

Comunicato stampa

Architects: In Pesaro, the experience of Medellín — from global capital of drug trafficking and murders to a model of urban regeneration

At a conference organized by the CNAPPC and the Order of Architects PLC of Pesaro and Urbino, as part of Pesaro Italian Capital of Culture 2024

Crusi: “Social innovation is the first and most important outcome of urban regeneration processes.”

Cappochin: “We must envision new ways of living, working, and moving.”

Storoni: “Due to its unique characteristics, our territory, characterized by coastal cities and inland villages, can serve as a testing ground for new relational processes.”

Pesaro, May 15th, 2024 – In over three decades, after the death of Pablo Escobar - leader of the Medellín cartel - the city finally shook off its reputation as the most dangerous city in the world and the global capital of drug trafficking, becoming one of a very limited number of cities internationally recognised as a positive example of innovation and urban transformation. In 2013, it was awarded the title of “Most Innovative City in the World”, surpassing both New York and Tel Aviv, a recognition granted by the City Group, the Wall Street Journal, and the Urban Land Institute. Medellín's flagship include its modern and innovative integrated public transport system (a metro and Metrocable, a network of cable cars connecting the city's suburbs), its environmental practices, and a strong cultural impulse through universities, museums, schools, libraries, and cultural centres, that foster the expansion of gathering spaces, encouraging social interactions.

The extraordinary transformation of Medellín was presented in Pesaro by Colombian architect Jorge Pérez-Jaramillo of MDE Urban Lab—one of the key figures behind the initiative—during the “Urban Regeneration: Design, Regulation, and an International Vision” conference, organized by the National Council of Architects, Planners, Landscapers and Conservationists (CNAPPC) and the Order of Architects PLC of Pesaro and Urbino, as part of Pesaro Italian Capital of Culture 2024.

Pérez-Jaramillo—member of the CNAPPC Scientific Committee for the “Project of the Future – What Cities and Territories Do We Want to Live In?” initiative — served as Medellín's chief urban planner from 2012 to 2015. During his tenure, he was involved in the development of numerous projects that helped transform the city. Among many others, the “Parque del Río” - a metropolitan green corridor considered one of the most significant in Latin America - and the “Unidades de Vida Articulada” (UVA): once inaccessible and dangerous areas surrounding water reservoirs, now repurposed into public gathering spaces and returned to local communities, fostering a renewed sense of civic duty, one of the greatest achievements of contemporary Medellín.



According to Massimo Crusi, President of the CNAPPC, “social innovation is the first and most significant outcome of urban regeneration processes, as it can generate meaningful change within the social and urban fabric of cities. That is why, for the National Council, initiatives that promote the value of high-quality architecture—and its ability to improve citizens’ quality of life—are of central importance.”

Giuseppe Cappochin, Head of the CNAPPC’s Department for “Urban Reform and the Future of the City”, through the “Project of the Future – What Cities and Territories Do We Want to Live In?” and drawing on the most significant international experiences, emphasized the need for a radical shift in the approach to urban regeneration, while providing concrete contribution to the Legislator, public administrations, and public opinion, through innovative paradigms of territorial governance, thus imagining other ways of living, working and moving around.

Finally, Carmen Storoni, President of the Order of Architects PLC of Pesaro and Urbino, stated: “A new awareness of the fragility of our inhabited territories is urgently needed, requiring a renewed urban culture. The unique nature of our territory—characterized by coastal cities and inland villages - can serve as a testing ground for new relational processes between people, and between nature and the built environment. We have the potential; the hope is that politics will be able and willing to seize it.”

Rome, May 15th

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