

That's essential, because the purpose is to restore young peoples' hope, and it's not enough to celebrate the 60-year anniversary of the Treaties in Rome. What's needed are concrete actions. So, although I can't give you a firm "yes", because this is a simulation, I can however tell you that it is in line with the objectives we're working on here at the European Commission.

MICHELE BUONO

Thank you.

JACUB ADAMOWICZ – SPOKESPERSON FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Thank you... now it's up to you.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI, IN THE STUDIO

And we thank you, but we've done our part of the work. Now the ball is in the court of our cities' administrators. But they have to be competent. Michele Buono's extraordinary work is not protected by copyright and it can be copied. It's not a utopia, but we've seen the possibilities first-hand. Can we believe in a better country?