



**TONITE**



## Engagement and empowerment of local community and stakeholders



tonite.eu

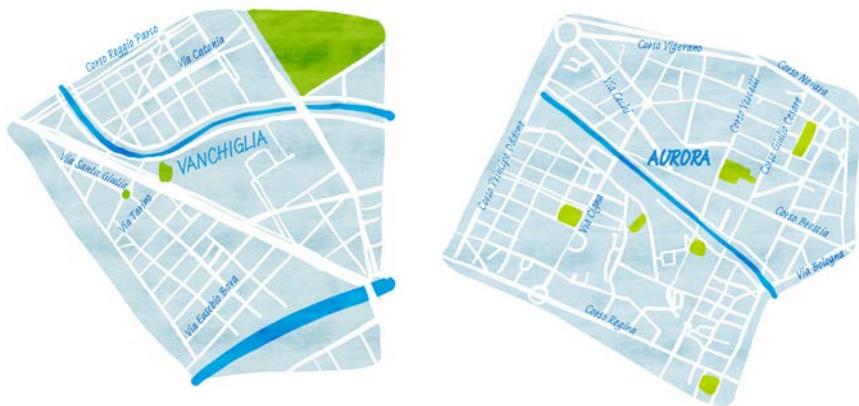


## TONITE'S PROJECT PRESENTATION

The **ToNite project** is funded by the European Union's **UIA programme (Urban Innovative Actions)** on **urban security** and seeks to develop multidisciplinary solutions **to manage public spaces** and **improve residents' perception of safety** at night.

This project is based on an **inclusive approach** involving local communities and stakeholders and fostering **social innovation** and **urban regeneration** to promote urban security.

ToNite focuses on a number of neighbourhoods of Turin, Italy, situated near the Dora River: Aurora and Vanchiglia.



The project encompasses **research, analysis, participatory activities and co-designed actions** with the objective of designing interventions on these neighbourhoods' public spaces in a collaborative way. ToNite offers local stakeholders **technical and financial support** to create new services that have a positive social impact, with a particular focus on evening and night-time.

The topic of **‘urban security and related innovative solutions’** was first introduced by the UIA secretariat in 2018 in conjunction with the work carried out under the Urban Agenda for the EU, one of the key objectives of which is to **“contribute to identifying, supporting, integrating, and improving traditional, innovative and user-friendly sources of funding for urban areas.”**

The factsheets aim to provide **EU local authorities** from outside the project's areas of intervention with a **series of transferable actions** for long-term sustainable and integrated security.

The ToNite project will design, develop and implement actions relating to 6 focus areas:

- ▶ **Ethnographic and social** research
- ▶ **Data-driven multidisciplinary approach** to urban challenges
- ▶ **Technology** implementation
- ▶ **Engagement and empowerment** of local community and stakeholders
- ▶ **Pilot actions:** Implementation & monitoring
- ▶ Urban infrastructure for safe and liveable **urban spaces: urban regeneration & local services**

>>>>>>>> **Community engagement and empowerment**

Community engagement and empowerment activities seek to involve local communities and stakeholders in co-designing solutions to enhance the security of public spaces, in particular at night, in a specific local area by:

- ▶ **informing** them about the project, its objectives, the activities it will entail, and the opportunities it brings to local residents. Another aspect is informing them on the local services at their disposal and on the positive aspects of their neighbourhood;
- ▶ **consulting** local communities and bring about a common vision on infrastructure regeneration;
- ▶ **supporting and activating** local stakeholders in designing and testing sustainable local solutions/services that can lastingly improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood and the management and use of public spaces, especially at night;
- ▶ **supporting** the public administration with recommendations and guidelines, setting priority services and interventions in order to deliver a 'service ecosystem' that improves urban security, social cohesion and liveability.

COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

PILOT  
ACTIONS

The activities to be carried out can be classified in two areas **related to engaging the local community and actors** and **supporting local pilot actions, should they be planned**. Furthermore, **community dialogue and storytelling activities** should be implemented at all stages as part of the overall approach.

>>>>>>>> **1- Actions related to community engagement should be participatory and open to the whole community. The key factor here is “working together”: collecting different points of view by involving groups of people of different ages, origins and life experiences.**

The different stages of this process can be designed and delivered through community ‘onboarding workshops’ adapted to different levels of engagement, which increase as the project progresses forward.



Illustrated by Fabrizio Alotto

## WHAT'S STRONG IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Empathetic online questionnaires can be developed combining written and interactive questions. The main objective of this activity is the engagement of citizens and community stakeholders in the target areas in order to make them aware of the project's next steps and to create a common language and vision. The focus of the questionnaires should revolve around “what's strong in your neighbourhood?” instead of “what's wrong?": questions about the ‘hidden gems’, stories, features and qualities of the territory can prompt the emergence of positive stories. In order to properly reflect the feeling on the ground and be inclusive, the video-questions can be recorded by local residents themselves, in different languages. The online format was chosen because of the restrictions linked to the pandemic, but if the situation allows it, it would be better to have in-person workshops.

## WHICH SPACES TO RE-IMAGINE?:

Workshops focusing on the areas earmarked for regeneration activities should be organised so that local residents can be informed and share suggestions with the urban design team. These activities aim to share ideas, thoughts and inspirations in order to create a collective vision for the future and identify which specific areas of the targeted neighbourhoods present promising opportunities.

## WHICH ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES DO YOU IMAGINE?:

These workshops should focus on sharing and imagining ideas, inspirational thoughts for generating and designing services/activities by and for the target areas. The sessions can include information on urban regeneration promising practices (both national and European) in order to identify opportunities, share alternative ways of doing things and thus inspire effective approaches and/or services to respond to real or perceived security challenges at night.



Illustrated by Fabrizio Alotto

## >>>>>>>>> 2- 'Community onboarding' workshops should contribute to defining the scope of the pilot actions. The activities meant to support local actors and the pilot actions' acceleration programme can be organised in a public call as follows: .

- ▶ **Before applications, a PUBLIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS:** a public call for proposals should be planned and launched to collect applications for solutions that lastingly improve the liveability of public spaces as well as social cohesion and the way local residents perceive security at night.
- ▶ **Before applications, a LIGHT INCUBATION period:** in order to help organisations apply, we recommend a so-called "light incubation" period that would include:
  - ▶ collective meetings: to help participants understand the terms of the call for proposals and share with them some useful tools (theory of change methodology and list of requirements),
  - ▶ with advice on content, form and administrative requirements.
- ▶ **After applications, ACCELERATION PROGRAMME and development of SERVICE BLUEPRINT AND MASTERPLAN:** this activity is useful to accelerate the selected pilot actions.

An '**acceleration programme**' for the selected pilot actions consists of theoretical and practical workshops that will include case studies of practices implemented elsewhere as well as tutoring on the pilot actions, based on social innovation and entrepreneurship criteria. Pilot action leaders receive advice on how to develop and define a precise and structured model of services that includes information on the activities offered, user experience, engagement strategies, social impact generation and evaluation, project sustainability, business modelling and financial strategies. Service blueprints co-designed by service providers and project facilitators provide a detailed snapshot of the service and allow providers to identify how they can improve their offer.

Finally, the city can also create a **Service Masterplan** that summarizes the information and learnings gathered from the selected services during the acceleration programme and provides a roadmap for future actions. It serves as a practical guide for the city to promote a service ecosystem that works towards the project's objectives of improving the perception of security and liveability in the targeted neighbourhoods.

>>>>>>>>> **3- Community dialogue and storytelling** are ‘horizontal communications’ tools meant to bring to the fore positive stories and initiatives in the concerned neighbourhood. They have a number of advantages: they give protagonism to the local community and foster exchanges among local residents, but also more broadly can inspire ideas to improve the usability and liveability of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, they can contribute to changing the way the area is perceived by local residents by giving them a sense of shared identity and pride. Storytelling must be oriented on the one hand towards overcoming stereotypes about populations of different origins thanks to the narration of their life stories and, on the other, towards enhancing the history and cultural value of the territory in order to build a new, positive identity for both ‘historic’ residents and newcomers. **Community dialogue and storytelling** can also be used to promote existing local services, the values they are built on, and what they can be used for.

New technologies can be used to enhance storytelling, such as the **Tellingstones app**, which was developed by a Turin-based startup, Espereal Technologies. This app can be used together with a network of virtual sensors (geofence), which allows users to locate on a map the stories and services related to specific places, and to be alerted when they walk nearby. For example, users can receive a story when they are in the vicinity of a historic monument, or more interestingly in this case, a local association. This solution can bring about rapid transformation in the neighbourhood’s usability and liveability and, above all, improved perceptions of safety. In addition, local stakeholders can update their stories and create a project community through a meta-app, as well as send messages promoting their initiatives. This is done in total respect of privacy.

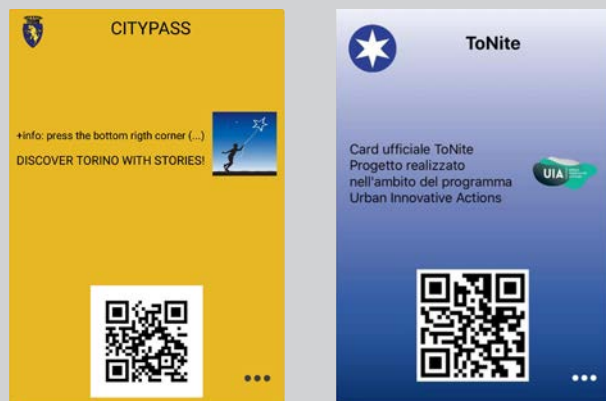
This intervention methodology can be easily transferred to other urban contexts because the app, which is already available in Italian and English, can be translated and easily adapted to each locality thanks to the addition of ‘cards’ that work as local apps for each place or project. Furthermore, it does not require the installation of physical sensors in the city, but rather uses virtual ‘geofences’.



## The ToNite project in facts and figures

- ▶ 2 questionnaires (1 for each target area), translated in 4 languages. (Italian, English, Arabic, Chinese)
- ▶ 66 people answered the questionnaire (41 people from Aurora and 25 from Vanchiglia)
- ▶ 3 co-design workshops as part of a participatory path called “IMMAGINIAMO E PROGETTIAMO INSIEME IL LUNGO DORA (“Let’s imagine and design together the Dora Riverside”)
- ▶ 180 people attended the co-design workshops
- ▶ 3 collective meetings (light incubation) with 124 people
- ▶ 43 1to1 meetings (light incubation)
- ▶ 1 service masterplan as a strategic document for the City of Turin that summarises all the service blueprints (up to 30) and will serve as a guideline for the city’s future plans.
- ▶ 1 Tellingstones app and 1 project card (ToNite) + 30 cards offered to all the initiatives that will have been selected following the call for proposals.
- ▶ At least 30 virtual sensors (geofence) activated in areas situated along the Dora River (each initiative can easily create other virtual sensors based on individual needs)
- ▶ Each end-user automatically downloads the project card and can select the cards of the 30 selected initiatives to receive notifications based on their interests.

- ▶ [5 biographies](#) of local young people from migrant origin + 5 biographies of older, native residents available on the Tellingstones app when users walk near the bridges over the Dora River. The bridges are used here as a symbol of the metaphorical bridges the ToNite project is building between newcomers and old residents of the neighbourhoods of Aurora and Vanchiglia.



- ▶ A documentary will be produced to show the multicultural character of the communities living by the Dora River;
- ▶ The app will also host other stories and biographies reported to the municipality by local residents.
- ▶ Training course on storytelling as a communication method to engage local residents for all the relevant service providers (i.e. the 30 selected through the call for proposals and all other interested ones).
- ▶ Capillary dialogue action: the project met over a hundred local stakeholders to understand the services they provide. All this information will be uploaded on the app and geolocated, thus enabling users to be aware of them when they walk nearby.

## EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES & TONITE'S BEST PRACTICES

### >>>>>>>>> The experience of Barcelona (Spain): Co-production approach to increase resilience in conflictive neighbourhoods

The Prevention and Coexistence Service (SPC according to the Catalan acronym) of one of Barcelona's districts, El Besòs i el Maresme, works along three lines: 1) diagnosis or prospection of the neighbourhood, 2) use of conflict management strategies and 3) community involvement in the co-production and implementation of actions.

The SPC considers that the process itself is as important as the achievement of concrete results in order to prevent conflicts.

The SPC works in public spaces and with local residents, using a socio-educational intervention approach in order to manage conflicts of social origin. They intervene on a wide range of issues, such as gender, childhood, health, the elderly, drugs, young people, interculturality, social and professional inclusion and education.

The intervention methodology seeks to **empower all local community agents** (individuals, groups and public entities) with the aim of proposing innovative and community-created tools for managing communal conflicts. One example is the community garden.

The first phase of this action consisted in identifying people who are considered referents by their peers in the neighbourhood. The objective was to foster the involvement and participation of people from a number of specific areas of the neighbourhood where communal conflicts were rife.

The second phase consisted in involving local residents in the creation of a communal garden: they participated in the installation of planters, planted the seedlings, and are now responsible for the day-to-day care of the garden.

This action created a sense of belonging in the neighbourhood.

## >>>>>>>> ToNite's experience

The engagement strategy was designed according to a hybrid online and offline plan and thus allows for greater flexibility in organising the activities and reaching the objectives despite Covid-19 restrictions.

The ToNite project was able to engage with people and walk them through a kind of fixed path that lasted a few months (July 2020- December 2020).

Based on these exchanges and meetings, the next steps were presented to the community, always based on a hybrid approach.

This flexible structure allowed the project to engage with over 180 people and led to the conception of a common vision on the qualities and strengths of the two pilot neighbourhoods of Aurora and Vanchiglia as well as other areas situated near the Dora River. Moreover, through the different activities and workshops, a group has emerged of local residents who are aware of the ToNite project and its objectives. They will play an important role in the project's next phases.

## TONITE'S KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

**Designing a hybrid strategy:** this is a key element to bring people on board from the start of any activity that aims for community engagement and dialogue. Online empathetic questionnaires can help to reach out to people and make them aware of the project and the planned activities. Offline activities should be carried out in places that are in or closely connected to the target areas.

**Structuring the engagement strategy as a fixed path:** community 'onboard workshops' are more effective if they are designed as a series of meetings, rather than a single one, because this way people are engaged on a path, a journey together with the other participants. Experience shows that they generally engage more with the work being done, and are more interested in discovering what lays ahead in future steps. Each participant can join the 'trip' whenever they want and participation is open to all without obligations. It is best to plan activities in out-of-work hours so that more people can join.

**Maintaining a constant dialogue with the community:** thanks to the meta-app system, users can independently navigate the app: they can produce updated contents and promote their initiatives in any given area. This means new services or activities can be publicised through the app whenever they are available.

**Planning and designing appropriate tools to support local actors:** the public call for actions and the acceleration programme can be useful support tools for local actors who are willing to implement initiatives in the territory and need guidance from the relevant stakeholders.

### Key terms:

- ▶ **Pilot actions:** innovative services and activities aimed at generating social impact in a given target area. For ToNite, pilot actions will be about new local services able to generate social impact, in particular in the evening and at night, through financial and technical support.
- ▶ **Light incubation:** service offered by a private or public organisation to support potential applicants in understanding the technical and social requirements of the call for proposals. For ToNite, collective and individual meetings with potential applicants contributed to mutual knowledge and synergies among existing local resources.
- ▶ **Acceleration programme:** theoretical and practical support to selected pilot projects in order to facilitate the implementation of the actions. For ToNite, the programme is tailored to the different features of the pilot actions. It will last 4 months and the selected proposals will follow specific modules (such as product co-design, business modelling, impact assessment, prototyping, testing and scaling...). Experts will be available throughout to meet local practitioners and provide assistance.
- ▶ **Service Blueprint:** a strategic and operational tool to develop and map out all the service stages in terms of user experience and organisational processes, both frontend and backend, to deliver the service. It is a detailed snapshot of the service experience and performance that allows the provider to identify opportunities to improve user experience and positively impact the organisation using client feedback and service measures.

► **Service Masterplan:** a strategic assessment and guide that will allow the City of Turin to understand and map out the ways in which the service ecosystem will fulfill its objectives according to the ToNite project. It provides on the one hand an overview of the services developed during the acceleration programme, and on the other information as to how the services will impact social cohesion and public spaces in the target areas. As such, the Service Masterplan provides a roadmap for future services and actions.



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