

Ageing in urban areas: urban agriculture and senior co-housing as tools for sustainable cities

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Abstract—This paper deals with the role that urban agriculture and senior co-housing play in developing more age-friendly (thus, sustainable) cities, with a focus on the Marche Region, Italy. These tools are crucial in promoting active ageing in both outdoor and indoor urban environments. To this end, the paper analyses the phenomena of urban agriculture for the elderly and senior co-housing focusing on regional and municipal solutions to regulate and promote such initiatives. The study adopts an interdisciplinary methodology, combining legal and anthropological research methods. The paper concludes that different approaches have been adopted at the local level to foster urban agriculture and senior co-housing as tools to develop more sustainable cities, responsive to the needs and rights of the elderly. This has led policy-makers from the Marche Region to implement different and not heterogeneous solutions in this field. Therefore, the paper develops some policy recommendations intended for the policy-makers of the territory to facilitate the transition towards more age-friendly cities.

Keywords—active ageing, sustainable cities, urban agriculture, senior co-housing

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of developing age-friendly cities is currently crucial in the perspective of sustainable development, due to the rising urbanization and the significant percentage of older people living in urban areas. It has been estimated that 55% of the global population resides in urban areas and more than 880 million people live in slums, by 2050 the number of urban dwellers is expected to increase by an additional 2.5 billion people [1].

In this perspective, it must be noted that a significant number of elderly lives in urbanized areas, according to a recent Istat analysis of the population aged 65 and over living in Italian cities [2].

The World Health Organization claims that “countries can afford to get old if governments, international organisations, and civil society enact ‘active ageing’ policies and programmes that enhance the health, participation, and security of older citizens” [3]. The policies in this field must, therefore, address the three pillars (health, participation, and security). Policymakers worldwide must act promptly to develop policies and adopt legal instruments specifically intended to promote active ageing, especially in those

countries where the proportion of older people is rapidly increasing, more than any other age group. Italy is, without doubt, one of the countries facing the challenges of an ageing population, and, in this context, the Marche Region is one of the Italian Regions with higher life expectancy.

The ageing of the population and the growing attention paid to the rights and needs of older people encourage us to question the concrete experiences of ageing and the life of older people. The focus of this paper is on urban spaces, both indoor and outdoor, as relational spaces capable of driving more sustainable cities. In this paper, we combined the socio-anthropological and legal perspectives to identify solutions for sustainable living and working environments designed on older people’s attitudes and needs. We consider sustainability through a person-centred perspective attentive to the relations between humans and environments [4].

Broadly understood as a set of relationships and behaviours that involve peoples and environments, urban and human infrastructures, green areas, buildings, and services, urban areas are crowded with experiences that connect the person to his/her fundamental rights [5]. Urban spaces are considered performative spaces, continuously re-designed through human agency and people’s actions [6].

With particular reference to the senior population, many different forms of sustainable urban living have been developed, affecting traditional legal categories and requiring a clear, unitary, and based on a functional approach to regulation. In this context, the paper addresses two specific tools adopted in the Marche Region: urban agriculture and senior co-housing.

Urban agriculture and senior co-housing have been analysed because ageing actively in cities involves the availability of outdoor and indoor solutions responsive to the needs and rights of older citizens, supporting the health, participation, and security of the seniors, which are the three pillars of active ageing. Indeed, active ageing goes beyond private domestic environments, embracing also the city’s public and green areas. In light of this, urban agriculture and senior co-housing have been chosen as areas of investigation (Fig. 1). This theme is developed by examining, first, how urban agriculture could promote the development of more senior-friendly cities and outdoor urban spaces, focusing on the legal framework and the recent developments in this field; second, how senior co-housing could represent a tool to

guarantee the right to adequate housing to the elderly and foster the creation of age-appropriate indoor spaces.

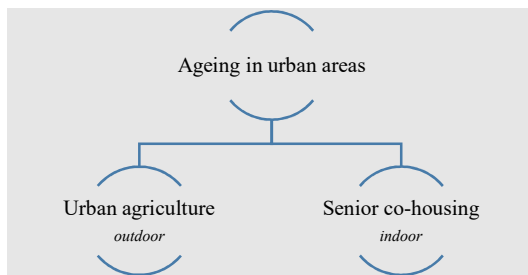


Fig. 1. Areas of investigation

II. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on legal-empirical research methodology combined, in the case of senior co-housing, with anthropological analysis of ethnographic research in the province of Macerata. Ethnography has been conducted through participatory action research, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participatory methodologies. Participant observation was conducted within a senior co-housing facility located in the city centre of Macerata, involving seven 65+ subjects living in independent two-room apartments. In addition to individual interviews (8), a focus group and a collective interview have been conducted to broadly discuss the right to the city for older people and sustainable co-housing possibilities in the city of Macerata. The research involved 23 individuals (12 males and 11 females) among older people, social operators, heads of services, volunteers, and representatives of institutions. Their ages range from 38 to 93. Most of the participants came from the city or province of Macerata, but people residing in the provinces of Jesi and Ascoli Piceno also participated in the research. Each participant was informed of the purposes of the research and signed generic consent to the collection of data and specific consent to their use for the research. All were made aware of the possibility of withdrawing their consent at any time. Most of the interviews with the key informants took place in their private homes or in the offices where they were employed. During both the interviews and focus groups, I tried to create a collaborative and constructive atmosphere, showing care and interest in the stories and experiences of the people involved.

The legal research originates from academic research based on normative investigation concerning the analysis of primary sources, jurisprudence, legal texts, and doctrinal writings, in the form of a “library-based” research. This method is combined with empirical research, which aims at studying and understanding how the law operates in a specific context and its effects within that context.

III. CULTIVATING AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES

A. Urban agriculture and sustainability

Rapid urbanisation has a critical impact on food systems, for example in terms of longer food chains and inadequate access to food. Also, access to food in large cities is characterized by high spatial and socio-economic inequality, making it difficult for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, to access nutritionally adequate products, resulting in higher consumption of processed foodstuffs with low nutrient value. Therefore, it is fundamental to satisfy the cities’ demand for food while considering the growing urban poverty levels. In

this context, urban agriculture could represent an important tool to facilitate access to food in cities, but not only.

Considering the increasing urbanization and demographic shift, urban agriculture is also capable of promoting access to green areas and providing numerous benefits to senior citizens, such as encouraging active ageing. In particular, recent studies have showed [7-9] how urban agriculture for the elderly promotes the well-being of those who participate in them, both from a physical and psychological point of view, promotes socialization and the creation of communities, as well as facilitates access to food. In this perspective, urban agriculture addresses all three pillars of active ageing.

Urban agriculture also represents an important tool for guaranteeing the “right to the city” of the elderly, capable of making urban environments more age-inclusive and promoting the use of green spaces by the older population. Sustainable cities are indeed required to be senior-friendly. This is stressed out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 11 is focused on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable and, in this framework, target no. 11.7 aims by 2030 to provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Locally sourced food systems, such as urban agriculture, are also traditionally linked to the promotion of sustainability and social justice, having the potential to provide environmental, social, and economic benefits, shortening the distance between farmers and consumers and contributing to the resilience of cities. The numerous benefits and opportunities of different natures brought by urban agriculture are also capable of achieving other SDGs, such as SDG no. 2 “Zero hunger”, SDG no. 3 “Good health and well-being”, SDG no. 10, “Reduced inequalities” and SDG no. 13 “Climate action” [10].

It must be also highlighted that the UN New Urban Agenda considers urban agriculture as a tool for sustainable urban development, representing a piece of the puzzle depicting the relationship between food and cities, in light of the potential that urban environments have to trigger a transformation toward more sustainable and resilient food systems. Even the new Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, adopted in 2020 and linked to the Urban Agenda for the EU, also highlights the role urban agriculture can play in developing a new model of a “productive city” that can reintegrate food production within cities and urban areas, including promoting new forms of mixed-use neighbourhoods.

B. Results

Despite the numerous definitions provided in the literature [e.g., 11-13], nowadays a unique legal definition of urban agriculture does not exist. Nevertheless, the literature has most commonly classified this phenomenon into two categories, depending on the goals pursued, which are urban gardening and urban farming. The former refers to those activities aimed at achieving mostly social goals, whereas the latter encompasses business models carrying out agricultural activities for purely economic purposes [11].

There is not even a specific EU or national strategy addressing this phenomenon. However, in Italy there are some regional laws and municipality-level regulations addressing this phenomenon, arguably because it is considered to be context-dependent, existing within heterogeneous situations, locations, and conditions. It has been highlighted that the growing expansion of said initiatives aims to satisfy the community's general interests through the proactive role of civil society [14].

Unlike other Italian Regions, such as Lombardy and Apulia, in the Marche there is not a regional law on urban agriculture yet, even though local governments and citizens could benefit from a uniform approach. This has led to different solutions at the local level: numerous municipalities have adopted local policies to promote the creation of urban gardens. However, the lack of a regional law in this field and the different approaches implemented at the municipal level resulted in heterogeneous initiatives in terms of objectives, age threshold, scale, conditions of use, resources, stakeholders involved, etc.

For example, in terms of objectives, the goals pursued differ significantly: they range from promoting socialization to knowledge exchange, from community building to the promotion of outdoor activities, from enhancing green spaces to developing community resilience, from supporting organic food production to increasing local food security.

As for the age threshold, five province cities of the Marche Region adopt diverse approaches for the assignment of urban gardens for seniors, which are summarized in Table 1. The age thresholds have been found in the urban gardens municipal regulations of Pesaro, Ancona (Regional capital), Macerata, Fermo, and Ascoli Piceno.

In this fragmented situation, urban policies and municipal regulations are called to address this phenomenon in a broader perspective, to face the current sustainability challenges. To do so, they have to consider the strengths, weaknesses, and potential impacts of urban gardening [15]. This includes integrating local policies in this field with the promotion of active ageing, the safeguarding and conservation of public goods, and the development of local food policies.

TABLE I. AGE THRESHOLD FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF URBAN GARDENS FOR SENIORS IN 5 PROVINCE CITIES OF THE MARCHE REGION

Urban gardens for seniors in five Marche province cities					
	Pesaro ^a	Ancona ^b	Macerata ^c	Fermo ^d	Ascoli Piceno ^e
Age limit	60+	65-80	60+(men) 55+(women)	60+ or retirement	No age threshold, only retirement

a. Comune di Pesaro, Delibera di Consiglio n. 113 del 14 dicembre 2020

b. Comune di Ancona, Delibera n. 47 del 30 maggio 2016

c. Comune di Macerata, Delibera di Giunta 2018/320 del 29 agosto 2018

d. Comune di Fermo, Deliberazione di Giunta Comunale n. 264 del 28 giugno 2012

e. Comune di Ascoli Piceno, Deliberazione Consiglio Comunale n. 15 del 9 aprile 2014

C. Recent developments

Recently, the relationship between urban agriculture and active ageing has been recognized by Italian law. Indeed, last year the national enabling law concerning policies for older people (Law n. 33/2023, Deleghe al Governo in materia di politiche in favore delle persone anziane) was adopted. This law entered into force on 31 March 2023 and it contains provisions for the delegation to the Government to protect the

dignity and promote the care, assistance, and living conditions of the elderly.

The law recognises the right of older people to make independent, free, informed, and conscious decisions regarding issues concerning their assistance, as well as the right to the continuity of life and care at home, within defined limits and terms. It also recognises the right of the elderly to receive palliative care and the specific assistance needs of older people with disabilities.

As far as active ageing is concerned, the law delegated the Government to adopt one or more legislative decrees aimed at defining the notion of "older people" and promoting dignity, autonomy, social inclusion, active ageing, and prevention of frailty of the elderly.

On 15th March 2024, the Legislative Decree n. 29 for the implementation of Law n. 33 of 2023 was enacted, which entered into force on 19th March 2024. Article 2 of the Decree provides a uniform definition of older persons, at a national level, in the context of policies in favor of the elderly. Age-wise, as illustrated in Table 2, it establishes the categories of "older person", the person who has reached the age of 65, and "great older person", the person who has reached the age of 80.

According to Art. 6, par. 2, lett. a) of the Decree, Regions and local authorities could promote a series of initiatives to encourage active ageing, among which there are actions aimed at supporting the social integration of elderly people through the care of urban gardens. Therefore, the strong link between urban agriculture and active ageing has been highlighted by national lawmakers.

TABLE II. DEFINITION OF "OLDER PERSON" AND "GREAT OLDER PERSON" ACCORDING TO LEGISLATIVE DECREE N. 29/2024

Who is old?	
Older person	65+
Great older person	80+

IV. THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND AGE-FRIENDLY URBAN SPACE

A. The right to the city and adequate housing: anthropological and ethnographic insights from the city of Macerata

In addition to urban agriculture, another very important sector to consider for the development of a sustainable and age-friendly urban space is undoubtedly represented by housing.

Unlike the right to adequate housing, which finds a first reference in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the expression "right to the city" has no precise normative reference. It is an expression first used by the French philosopher Henri Lefevre, who in 1968 published a volume, entitled *Droit à la Ville*, in which he highlighted the close relationship between urban context and society, or rather between the space of development of urban life and the rights of the people living there. Nonetheless, as showed by a recent study [16], to overcome the limitations of the end of the Right to the city in practice, there's a need to reconsider and clarify its ends, i.e. its ultimate normative purposes. The elderly person's right to adequate housing and the development of an age-friendly urban space are, thus, inevitably connected and bound to influence each other. In this twofold perspective, it

is possible to distinguish new and different models of living, and alternatives to nursing homes, ranging from the individual dimension of the adaptation of the private home to the needs of the elderly to forms more marked on sociality and assistance such as extra-care housing, multigenerational houses, co-housing, village and retirement community.

In the city of Macerata senior co-housing has been the field of two main interventions: the Ma Maison project, led by the Municipal Public Personal Services Company (APSP-IRCR Macerata); and the Architectural Accessibility project launched in Collevario by the Municipality in 2021. Effective as of October 2020, the Ma Maison project is a Senior Co-Housing service created to support the home autonomy of the elderly person. Seven mini-apartments of about 60 square metres – located in Palazzo Legati Filati, –, consisting of a living room/kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom are made available upon request of the elderly, who pay a fixed fee including rent and utility bills. The project guarantees the daily presence of a social operator and a support network activated if needed. Along with the 17 flats located in the Collevario neighbourhood, the Ma Maison is one of the two co-housing municipal experimental projects addressed to older people in Macerata (for legal reference see here § 2.5). While the Collevario experience, which opened in 2022, is an example of public housing built by the Regional Public Housing Authority (ERAP) and assigned by the municipality through a public call, the Ma Maison project reuses a historic building, allocating seven flats to senior co-housing. Older people who ask to join the project are enrolled in a waiting list, on the model of retirement home.

What emerged from the participant observation, semi-structured individual and collective interviews and informal conversations is that, in the case of the Ma Maison project, the housing choices and practices of the elderly who choose the co-housing formula are motivated first and foremost by the desire to maintain, as far as possible, their independence and not to burden their families.

B. The right to adequate housing in older age

The increase in longevity and the growing number of elderly citizens make it necessary to adapt existing living environments to the concrete needs of the elderly and also design new spaces that support active ageing and enhance social relationships.

In this context, the right to adequate housing represents not only the right to a place for permanent living but also, in a broader sense, a right closely related to the right to the city as a right to actively participate in urban life and fully realize one's person. The mutual relationship between the right to adequate housing and the right to the city is clearly highlighted already in the International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted at the First World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982. Indeed, the Vienna Plan includes housing and the environment among its priority areas for action, stating in Recommendation 22 that “the living environment should be designed, with support from Governments, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations, to enable elderly people to continue to live, if they so wish, in locations that are familiar to them, where their involvement in the community may be of long-standing and where they will have the opportunity to lead a rich, normal and secure life”.

In the same direction, the United Nations Principles for Older People issued in 1991 group under the theme of

independence the access to adequate shelter and life “in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities”.

The European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, adopted in 2000, defines the right to the city as the right of all inhabitants to find the conditions necessary to satisfy their aspirations from the political, social, and environmental point of view, while assuming their duties of solidarity (Art. 1) and recognises the right “to a proper, safe and healthy home” as an essential aspect of human rights in the city (art. XVI).

The Madrid Plan of 2002 -aiming to “include the elderly in policies rather than defining policies for the elderly”- recommends the development of age-friendly housing and of an urban environment adequate to develop an independent living of the elderly and an age-integrated urban community (nota).

The 2007 World Health Organization guide [15] places housing among the areas where action is needed to ensure that cities can be “age-friendly”, thus allowing older citizens to exercise their citizenship right. Along the same lines, the World Health Organization, in the “Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health for 2016-2020”, sets as one of its strategic objectives the development of age-friendly environments, specifying that “actions to create age-friendly environments can target different contexts (the home or community, for example) or specific environmental factors (such as transport, housing, social protection, streets and parks, social facilities, health and long-term care, social attitudes, and values)”.

Finally, the European Urban Charter - adopted in a first version by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in 1992, and then, in a second version, in 2008 to be last updated in 2023 - places housing among the principles for modern urban living and, in particular, among the principles grouped in the II theme “social rights, cultural and economic development”.

C. Housing solutions for the elderly: an Italian private law perspective

From a private law perspective, the protection of the rights of adequate housing for older people raises the question of whether and how the traditional approach to property and property rights is still adequate to meet the needs emerging from an ageing population. Indeed, one might wonder whether an elderly-oriented interpretation of property rights is possible in a way that brings out the particular condition of the person, overcoming the idea that property rights depend on the nature of the object rather than on the characteristics of the title owner. Moreover, the variety and diversity of housing solutions for the elderly that are emerging in practice, makes a unified analysis of them difficult, but instead requires a distinction and specific examination to be made between the different models.

Thus, different legal implications derive from adaptation of the private home to the elderly rather than from other housing solutions, more marked on sociality and assistance, such as extra-care housing, multigenerational houses, cohousing, villages, and retirement communities. Among the latter, distinctions must also be made based on the promoters and managers of the housing, the services they offer, and the target group to which the housing solution refers.

In Italy, the development of active ageing legal policies needs also to conform with the distinction of legislative competence between the State and the Regions, established by the Constitution. Indeed, according to art. 117 Const., the Italian State is exclusively competent to determine the essential levels of services concerning civil and social rights (according to Article 117, par. 2, lett. m of the Constitution), whereas, based on Art 117, par. 3, the Regions have the competence to develop policies for active ageing within the sectors of exclusive and concurrent competence.

Considering this distinction, various housing solutions for the elderly find a first regulatory reference in Article 1 paragraph 162 of Law 234/2021, which refers generically to "housing solutions, also in line with the planning of the interventions of the PNRR, through the use of new forms of solidarity of the elderly". Paragraphs 678 and 679 also provide for cohabitation projects involving persons over 65.

Moreover, the recent Law 33/2023 establishing delegations of powers to the Government on Policies for the Elderly promotes in Article 3 paragraph 2 lett. a), n. 6 senior cohousing and intergenerational cohousing "to be implemented, according to criteria of sustainable mobility and accessibility, in the context of houses, family homes, family groups, apartment groups, and supportive condominiums, open to family members, volunteers and external providers of integrative health, social and sociomedical services". This last delegation to the government clearly shows the link between longevity and urban regeneration (with the reuse of the urban heritage also for new forms of solidarity cohabitation) and between longevity and active citizenship: as observed in the previous paragraph, rights, and longevity are two complementary aspects, which must find the right combination in the urban environment.

Finally, the recent enactment of Legislative Decree no. 29 of 15 March 2024 on "Provisions on policies for the elderly, implementing the delegation referred to in Articles 3, 4 and 5 of Law No. 33 of 23 March 2023" makes the discussion of the issue of cohousing as timely as ever.

Indeed, Article 1 states that the decree "contains provisions to promote dignity and autonomy, social inclusion, active ageing and the prevention of frailty in the elderly population, also through(...) senior cohousing and intergenerational cohousing". The following Article 15 then encourages their development "within the framework of houses, family homes, family groups, flat groups, and supportive condominiums, open to family members, volunteers, external providers of supplementary health, social and sociomedical services, as well as to initiatives and activities of third sector entities referred to in legislative decree of 3 July 2017, no. 117". Article 16 promotes, instead, their implementation "through mechanisms of urban regeneration and reuse of the built heritage", while Articles 17 and 18 encourage the launch by the regions and municipalities of experimental pilot projects, which can also be promoted by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, which is obliged to monitor them at the end of each year of the experimental period.

Regarding the Regional context, it can be observed that it appears to be varied and fragmented with Regions that still have no legislation on active aging and senior housing, Regions that, despite having legislation specifically dedicated to active ageing, do not deal directly with senior housing and

Regions that, finally, provide housing solutions for the elderly, albeit in different ways from each other.

Among the latter is, in particular, the Marche Region, which has had the opportunity to deal with the theme of co-residence of the elderly in the Regional Law 1/2019 dedicated to the promotion of active ageing.

The first paragraph of Article 10, entitled "Health and well-being", states that "the regional social plan and the plans for the social and territorial area guide their planning in such a way as to overcome exclusively welfare logic in support of the elderly, promoting the prevention of physical and psychological disabling processes and the autonomy of elderly subjects". To this end, the Region supports "the diffusion of proximity interventions, also in an intergenerational perspective, such as co-residence, including the different types of housing models, as well as spaces and places of encounter, socialization and participation".

As evident, the Marche Region expressly stands in support of co-residence, understood in its broadest dimension, mentioning the regional legislation and the different types of housing models, without forgetting the multigenerational perspective.

Based on this normative context, many projects and initiatives have been implemented in the regional territory, with a particular preference for the cohousing model.

D. Results

The existing forms of housing show very clearly how necessary it is nowadays to adopt an approach based on the concrete needs and experiences of seniors in order to develop legal solutions useful for them. Indeed, putting the person at the center of the legal reflection on senior housing allows to highlight some necessities, including the design of the house or the adaptation of the same to the changes related to advancing age (e.g. smaller easy-to-manage home, absence of stairs, assistive technology, home automation, reserved parking spaces). The location of housing in safe neighbourhoods, close to the city centre and the main services is also crucial. In the fight against loneliness often linked to senility, the forms of cohousing -in the dual dimension of senior and multigenerational cohousing- must be encouraged and implemented.

These practical observations finally show how important is that the legal sector always takes into account the needs of the elderly by developing solutions that from the design of housing -based on the principles of Design for All, Universal Design and Inclusive Design- arrive at contractual models that can be modulated according to the necessities of seniors.

This will lead to an effective participation of the elderly in the life of the city, in line also and especially with the SDG no. 10 "Reducing inequalities within and between countries" and the SDG no. 11 "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

V. MAIN CONCLUSIONS

In the Marche Region, the implementation of policies and legal instruments aimed at supporting active ageing in urban areas, both outdoor and indoor, has a crucial role in the context of sustainable development, especially in making cities more sustainable as provided by SDG no. 11.

In this context, the promotion of urban agriculture for the elderly and senior co-housing represents a key instrument in driving sustainability in urban environments, e.g., by developing inclusive and safe domestic and public spaces, providing access to green areas by vulnerable groups, and finally creating age-friendly cities. However, different approaches have been adopted at the local level to foster urban agriculture and senior co-housing as tools to develop more sustainable cities, responsive to the needs and rights of the elderly. This has led policy-makers from the Marche Region to implement non-heterogeneous solutions to regulate and promote active ageing.

The results of our research led to the conclusion that in the territory there is so much more to do to promote age-friendly cities. Therefore, some policy recommendations have been developed; they are illustrated in Table 3.

TABLE III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS IN THE MARCHE REGION

<p>1. Adopting a Regional law on urban gardens, setting objectives, conditions and minimum standards</p> <p>In Italy, some Regions have adopted laws on urban gardens (e.g., the Lombardy Regional law n. 18/2015 on “Orti di Lombardia” and the very recent Apulian Regional law n. 10/2024 on “Orti di Puglia”). In the Marche, local communities, local governments, educational institutions, associations and citizens would benefit from a clearer and more uniform approach in the territory provided by a regional law in this field. This would set the main rules for the different typologies of urban gardens in the territory, such as school gardens, urban gardens for the elderly, therapeutic gardens. In the case of urban gardens for seniors, it would be important to adopt a unique age threshold for the assignment, according to the definition of “older person” in Legislative Decree n. 29/2024.</p>
<p>2. Adopting local policies and municipal regulations specifically aimed at fostering urban gardening in light of the three pillars of active ageing</p> <p>Urban gardens for seniors should support the health, participation and security of the participants, in an active ageing perspective. This means that the local governments are called to take into consideration if and how these pillars are met in their urban gardens initiatives, starting by assessing the needs, rights and expectations of the senior population.</p>
<p>3. Promoting participatory mechanisms in the management of urban gardens</p> <p>Participants and local stakeholders would be empowered by sharing responsibilities and being actively involved in co-governance mechanisms, following an intergenerational approach that involves all the different generations, including the older persons.</p>
<p>4. Developing urban food policies to facilitate access to food in urban areas, especially for vulnerable groups (such as the elderly)</p> <p>At institutional level, it would be crucial to adopt specific policies to develop local food systems in light of the sustainability goals. This could be done by starting with an assessment of the needs, challenges and related opportunities. In this process it would be fundamental to integrate all the relevant players, such as citizens, associations, volunteers, educational institutions, universities, and businesses.</p>
<p>5. Promoting meeting activities with older people on housing issues</p> <p>On the one hand, knowledge of the available housing solutions enables the senior to choose the one that best suits his/her needs. On the other hand, listening to the needs of seniors makes professionals more aware of the housing solutions to be developed and implemented.</p>
<p>6. Identifying uniform criteria and developing a national register of senior and multigenerational cohousing</p>

Identifying uniform criteria for cohousing makes it easier to classify a housing solution in this model or not. The creation of a single national register makes them easy for citizens to know.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed to the “I. Introduction” and “II. Methodology” of this work. Lattanzi P. and Mariani S. conceived and wrote the section “III. Cultivating age-friendly cities”, paragraphs A-C. In the section “IV. The right to adequate housing for a sustainable and age-friendly urban space”, Vesce M.C. conceived and wrote paragraph A, Tiberi T. and Vagni L. conceived and wrote paragraphs B-D. Lastly, Lattanzi P., Mariani S., Tiberi T. and Vagni L. conceived and wrote the section “V. Main conclusions”.

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