

CASE STUDY

MILAN (IT) – SÃO PAULO (BR)

IURC - LA



JUNE 2023

Thematic Network: Urban and Regional Renewal & Social Cohesion

Thematic Clusters: Urban Sustainable Agenda / Urban Regeneration Projects

Cross-cutting challenge: Post-Covid Recovery – Social Justice & Inclusion

Topic keywords: urban regeneration, sustainability, planning, public spaces, greening, brownfield areas.

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MILAN – SÃO PAULO

IURC – CASE STUDY

Regeneration of industrial heritage and brownfield areas, considered as catalysts for social and environmental transformations.

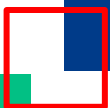
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

São Paulo and Milan are working on urban regeneration through the lens of sustainability and social inclusion. The cities are interested in uncovering common patterns, similarities, and important differences in their land-use organisation, city development plans, and policies. They have created a **comparative study** with the aim of shedding light on important urban regeneration policies, practices and projects that both cities are developing which includes a detailed analysis of different planning instruments and regeneration methodologies. This cooperation process has led to the creation of guidelines summarising their main learnings from the comparative study and shared principles for advancing sustainable, socially inclusive urban regeneration. They have focused on the regeneration of brownfield areas with the aim of creating sustainable and lively neighbourhoods, improving connectivity, and integrating vibrant public spaces into greening and economic development strategies. The **guidelines** are the result of a collaborative effort that seeks to open up the discussion on solutions to common problems through the co-design of a roadmap and inspired by international best practices and which are adaptable to local contexts and specificities.

São Paulo and Milan also have built strong ties that led to new opportunities for collaboration, namely on waste management and environmental education, as well as on the fashion industry and its link with circular economy.



Milan, Bovisa Goccia: regeneration area for Politecnico di Milano's Campus Nord (source - [HERE](#))



MAIN CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Milan is an important economic and cultural hub in Italy. In 2019, the city adopted its new urban plan with the 2030 Horizon which seeks to focus on intergenerational social inclusion, the distribution of urban growth's benefits across all neighbourhoods, and the improvement of environmental conditions, sustainability, and green spaces. In this regard, Milan is working on the redevelopment of urban brownfield sites and the renovation of public spaces with innovative and sustainable methodologies featuring social participation. City leaders and policymakers are actively promoting a more liveable and inclusive city through the transformation of underused areas into green and lively spaces.

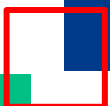
São Paulo is Brazil's largest city with more than 12 million inhabitants within the city boundaries and 21 million in the metropolitan region. The city generates 11% of the national GDP and is an important centre of innovation, education, and economic development. Policymakers, academics, and city leaders are seeking to find new models of growth that focus on improving the quality of public policies to create new sustainable urban development practices.

Towards these objectives, the city is focusing on the redevelopment of vacant and underused spaces while preserving natural heritage (landscapes, forests, and other environmental characteristics that belong to the city's identity). The city also wishes to improve the access of peripheral neighbourhoods to public services through technology and innovation, as well as intending to become a greener city through improving and increasing green areas.

Milan and São Paulo face common challenges linked to urban expansion and environmental issues. They share an important industrial heritage and both cities have several large brownfield sites in well-connected and/or central areas, that have a great potential for regeneration.



During their Study Visit in Milan, the São Paulo team learned about the city's impressive regeneration projects such as the new Bovisa Politecnico campus and the Ex Macello regeneration projects. As the city is currently in the process of defining strategies for the regeneration of the Bras area, with its partner city Milan they decided to build a comparative analysis that would act as analytical framework and allow the design of guidelines for urban regeneration projects, to then be applied to their own context and transferred to other cities.





The Bras area is located in São Paulo’s Central District, and boasts a rich cultural heritage, including brownfield sites such as the Complexo do Gasômetro. The city centre is surrounded by public services and facilities related to art, music, theatre, commercial activities, events, and gastronomy. However, car infrastructure act as urban barrier, fragmenting the area to the detriment of pedestrian facilities and safety, while also generating large, disconnected empty spaces. Brás features many brownfield areas that form an important reserve of vacant urban land with a transformative potential to create new residential and mixed-use developments. The area thus represents a great opportunity for the transformation of São Paulo’s Central District.

“Heritage preservation and regeneration can act as a middle point between sustainable development and social inclusion”

– **Rodolfo Maiche**, Public Policy and Government Management Analyst - Secretary of Environment and Green Affairs, Municipality of São Paulo

The redevelopment of the area therefore seeks to fully capture the potential of São Paulo’s City Centre, by integrating culture, economy, and urban regeneration objectives. This innovative perspective sees different elements of the Brás Area (Casa das Retortas, Parque Dom Pedro II, Complex Gasometres) as an integrated intervention to create a new Hub for Creative Economy with the power to transform the area into a thriving centre of innovation and creativity.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

The cities compared both their pressing challenges and current urban initiatives to identify common sustainable urban development areas for collaboration and transferable solutions. This resulted in the creation of a **comparative study**, analysing both cities' planning instruments and mechanisms to transform and regenerate urban environments. They have developed a deeper understanding of how strategic plans for land-use and zoning regulations can promote more diverse, sustainable, and lively neighbourhoods. After the elaboration of the document summarising these important learnings, Milan and São Paulo held a workshop to gather ideas and inspiration on urban regeneration.

Through this cooperation process, the cities have **co-designed regeneration guidelines** to create a roadmap that can be adapted to the context and realities of other cities. The guidelines for redevelopment projects, focused on **brownfield areas with important cultural heritage contexts**, will serve as starting point to guide the different redevelopment plans and strategies in both Milan and São Paulo. They highlight the main elements of success present in both cities, that were shown in the comparative study.



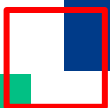
KEY FIGURES : The Bras Area

18,242 m²
of new uses
contemplated in the
Casa das Retortas

9
urban regeneration
guidelines elaborated

6+
New proposed uses
for the project (museum,
innovation centres for textile, wood,
and gastronomy, restaurant,
panoramic rooftop, library,
coworking, etc.)

As a result of the fruitful exchange of knowledge and experiences with the municipality of Milan and experts from the Politecnico di Milano, São Paulo will integrate the main learnings from the cooperation into the new Bras redevelopment project. By integrating the guidelines to the project, the objective will be to increase the connectivity of the Bras neighbourhood to the rest of the city, its access to public spaces and green areas with the Dom Pedro Park, as well as provide a renewed liveliness and economic dynamics. In addition, the comparative study is a complete document that provides a necessary analytical framework for future projects.



“Milan and São Paulo have more similarities than we could imagine, which allowed us to work together towards a common goal.”

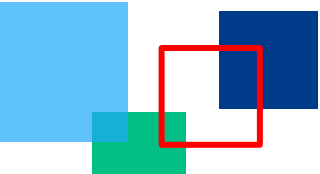
– Francesco Vescovi, Urban Planning Officer – Comune di Milano



São Paulo, Casa das Retortas: regeneration site in Bras Area (source – ADESAMPA & SMUL)

Therefore, the Bras redevelopment project is not only fostering the revitalization of an important central area in São Paulo but also has the potential to become a catalyst to include Nature Based Solutions and innovative sustainable technologies that improve environmental conditions, increase green coverage, and limit heat island effects in the area. Learnings from the cooperation are a starting point to implement new strategies and continue collaborating on the creation of more inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable neighbourhoods.

You can find a summary of the guidelines below, that highlight the main learnings from the comparative study:



1

Zoning & incentives



- Zoning strategy to identify opportunity areas
- Integration of new projects into existing urban guidelines
- Requirements and incentives for lively neighbourhoods.

5

Accessibility criteria



- Regeneration strategies around transportation nodes to increase accessibility of the redeveloped area
- 15-minutes city models
- Job creation near residential areas.

2

Territorial integration



- Accounting for wider urban dynamics
- Integration between micro and urban scale
- Taking advantage of new regeneration projects to create integrated strategies

6

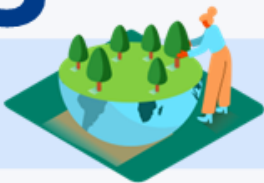
Intersectoral synergies



- Identify key public and private synergies
- Local Economic Development to achieve social outcomes
- Promote tax exemption or reduction incentives to the private sector

3

Sustainability perspective



- Sustainability strategy for land-use allocation and green areas.
- Considering current & potential scenarios
- Incentives & mandatory environmental requirements (quotas).

7

Participatory processes



- Ensuring that transformation processes will benefit to citizens
- Innovative participatory processes to involve local communities at each step
- Participatory processes as an opportunity

4

Architectural competitions



- Incentives to developers to create architectural competitions
- Municipality establishes rules and guidelines
- The winner must include participatory process

8

Heritage guidelines



- Heritage preservation as opportunity and middle ground between environment and regeneration priorities
- Transforming buildings and assets is more sustainable than demolition or new constructions

9

Temporary uses & Academia



- Temporary uses to bring new activities to regenerated area Inclusion of local communities in interventions developed
- Academia creates knowledge & capacities

Milan and São Paulo seek to continue the dialogue with the wider IURC network with different departments and across sectors including the Politecnico di Milano (Polimi). While the cities have collaborated in various initiatives and programmes over many decades, through the IURC-LA cooperation they have been able to work decisively on a topic that is important to the sustainable development of both cities.



The concrete results from the IURC-LA programme between both cities extend to a number of successful agreements that will contribute to the pairing's long-term collaboration. Connections made during Study Visits and technical workshops allowed new synergies to emerge on a variety of topics linked to sustainable urban development (regeneration, food security, environmental education, and culture). In March 2023, a meeting in the Palácio do Anhangabaú in São Paulo allowed member of both cities' international relations department to further discuss and exchange on these topics. This led to the organisation of the following activities:

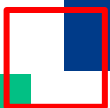
1. A delegation from the Secretary of Environment and Green Affairs from São Paulo (UMAPAZ) conducted a field visit to Milan in March. The objective was to learn more about the management of urban environmental services, and especially about **circular economy, waste management, and environmental communication** to raise awareness amongst citizens and in schools. The Secretary is actively collaborating with the Municipality of Milan to find common solutions and exchange knowledge on these topics.
2. The Culture Secretary and International Relations Department of Milan were invited to participate in the **World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF)** that will take place in October in São Paulo. The exchange will be an opportunity to **develop cultural cooperation activities** between the Claudio Abbado Civic School of Music in Milan and the public schools of São Paulo and Graduate Schools of Music to foster joint classical musical performances in São Paulo.
3. Both cities have active and vibrant **fashion industries** and are exchanging insights on this sector. As a result of the strong relationship between São Paulo and Milan, two renown Fashion Academies of São Paulo will participate in the **Fashion Graduate Italia 2023** - Internationalization Project / Talent To Talent. The Piattaforma ETS has been a hub connecting the best Italian Institutions and Academies and dedicates special attention to international talents to create a global network.
4. In October 2022, Pedro Martin Fernandes (Advisor, City Hall of São Paulo), was invited by Massimo Tadi (Associate Professor – Polimi), to give a lecture at the Polimi, Master Programme in Building and Architectural Engineering. The impact of the lecture was significant as students had the opportunity to understand the theoretical perspective from a new point of view, applied to a real project and based on integrated strategy



for problem solving. Technical experts from São Paulo will continue to be invited to collaborate with the Polimi and give new guest lectures in the future.

“The lecture triggered new questions through a productive dialogue, highlighting the relevance of cooperation”

- Pedro Martin Fernandes, Advisor – City Hall São Paulo



LESSONS LEARNED

*The following learnings were gathered from the comparative study. Please find more [HERE](#).

Interconnectivity of environmental and social issues: a holistic approach recognises that environmental performance and social inclusion are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Addressing one issue cannot be done in isolation. When developing a regeneration project, local heritage features provide a unique opportunity to transform neighbourhoods into liveable and sustainable areas while preserving their character.

Importance of community participation : recognising the critical role that communities play in shaping territorial development and improving social outcomes. Importance of involving communities in decision-making processes and of building capacities to support communities to be able to participate effectively. For regeneration projects, both cities wish to develop common solutions that minimise bureaucracy linked to participatory processes and therefore increase efficiency and practical impacts.

Territorial integration: to regenerate heritage / brownfield areas, it is essential to consider wider urban dynamics, with a territorial integration of surrounding neighbourhoods. Inserting specific site regeneration interventions can connect projects between the microscale and other urban dynamics, coordinating transformative actions in surrounding areas. It is key to create an integrated strategy for the whole neighbourhood to be able to reach common objectives of liveability, densification, connectivity and sustainability for the regeneration of vacant or under-used spaces.

Intersectional synergies: both cities recognise the importance of creating partnerships cross sectors. Through incentives or specific agreements, social benefits and the public goods can provide a positive feedback loop of local economic development and neighbourhood transformation in collaboration with the private sector. Academia and research is also fundamental for capacity building, creating intergenerational dynamics and attracting young people, as well as promoting temporary uses for heritage and regenerated sites.

THE IURC PROGRAMME

The International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme enables cities in different global regions to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with the public and private sectors, as well as representatives of research and innovation, community groups and citizens. Through engaging in IURC, cities will have the chance to share and exchange knowledge with their international counterparts, building a greener, more prosperous future.

The IURC programme is an opportunity for local governments to learn from each other, set ambitious targets, forge lasting partnerships, test new solutions, and boost their city's international profile. Its activities will support the achievement of policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the EU Urban Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.

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Rodrigo Ravena, Secretary –Environment and Green Affairs Department, Municipality of São Paulo

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Links to related outputs:

Comparative Study: https://www.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/IURC_LA_Milan-SP_Comparative-Study.pdf

Regeneration Guidelines: https://www.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/guidelines-SP-milan_vertical_VF.pdf

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