



Country Context Report & Situation Analysis

Project Result 1 - Country context analysis: availability and infrastructure of informal learning space

Sapienza, University of Rome

Italy

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Rome, 12/12/2022

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Introduction

The Italian higher education system is binary, with two major institutionally and functionally different sectors or compartments: the University sector and the Higher Education for Fine Arts, Music, and Dance sector, abbreviated as the AFAM sector.

The Italian university sector comprises higher education institutions divided thus:

- public universities
- legally recognised non-public universities
- on-line universities
- higher schools and institutions with special charter

Within these sectors, students can study the following learning paths:

- Bachelor's degree: Bachelor's degree (3 years)
- Bachelor's degree: Master's degree (2 years)
- Master's degree: Master's degree (5 years)
- Master's degree (PhD): PhD (3 years)
- Master's degree and continuing education programs: Master's degree and Graduate School (1 to 2 years).

To complete any higher education course, the student is required to obtain a certain number of credits that define university study programmes. A university credit (CFU) is normally equivalent to 25 hours of study by a student, including independent study. The average quantity of academic work accomplished by a full-time student in one year is traditionally measured as 60 CFUs.

Degree and Master's Degree study courses with comparable aims and educational activities are organised into "classes" (degree classes). Each institution autonomously designs the education content of each degree course: they are required to incorporate specific educational activities (and the equivalent number of credits) established at the national level. These criteria are unique to each class.

Situation on National (Regional) Level in Italy

Key Stakeholders on National (Regional) Level

Provision, Management and Design of Learning Spaces in Higher Education

Individual universities in Italy are responsible for creating university facilities, whether official or informal study areas. In particular, at Sapienza University of Rome, a single entity prepares the building planning, coordinates the construction, conservation, and maintenance of the real estate, through the design, direction, and control of the works; and is in charge of the certification and verification of conformity of the works carried out, as well as the design and implementation of the fittings and furnishings.

Although planning and maintenance are centralised in these offices, independent and autonomous occurrences occur in which student clubs (each with its own representatives) buy and adjust "unused" places and regions to their own purposes. This is a strange phenomena that occurs more at humanities faculties, presumably because there is more conflict, discourse, and argument among the students who attend them.

As a result, Sapienza's Building Administration Area has implemented new intervention processes via an automated Ticketing System in order to increase the efficiency of the University's building stock maintenance and management of associated services. Requests for intervention must follow specific protocols, and the platform is intended to highlight inefficiencies or to offer recommendations (which are almost never heard).

Promoting and Supporting of Inclusivity in Higher Education

At the national level, there is the Ministry of Equal Opportunities and Family, which is in charge of information in the field of equal opportunities, as well as the collection and organisation of information through the creation of databases, as well as the promotion and coordination of activities, verification, monitoring, and training. This involves monitoring for inclusion, equitable treatment, and the elimination of prejudice. The ministry is primarily general, while monitoring rights and managing equal chances is outsourced to specific institutions in the case of university education.

There is also a Minister for People with Disabilities. The Office, in particular, is in charge of the steps required for the implementation of interventions related to the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as promoting their full and effective participation, social inclusion, and autonomy, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

As of January 29, 2021, Sapienza University of Rome has taken a huge step forward for the rights of inclusiveness. Sapienza has established the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

The Technical-Scientific Committee on Diversity and Inclusion is made up of faculty, students and technical-administrative staff and works to foster inclusion processes and counter all forms of discrimination, direct or indirect, within the University.

Purposes and activities of the CTS are coordinated with other University bodies operating in similar areas such as the Single Guarantee Committee, the Trust Advisor, and the Technical and Scientific Committee for Sustainability to carry out strategic plans and initiatives aimed at

enhancing the potential of individuals, supporting equality and integration, and promoting collaboration and the creation of new networks, both internal and external, to foster policies for inclusion.

The programmatic lines of CTS activities developed through the work of special subgroups are the following:

- Mapping of student perceptions on different areas of possible discrimination, effects on perceived
- Well-being, knowledge of Sapienza's services and initiatives for inclusion; identification and intervention on architectural barriers;
- Promotion of non-hostile language and communication;
- Deaf culture awareness, promotion and dissemination of LIS within the entire Athenaeum community;
- Creation of a portal on inclusion and diversity on the University's website.

Today there are important developments from Sapienza University. A public notice has recently been published by the Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri (most important government agency in Italy), Department of Youth Policy, for the financing of projects aimed at the implementation of actions to encourage and support the creation of gathering spaces for young people in which to promote recreational, social, educational, cultural and training activities.

The aim is to encourage the use, by the new generations, of the spaces available within public libraries and universities, through the funding of project proposals for multipurpose and innovative spaces for broad accessibility and usability.

Engaging with Informal and Non-conventional Learning Spaces

In our country, at the institutional or official level, there are no institutional university bodies that suggest or point to informal learning spaces.

Instead, there are only mostly spontaneous initiatives of groups sharing information by networking. This is usually done through chat (posting of positions and feedback) of the users themselves or through appropriate links placed on official pages of educational institutions or popular web sites and communities.

For example, the *Ente Lombardo di lingua e cultura italiana* in Milan (a place where foreigners learn Italian through specific courses) is promoting a campaign for group and collaborative study, scattering the location of spaces spread throughout the city where they can "throw themselves into books and at the same time enjoy a good coffee."

In Rome, the website RomaTips, (an independent site that promotes culture, Roman food, music, etc.), like many other websites have done, gathered information on what we call Informal Learning Spaces, and then produced an article called "15 Spaces Where to Study (or Work) in Rome: 15 Places with Free Wi-Fi and More." These are unconventional spaces (not libraries or study rooms), but places that combine good food (as in the best Italian tradition!), free wi-fi (because being connected with others is a primary need) and equipped spaces.

The initiatives are, therefore, mostly about information gathering, as many communities realize the need of users to have and use informal places for learning, but there is also the realization that the users themselves are not aware of the existence of such spaces and there is therefore a need for dissemination.

State of the Art: Informal and Non-conventional Learning Spaces in Italy

Projects and Good Practice Examples

Libraries or more traditional free, though non-university, spaces are plentiful in Rome or in large and small university towns, but they have restrictive hours and rules (such as not being able to consume food, closing on weekends or Sundays, or closing at 1pm, observing absolute silence), as well as outdated equipment (wi-fi not working or with restrictions, paper-only consultation of books and/or journals, etc.) that do not make students feel comfortable for informal consultation. Furthermore, the institutions behind these sites frequently do not network and network with one another, preferring to protect their own piece of the public.

Then there are museums and cultural spaces in general that foster more spontaneous initiatives, recognising the relevance of discussion, conflict, and dialectic in increasing knowledge and critical thinking, as well as the importance of the services supplied in such places (wi-fi, equipment, but also a good coffee). In reality, spending long hours in cafés or cultural centres talking and launching new enterprises is a habit that dates back to the 1800s).

In the city of Rome, for example, one encounters two museums the MACRO and the MAXXI that provide their own equipped spaces and cafeteria.

MAXXI (designed by Zaha Hadid) where the free wi-fi works perfectly and the agility of access "is dreamlike" (so cite those who study there; in fact, there is no need for lengthy registration procedures and there is a very high upload, browsing and downloading speed), each table has many electrical outlets available, as well as being directly in the cafeteria ("One always feels like a good coffee when studying," cite the sites that report it). Chairs in the outdoor garden, for studying during the warm sunny days of winter, fall, and spring, and cushions inside, under the staircase, complete the picture of space availability.



Fig. 1 – MAXXI museum cafeteria and working/learning space.

The MACRO museum is a contemporary art museum that has undergone ups and downs. Currently, the Macro Asylum project revives it as a space open for free to the city and artistic creation. The project is called Museum for Preventive Imagination-Publishing, and it expresses the desire to let visitors free to bring out their imagination by providing spaces and guidelines for their use. The Macro cafeteria, because of its multifaceted nature and cultural contamination, is judged to be a lovely place to study or work in Rome.



Fig. 2 – MACRO museum cafeteria and working/learning space.

Many bookshops also include reading areas. The Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli institution (a chain of bookstores scattered throughout Italy, particularly in large cities and

university towns) is one example: some rooms are set aside for primary use by students and researchers who wish to use the Fondazione Feltrinelli's archival and book holdings, as well as all those interested in reading and/or studying from their own materials.



Fig. 2 –Fondazione Feltrinelli working/learning space.

Tools and Guidance Material

As anticipated, most of the websites that collect this information are private agencies that conduct surveys and market research, for the purpose of publicizing places to meet the needs of users, but also for the purpose of helping individual merchants (cafeterias, small libraries, etc.) advertise themselves.

It's worth noting that no one ever addresses the available places inside universities or different faculties. A student who lives near the Faculty of Architecture but studies medicine, for example, has no means of knowing what study rooms are available at the Faculty of Architecture. A student is then forced to attend his own faculty. This is not conducive to student interaction, potential collaborations, or debates, and it is not even a green practise in a city like Rome: it is necessary for a student to travel, even a lot, to reach their own faculty, when they could travel less if they had more information about nearby spaces, inside universities, and elsewhere.

These sites frequently gather information based on certain criteria, which are also made explicit: presence of wi-fi; good lighting; spacious tables; possibility of sitting for a long time without consuming additional resources; presence of other students to feel part of a group. Often (hilarious note), it is also decided to use the cost of coffee and the goodness of coffee as the unit of measurement and selection criteria. After all, coffee is the most common item among student orders—not only because of the effect of caffeine, but also because it can legitimise a four-hour stay at the same table without ordering anything else and spending little.

Scientific Publications

In Italy, most of the scientific debate, and consequently the scientific literature, concerns the theoretical differentiation between the terms "formal, informal, and nonformal" referring to educational contexts and/or learning environments. Research is also focused on the "ontological" characteristics of learning and/or its processes.

Other articles have, however, focused, during the emergence of the phenomenon of the spread of study through web platforms, on analysing new online and inclusive learning methods (Caruso, 2015; Giannandrea, 2008; Petrucco, De Rossi, 2018).

However, following the new demands imposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, there has been a proliferation of research into the possibility of designing informal or so-called hybrid study spaces, with the understanding that designing forms and spaces of learning is a process requiring pedagogical, architectural, social, cultural, and political creativity.

The national scientific literature on educational innovation emphasises the close connection that exists between teaching and the learning environment (Buono, Capece, and Giugliano, 2021). As a result, educational renewal initiatives must include a fresh vision of school spaces and instructional contexts. New school design principles are emerging, emphasising learning as an active and productive process.

Finally, other research focuses on the desire to improve spaces; however, it analyses the Italian economic context, which unfortunately lacks funds for improving existing spaces and adapting to new needs, thus proposing civic crowdfunding activities that can be used to improve the facilities and services provided by public universities (Colasanti, Frondizi, Meneguzzo, 2018).

Analysis: Informal Learning Spaces & Inclusion

The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research has not initiated topics to "informal learning spaces." Only protocols have been initiated for distance learning, but not for relational spaces between students.

The Ministries of Public Education and Scientific Research, Equal Opportunity and Disability (3 different ministries), have not developed issues related to informal Learning Spaces.

Learning spaces have changed since the Covid-19 experience. Many scholars and universities have initiated procedures for distance learning. However, no solutions for "new learning spaces" have been provided (Valenti, Montesanto, Straniero, 2021).

This direction has also been expressed by the CNSU (National Council of University Students 2019-2022) in its Recommendation of October 6, 2021 (http://www.cnsu.miur.it/argomenti/documentazione/raccomandazioni/2021/ra_2021_10_06_001.aspx), where the focus is on distance education and not on "new learning spaces."

Situation on Institutional Level at Sapienza, University of Rome

Institutional Context

General Information

Sapienza has a long and illustrious history. It was founded in 1303 by Pope Boniface VIII, who issued a papal edict. He established the Studium Urbis, the University of Rome, in *suprema praesentia dignitatis*. The Studium Urbis grew in prominence and status throughout time. After World War I, Italy shifted toward a fascist government. The dictatorship constructs a prominent university city, inaugurating the new structure built by Marcello Piacentini in 1935.

Sapienza has 11 faculties (scientific and humanities), 58 departments, as well as a School of Advanced Studies and a School of Aerospace Engineering. It also includes several Interdepartmental Research Centers and Research Service Centers. It moreover features two university polyclinics (Policlinico Umberto I and S. Andrea Hospital Center) and other venues for medical education and research.

Sapienza has large and integrated real estate holdings in the urban region, including the University City of Piacenza, which opened in 1935, and structures of outstanding architectural significance in downtown Rome. These include the medieval Engineering building in San Pietro in Vincoli, with its famed Cloister attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo, the structure in Piazza Fontanella Borghese, Villa Mirafiori near Via Nomentana, and the Architecture building in Valle Giulia. The Sciarra glassworks, as well as the modern Marco Polo and Blue Spider buildings, are located in the San Lorenzo area. The historical and architectural value of this legacy needs ongoing attention and investment in preservation and enhancement, which must coexist with plans for the building of new facilities for a contemporary university.

Sapienza employs a highly qualified professional community of teaching, technical, administrative, and library personnel. Sapienza has 3,341 faculty members as of the end of 2020; in addition, there are 2,705 contract faculty members who completely cooperate in teaching and 845 research fellows who contribute to scientific activities. In the university administration, there are 2,104 technical-administrative personnel and 1,487 in the university hospital businesses, for a total of 3,591.

Sapienza has been experiencing an increase in enrollment for a number of years. The total number of students in the 2020-2021 academic year, calculated from the data in the tables below, is 116,928 (105,466 enrolled in courses under the 270/2004 system, 2,325 enrolled in courses under the old systems, and 9,137 enrolled in postgraduate courses).

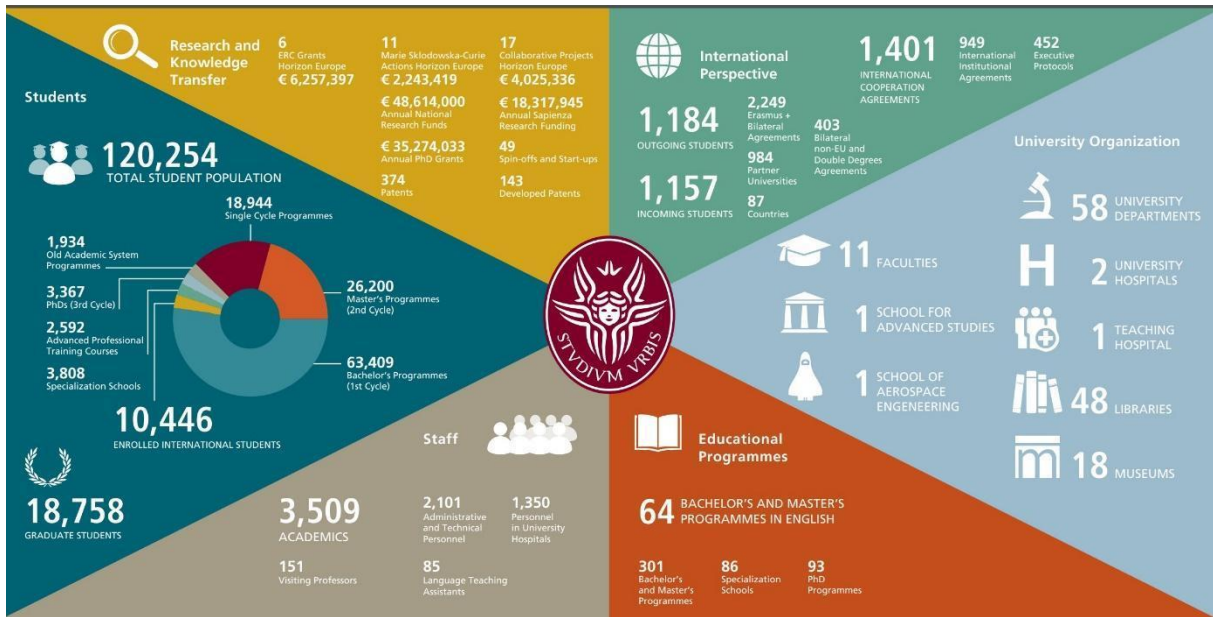


Fig. 4 - Summary table of courses, students enrolled and staff employed

International students enrolled at Sapienza have been steadily increasing in recent years. Even 2020, despite the pandemic, confirmed this positive trend, which highlights the University's attractiveness to young people from different countries who want to access a quality education. International students are defined as students with foreign citizenship or foreign access qualifications. This definition is also used by major global ranking agencies to assess the degree of internationalization of universities.

Regarding activities in support of students, as part of the partnership with Fondazione Intesa Sanpaolo Onlus in March 2020 a call for grants was published for students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs at Sapienza who are physically, mentally, socially or socially disadvantaged or have family members or are in economic difficulty for a total allocation of 125,000 euros.

The Library System consists of the Sapienza Library System Center and the Department and Faculty libraries, plus interdepartmental libraries and that of the Latina campus, for a total of 50 operational facilities at the end of 2020, for 85 service points. Three reading rooms are open H24 and one until midnight. Most libraries observe an opening schedule of more than 10 hours per day.

Physical Infrastructure and Learning Spaces

Stakeholder Focus Groups / Interviews

Methodology

In this part of our project, we followed a qualitative data collection procedure based on interviews/focus groups with the stakeholders. Stakeholders could include persons involved in providing, managing, operating and supporting learning spaces from university administration (e.g., facility management, technical support, students' contact points, study

coordinators, department heads, librarians, student representative councils /unions, etc.), as well as from public authorities and other key stakeholder groups.

Focus groups or single interviews aimed to investigate two main issues regarding the informal learning spaces in our campus:

- **spatial characteristics, availability, accessibility, equipment, and infrastructure of informal and non-conventional learning spaces** provided by the institutions in the consortium and in the university surrounding, as well as
- **awareness, perception, and existing strategies** within the involved stakeholders to promote inclusive and supportive technologically enhanced informal and non-conventional learning environments, as well as established approaches to mitigate existing inequalities.

Interview guidelines were developed by UWK as the work package (PR1) coordinator in English, and they were revised two times following the suggestions and comments of the project partners in a participatory process. Final guidelines including interview questions and some instructions concerning the interview process were translated into Italian and adapted to our campus situation. Following themes were the main issues discussed during the interviews:

- Spatial characteristics of the informal learning environment at the university
- availability, accessibility, usability, equipment, and infrastructure of informal and non-conventional learning spaces
- awareness and perception related to inclusivity (problems, challenges, measurements taken)
- Role of digitalization in using learning spaces
- Future perspectives and plans

We aimed for conducting one focus group with at least 3-5 stakeholders or individual interviews with 3-5 stakeholders.

Data was transcribed and analysed according to guidelines developed by the UWK in cooperation with the partners .

Implementation

On Sept. 25 from 10 a.m. to noon, in the doctoral classroom of the History, Representation and Restoration of Architecture Department, an interview was held with four representatives of the technical-administrative department of the Faculty of Architecture and one representative of the university, specifically referring to the area of property management of Sapienza.

The interview was conducted in the form of a focus group having been conducted through a brainstorming discussion. Only one participant was given a private interview, as he was unable to participate due to his detached location.

The sample of interviewees, although rather small, was quite heterogeneous in terms of background (administrative, technical, managers), educational qualification, age and gender.

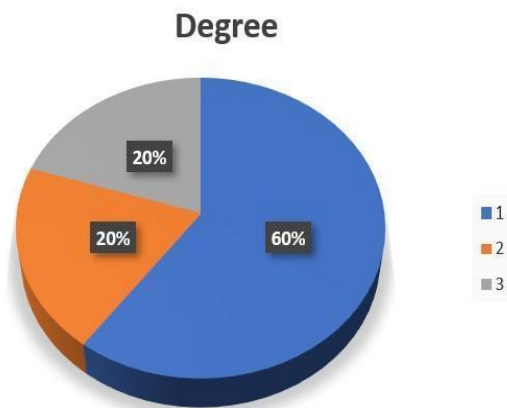


Fig. 5 - Graph of educational degree or qualification. 1: Bachelor's degree; 2: Diploma; 3: Master's degree/PhD.

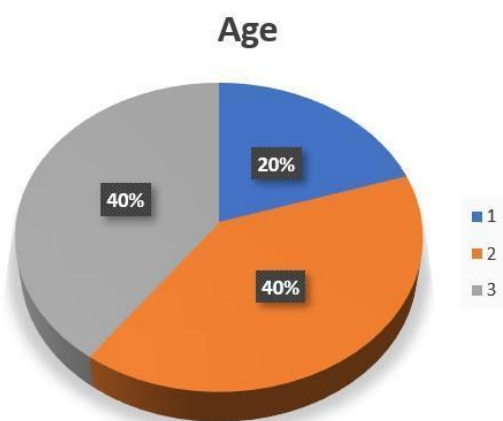


Fig. 6 - Graph of the age of participants. 1: 30-40 years old; 2: 40-55 years old; 3: 55-70 years old.

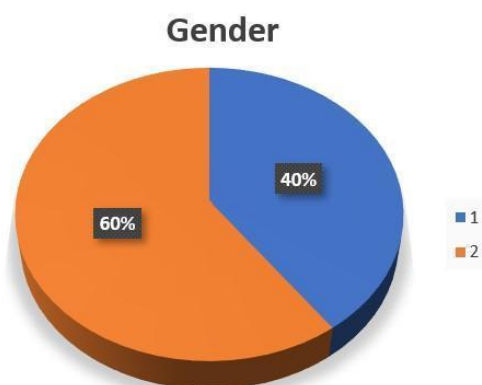


Fig. 7 - Graph of the gender of participants. 1: male; 2: female; 3: others.

Task/Responsibilities

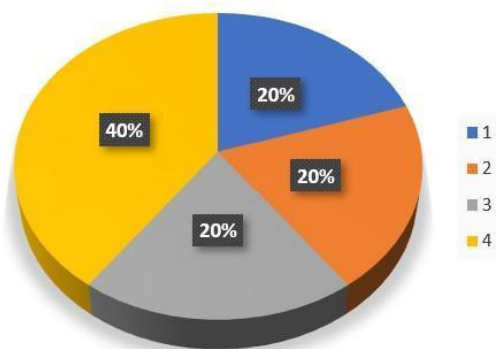


Fig. 8 - Graph of participants. 1: Administrative Director; 2: Technician; 3: Manager, 4: Administrative

Table 1: Focus Group and Interview Participants – Department and task

Participants	Institution	Department / Division	Tasks / Responsibilities
Participant 1	Sapienza University of Rome – Architecture Faculty	Technical division	Coordinator of administrative technical staff.
Participant 2	Sapienza University of Rome	Area Gestione Edilizia (Property Management Area)	Managing the digitization process of Sapienza's properties.
Participant 3	Sapienza University of Rome – Architecture Faculty	Faculty Management	Teaching Management
Participant 4	Sapienza University of Rome – Architecture Faculty	Faculty Management	Program curriculum office
Participant 5	Sapienza University of Rome – Architecture Faculty	Department Director	Administrative and Scientific management of History, Representation and Restoration of Architecture Department

The discussion among participants is led by a facilitator who launches the key topics of the focus, leaving space for the group to engage in discussion, including through mutual clarifications, deepening the views expressed.

Results

Different themes emerged from the responses, both in terms of the characteristics of existing informal learning spaces and considerations for, not so much the needs of students (of which most are unaware), but the improved contribution that Informal Learning Spaces would return to students if well thought out and implemented.

They emerge, a number of aspects and values that NIILS should and could bring to the student community:

- The relational aspects: a quality NIILS must aim to develop an environment in which students can, in a collaborative work space, develop skills related to "building," observing phenomena, analyzing and describing the outcomes of their experiments, and improving problem solving skills;
- The value of networks and technologies: spaces must be integrated with digital technologies that promote their usability and effectiveness in terms of use. In fact, at the technological level, there is instead an increasing diffusion of technologies dedicated to Smart Learning, such as: systems for reserving rooms and stations; systems for room automation; interactive whiteboards; and centralized printing areas.
- Well-being aspects: the general comfort of spaces, air quality, temperature, noise and brightness can produce fluctuations in productivity and individual or collective creative thinking. Analyzing workspaces a concentration of creative individuals with different skills among them, the possibility of using stable communication networks, and the presence of informal environments (bars, lunchrooms, common spaces) where relaxation opens up the exchange of ideas.
- The support and control of self-management: within universities there are still few policies and guidelines in order to promote, support and develop in the forms provided by the institutions, services for students, activating projects for spaces
- of aggregation and Self-Managed Study. In this area, The Sapienza building management area should commit to providing spaces and infrastructure for study and cultural aggregation to be conducted in self-management.
- Value of differentiation: different study needs require spaces with different characteristics to enable high effectiveness of collaboration and learning. Therefore, it is important that there are different types of spaces that encourage collaboration and socialization, as well as concentration and contemplation (individual or collective creative thinking activities and regenerative breaks);
- Aspects of reconfigurability: spaces that can be adapted quickly at low cost to meet contingent needs or long-term evolutions; this feature, more than any other, proved valuable during the COVID-19 emergency;
- Habitability: spaces intended not as mere study spaces, but as welcoming (and stress-reducing) places that take into account people's well-being, comfort, and professional needs.

Finally, a strongly recalled aspect, which appears to be frequently offered as a requirement of service excellence, is continuity and the ability to use at times other than frontal instruction and study.

It also became clear that none of those there were aware of any venues outside of the institution that might be utilised for informal study, and that the term "inclusiveness" was never spoken spontaneously, but only when pressed.

During the discussion, there were a number of questions and self-criticisms on the topic of physical learning spaces and the characteristics they should have in order to meet the needs of today's radically changed society, in which even students are very different from those who sat at desks only a few years ago (attention thresholds, ways of studying not only on paper books, use of platforms and interchange of opinions, comments and files via the web). We should "move beyond the idea of the classroom as a single spatial reference for teaching to

embrace a vision that every place inside or outside the university should be considered a place for learning."

New functionalities have been added to universities today. They are not only educational spaces, but also environments that encourage the construction of "bridges" between different generations and cultures; they are spaces and occasions for dialogue between public administration, students, and citizens; they are learning environments, but also service centres for the territory; they are places for young people, but also points of reference for the archipelago of associations that operate and gravitate to urban realities. The university building must evolve in this new cultural humus and requires thoughtful surroundings to accommodate the full capacity of a society in the creation.

The question posed forcefully is "why are we technicians and administrators still largely illiterate about the ability to organize in different and flexible ways the spaces of education and about the needs of students"?

Existing Informal Learning Spaces

Table 2: Important informal learning spaces at Sapienza as identified by stakeholders

		Indoor	Outdoor	Off campus	Focused learning	Collaborative Learning
Label	Notes / Description					
Library		YES	NO	NO	YES	NO
Aula Zen (room)	Classroom equipped with plugs, but few stations	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Aula Zen (hallway)	Very cold classroom in winter (without heating)	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
Picnic Tables	(Wooden tables near the pond)	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

- Both Focused and Collaborative
 - AULA ZEN (hallway)
 - Indoor
 - Picnic Table
 - Outdoor
- Collaborative learning
 - AULA ZEN (room)
 - Indoor
- Focused learning
 - LIBRARY
 - Indoor

Characteristics of informal learning spaces

AULA ZEN (room)

- Basic needs (food & hygiene) - vending machines are available in the close backyard
- Infrastructure: plugs available
- Technology: insufficiently available
- Furniture: table available
 - Comfortable but very little (only for a few students)
 - Type/design: classroom with shared tables divided by rows.
 - Use: laptop studies and design
- temperature & ventilation: sufficient
- Acoustics: poorly designed (just for collaborative learning)
- Lighting: sufficient

AULA ZEN (hallway)

- Basic needs (food & hygiene) - vending machines are available in the close backyard
- Infrastructure: plugs available
- Technology: insufficiently available
- Furniture: table available
 - Not comfortable but very little (only for a few students)
 - Type/design: shared tables, very narrow and equipped with fixed chairs on the floor (made of stone, so they are very uncomfortable)
 - Use: laptop studies and design
- temperature & ventilation: insufficient
- Acoustics: not very good
- Lighting: insufficient



Fig. 9 – Hallway table

LIBRARY

- Basic needs (food & hygiene) – it is forbidden to bring food and beverage
- Infrastructure: plugs not available
- Technology: insufficiently available
- Furniture: table available
 - Not comfortable (old design and usability)
 - Type/design: classroom with single tables a focused light
 - Use: books learning
- temperature & ventilation: sufficient
- Acoustics: poorly designed (just for focus learning, it is forbidden to speak)
- Lighting: sufficient

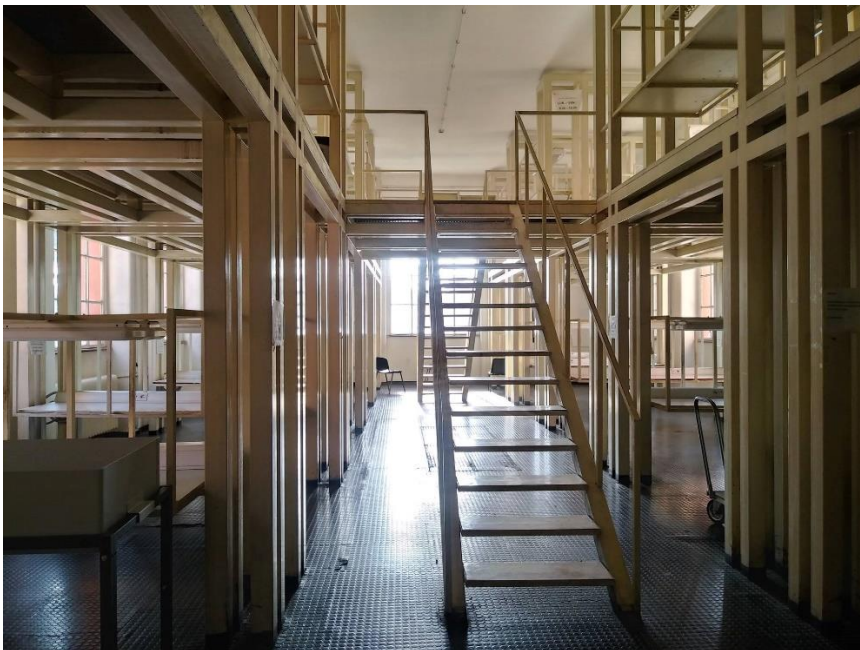


Fig. 10 – Library

PIC-NIC TABLES

- Basic needs (food & hygiene) – vending machines are available in the close backyard
- Infrastructure: plugs not available
- Technology: insufficiently available
- Furniture: table available
 - Not comfortable (old design and usability)
 - Type/design: tables and chairs in a single object made of wood and not suitable for drawing and planning
 - Use: books learning
- temperature & ventilation: not air conditioned (it depends on seasons)
- Acoustics: -
- Lighting: it depends on weather

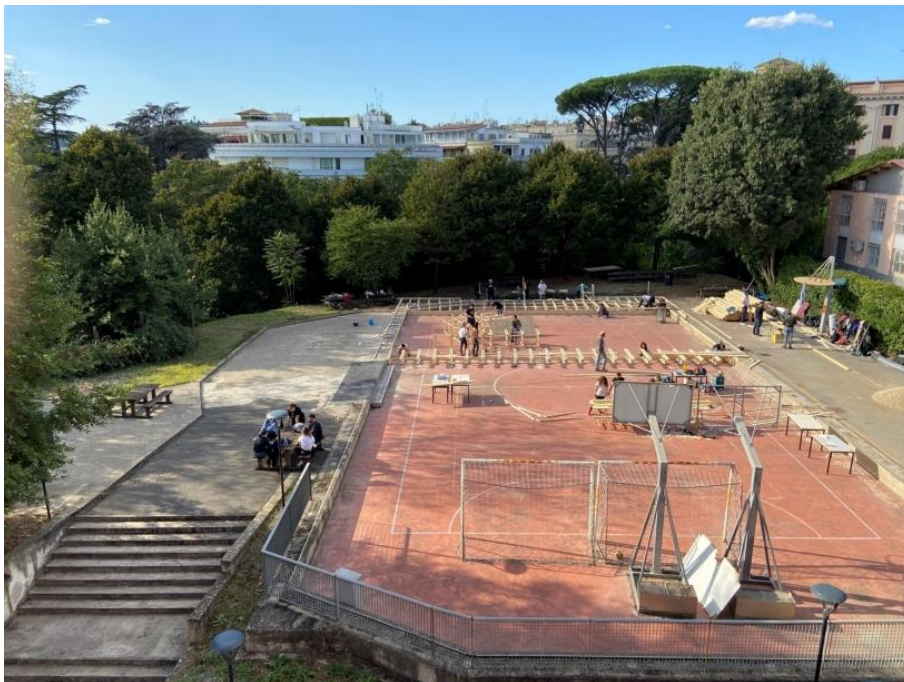


Fig. 11 – Pic-nic area under construction



Fig. 11 – Pic-nic area during summertime

Usability of ILS

- Inclusivity: All the rooms are not inclusive
- Flexibility: there is no flexibility in places (spaces are very small and with fixed furniture)
- Circulation and length of use: Informal learning spaces are few, so there is no circulation of occupants

- Accessibility
 - Administrative accessibility
 - Physical accessibility: Not good due to the lack of adaptability of the spaces and because they are not well designed for architectural barriers
- Comfort: lacking
- Capacity: lacking
- Problems and challenges
 - students' perspective: stakeholders are unaware of student comments. Only the Department Director (he is also a professor).
 - financial and administrative: funds are low for a complete redesign, and those who manage the built heritage have no contact with the student body
 - Management and regulations: rules are restrictive for students, but they serve to operate control.

Awareness and Strategies on ILS

- existing strategies
 - For well-being: There are no strategies for future informal learning spaces. Thanks to the project, some stakeholders have gained awareness
 - For Access: There are no strategies for future informal learning spaces. Thanks to the project, some stakeholders have gained awareness
- Use of formal learning spaces as ILS: many classrooms are used by students at times when they are empty
- Pandemic and Digitalisation
 - role of digitalisation in use of Learning Spaces: the web has become for all intents and purposes an informal learning space
 - impact of pandemic on teaching: Stakeholders are not aware of the impacts of the pandemic on teaching. They are far from the student world (except for the Department Director. He is a professor too).
- Future expectations and plans
 - Inclusivity: inclusivity is still little considered, but many stakeholders are aware of its importance
 - use of ILS: We should move beyond the idea of the classroom as a single spatial reference for teaching to embrace a vision that every place inside or outside the university should be considered a place for learning.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has clearly had a substantial influence on the distribution and accessibility of curricular content across the country. Many colleges continue to employ the hybrid learning approach because it allows students who are geographically challenged or have other barriers that prohibit them from participating in in-person sessions to engage in the class with minimal disturbance to their learning schedule. As a consequence, more kids can now attend classes than before COVID-19.

Why should more money be spent on the design of informal learning spaces? Despite the work required, a well-designed NIILS provides advantages for both individuals and learning. Furthermore, students would be more content and motivated, while institutions would enhance space efficiency by utilising underused spaces and reusing their physical heritage in a sensible way.



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Appendix A – Websites and Links

Key Stakeholders in Italy

Provision, Management and Design of Learning Spaces in Higher Education
Sapienza Building Management Area

<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina/area-gestione-edilizia>

Promoting and Supporting of Inclusivity in Higher Education
Comitato tecnico-scientifico sulla diversità e l'inclusione

<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina-strutturale/sapienza-linclusione-e-il-benessere>

Engaging with Informal and Non-conventional Learning Spaces
RomaTips

<https://www.romatips.it/wifi-gratuito-dove-studiare-roma/>

Informal and Non-conventional Learning Spaces in Italy

Projects and Good Practice Examples

MAXXI MUSEUM: <https://www.maxxi.art/>

MACRO MUSEUM: <https://www.museomacro.it/it/>

LA FELTRINELLI: <https://fondazionefeltrinelli.it/piani/piano-5/>

Tools and Guidance Material

INFORMATION OF IILS IN ROME

<https://www.romaweekend.it/articoli/dove-studiare-a-roma/>

INFORMATION OF NIILS IN MILAN

<https://www.kappuccio.com/2021/01/03/dove-studiare-a-milano/#:~:text=Udite%20udite%2C%20anche%20a%20La,e%20dedicata%20al%20lavoro%20Fstudio!>

STUDENT'S FORUM IN BARI

<https://ingiabari.forumfree.it/?t=34119310>

Scientific Publications

https://www.academia.edu/69659431/Design_per_configurare_nuovi_luoghi_e_spazi_di_apprendimento_adattivi



[Baroni, F., & Lazzari, M. \(2022\). Universal Design for Learning at university: Technologies, blended learning and teaching methods. Studies in Health Technology and Informatics. https://doi.org/10.3233/shti220885](https://doi.org/10.3233/shti220885)

[Colasanti, N., Frondizi, R., & Meneguzzo, M. \(2018\). Higher education and stakeholders' donations: Successful civic crowdfunding in an Italian University. Public Money & Management, 38\(4\), 281–288. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2018.1449471](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2018.1449471)

[YALCINKAYA, D. \(2016\). An Informal Learning Practice Reflects its Importance.](#)

(Not published from our country but discusses Italy)

https://www.academia.edu/431158/Gli_Ambienti_Di_Apprendimento_on_Line_Da_Spazi_Per_La_Formazione_a_Luoghi_Per_La_Collaborazione

https://www.academia.edu/85848453/Il_Web_2_0_come_mediatore_dei_processi_di_apprendimento_formali_ed_informali_tra_scuola_e_territorio_il_progetto_Didaduezero_della_provincia_di_Trento

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09540962.2018.1449471?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275039178_Spazi_ibridi_di_apprendimento_e_inclusione_socio-educativa

https://www.academia.edu/3891467/Creativit%C3%A0_ed_apprendimento_negli_spazi_cognitivi_virtuali_frontiere_per_la_genesi_della_nuova_creativit%C3%A0_applicata_allo_spazio

<https://revistas.uma.es/index.php/idisen/article/view/12804>



Appendix B – Guidelines for Focus Group Interviews with Stakeholders (in Italian)



Linee guida per le interviste ed i Focus Group con gli Stakeholders

**Risultato del progetto 1 - Analisi del contesto nazionale:
disponibilità e infrastrutture di spazi per l'apprendimento
informale**

Versione: May 2022, ITA

Linee guida per le interviste ed i focus group: Nuovi approcci per spazi di apprendimento informali inclusivi

Inviare ai partecipanti il modulo "Informazioni sulla ricerca e consenso alla partecipazione" prima dell'intervista al focus group.

Checklist per le interviste/focus group faccia a faccia

- Guida alle interviste
- Attrezzatura per la registrazione audio
- Consenso informato (per ogni partecipante)
- Domande conoscitive (per ogni partecipante)
- Mappa delle sedi universitarie (con le domande conoscitive o separatamente)
- Matite colorate e/o adesivi per segnare i luoghi sulla mappa del campus.

Checklist for focus groups / interviste online:

- Guida alle interviste
- Mural Board con mappa delle sedi universitarie e domande conoscitive
- Chiedere ai partecipanti di inviare il modulo di consenso firmato prima di iniziare l'intervista.

ALTERNATIVA: la dichiarazione di consenso può essere registrata all'inizio dell'intervista su nastro e trascritta (quindi senza raccolta e conservazione delle firme)!

Appena iniziate, raccogliete la dichiarazione di consenso firmata o distribuite i moduli di consenso e date ai partecipanti il tempo di leggere e firmare la dichiarazione di consenso.

Introduzione (5 min.):

Cari partecipanti,

Vi ringraziamo per aver accettato di partecipare e per averci dedicato il vostro tempo per parlarci delle vostre idee e prospettive su questo tema. Con questo focus group (intervista) vogliamo saperne di più sugli spazi di apprendimento informale e sul loro utilizzo nel vostro campus e nei dintorni. Per spazi di apprendimento informale intendiamo luoghi scelti dagli studenti in modo indipendente e auto-organizzato per diverse attività di apprendimento (individuali o collaborative) al di fuori delle sessioni di insegnamento frontale. Di solito, si tratta di luoghi al di fuori delle aule di lezione e delle sale conferenze, come sale studenti, atri e corridoi, spazi biblioteca, caffè o luoghi all'aperto. In questo focus group intendiamo affrontare e approfondire i seguenti aspetti:

- le caratteristiche spaziali, la disponibilità, l'accessibilità, le attrezzature e le infrastrutture degli spazi di apprendimento informali e non convenzionali messi a disposizione dalle vostre istituzioni nei dintorni dell'università, nonché
- le vostre prospettive sugli ambienti di apprendimento informali e non convenzionali inclusivi e con supporto tecnico e tecnologico, nonché le vostre strategie e gli approcci consolidati per mitigare le disuguaglianze esistenti tra gli studenti.

La nostra discussione durerà dai 60 ai 90 minuti. Per la vostra privacy, vorrei ricordare i seguenti punti, che sono anche indicati nel modulo di consenso:

- 1) Questa sessione sarà audio-registrata e l'audio registrato sarà conservato con la massima riservatezza secondo le norme europee sulla protezione dei dati.
- 2) Non verrà utilizzato il vostro vero nome, ma degli pseudonimi.
- 3) Solo il team del progetto avrà accesso ai nastri.
- 4) Può decidere di interrompere l'intervista in qualsiasi momento.

La sua partecipazione è molto preziosa per la nostra ricerca. Se avete ulteriori domande sulla nostra ricerca o sul processo del focus group (intervista), non esitate a chiedere.

Avvio dell'audio-registrazione

Domande:

Domande Conoscitive (10 min.): Se conduci il focus group/o l'intervista faccia a faccia, distribuisce la mappa del campus e queste domande di base. Se conduci le interviste online, condividi il link alla pagina della Mural Board con la mappa dell'università e queste domande di base.

1. Può presentarsi?

- a. Qual è la sua posizione?
- b. In quale Dipartimento lavora?
- c. Quali sono i suoi compiti e le sue responsabilità?

Spazi di apprendimento informali (30 minuti): In questa parte della discussione analizzeremo le caratteristiche spaziali, la disponibilità, l'accessibilità, le attrezzature e le infrastrutture degli spazi di apprendimento informali e non convenzionali messi a disposizione dalle vostre istituzioni nei dintorni dell'università. Vi preghiamo di segnare sulle vostre mappe i luoghi di apprendimento informale più utilizzati o più importanti utilizzando gli adesivi.

2. Che tipo di spazi di apprendimento informale esistono nella vostra sede universitaria e nell'area circostante, a disposizione degli studenti?
3. Quali sono le caratteristiche di questi spazi in termini di:
 - a. illuminazione, acustica, temperatura e ventilazione
 - b. Arredo (colori/materiali/ utilizzo), dotazione tecnologica (incluso W-LAN, spine e prese),
 - c. Accesso con cibi e bevande, igiene (pulizia e dotazioni sanitarie)?
4. Come gli studenti utilizzano questi spazi? Quali spazi sono utilizzati per attività di singole e di concentrazione? Quali spazi sono utilizzati per attività di apprendimento collaborativo (gruppi)? (Nota: qui si può dire ai partecipanti di segnare questi luoghi con colori diversi sulla mappa o sulla Mural Board).
5. Nella parte che segue, vorremmo sentire la sua opinione sulle possibilità di utilizzo degli spazi di apprendimento informale nella vostra sede universitaria per quanto riguarda la capacità, il comfort, l'accessibilità, la circolazione, l'adattabilità, la diversità, la flessibilità:
 - a. Esistono requisiti (amministrativi, finanziari, normativi) per l'utilizzo di questi luoghi?
 - b. La capacità (posti) sono sufficienti per gli studenti?
 - c. Questi luoghi sono confortevoli e favoriscono il benessere e l'apprendimento degli studenti?
 - d. Quanto sono accessibili questi luoghi in termini di accessibilità fisica e amministrativa? Ritieni che tutti gli studenti abbiano le stesse possibilità di accedere e utilizzare questi spazi? Se no, perché?
 - e. Quanto sono flessibili e adattabili questi luoghi di apprendimento informale?
 - f. Per quanto riguarda il termine "circolazione": Qual è la durata media di permanenza/utilizzo in un giorno di questi spazi di apprendimento informale?
6. Siamo interessati alla sua opinione sui problemi e le sfide in relazione agli spazi di apprendimento informale menzionati in termini di regolamenti, gestione, prospettive finanziarie e amministrative, nonché dal punto di vista degli studenti.
 - a. Quali sono i problemi o le sfide di cui sei a conoscenza per quanto riguarda i regolamenti e la gestione di questi spazi di apprendimento informale?

- b. Quali sono i problemi o le sfide di cui sei a conoscenza per quanto riguarda le questioni finanziarie e amministrative?
- c. Quali sono i problemi e le sfide di cui siete a conoscenza dal punto di vista degli studenti?

Strategie per aumentare l'attrattiva, l'utilizzo e l'accesso a questi luoghi (30 minuti): Nella prossima parte della discussione, vorremmo conoscere le sue prospettive sugli ambienti di apprendimento informali e non convenzionali inclusivi e di supporto, anche tecnologicamente potenziati, nonché le sue strategie e gli approcci consolidati per mitigare le disuguaglianze esistenti tra gli studenti. Vogliamo anche parlare dei progetti futuri.

7. Esistono strategie per aumentare l'attrattiva, l'uso e l'accesso a questi luoghi?
- a. Se sì, quali sono? Può dirci di più su queste strategie?
 - b. Se no, sa se ci sono in programma progetti per aumentare l'accessibilità, l'uso e il comfort per sostenere l'apprendimento e il benessere degli studenti?
8. Durante la pandemia molti corsi e attività di apprendimento si sono svolti online. Abbiamo visto che la digitalizzazione è una chiave per il futuro dell'apprendimento formale e informale. Considerando il periodo post-pandemia e la digitalizzazione in corso, quali sono le sue aspettative e preferenze riguardo all'uso degli spazi di apprendimento informale?
- a. Si aspetta che le modalità di apprendimento e di insegnamento tornino ad essere quelle di prima della pandemia? Quali cambiamenti vi aspettate?
 - b. Probabilmente, in futuro alcuni corsi saranno ancora tenuti online. Ciò significa che le aule saranno utilizzate meno. Pensa che le aule per le lezioni possano essere utilizzate per attività di apprendimento informale?
 - c. Quali sono le vostre previsioni future (visioni) per quanto riguarda gli spazi di apprendimento informale, in particolare nelle sedi universitarie (aumento della loro importanza, aumento dell'uso da parte degli studenti, ecc.)
9. C'è qualcosa che vorresti aggiungere a quanto abbiamo già discusso?

Chiusura (5 minuti): Vi ringrazio molto per il vostro tempo e per il vostro contributo al nostro studio. È stata una discussione arricchente. Se desiderate rivedere le trascrizioni, saremo lieti di condividerle con voi. Condivideremo con voi anche la relazione finale.

Stop audio-registrazione

