Coltivando.
The convivial garden at Politecnico di Milano.
Promoters.
Politecnico di Milano,
Design dept.
Politecnico di Milano,
School of Design

Funders.
Politecnico di Milano

Aknowledgements.
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Context.
Bovisa neighbourhood is a former factory district that in the last 20 years passed through deep changes in the urban and social fabric. People living here from the 50s were used to grow their own food in the green allotments. When Politecnico campus set, people felt detached from this (public) space.
The project.

900 mq. 97 beds. Coltivando is the university community garden open to people working/studying in the Politecnico-Bovisa campus and to the neighborhood. It aims to give back the public space of the campus to the local community to provide people with fresh organic food, and to strengthen up social relationships. People volunteer in the share lots.
The design process.
| Oct 2011. garden prototype
| Feb-Oct 2012. garden co-design sessions
| Oct 2012. garden opening
| Dec 2012. Core community set up
| Oct 2012-ongoing. Continuous co-design with the members
| Oct 2012-ongoing. Continuous networking with local players.
Coltivando is built on a public area, rented by the Municipality of Milan to the Politecnico di Milano. In the same year of Coltivando opening, Milan City Council approved a policy to exploit green abandoned public spaces as (vegetable) gardens for local residents. Coltivando has been supported by Zone 9 comitee, the local governance board of Milan City Council.
Since the beginning, Coltivando has been co-designed and build by the community. Some members are entrusted with specific duties, according to their personal competences. Coltivando has been networking with other local gardens, associations and schools to promote the gardening activities and the social relevance of green public spaces.
Coltivando community puts together singles, families with kids, retired with students and staff from Politecnico. They belong to an open community: everyone can join the community just helping the works in the garden and share the convivial lunch together. Gardening is the driver that brings people to the place: taking care of a place, force people to come back regularly and to meet the neighborhood, strengthening up the community sense.
Coltivando is the first university garden in Italy, and it’s built in a public space. Coltivando participates to the open assembly about Green and Environment in the city council of Milan (Tavolo del Verde), joined the milanese network of community gardens and is quoted as one of the best practices by the council members.
Coltivando is a service for urban agriculture. It an instance of 0 miles food production. People working at Coltivando, bring home their own food as much as they need. Also, they support the sharing of food by eating together every Saturday, with courses made of the vegetables of the garden.
Coltivando design process tackled complex design issues that forced designers to work in a multidisciplinary team made of spatial and product-service-system designers. They had to combine their competences to develop the best solution and, moreover, to face the community feedback for every project progress. That is, designers had to learn how to be a community coach.

Skill Training and Design Education

multidisciplinary designing team

co-design

community coaching
To build Coltivando infrastructures and equipments, local craftsmen have been involved. The spatial concept of the Garden is based on a DYO, modular building box. That means that in every part of the world, it is possible to replicate the space. For designers, Coltivando is a showcase of new design community centred competences to put in the marketplace.
Visualisation and storytelling has been the main aid for designers to share their ideas with the community in co-design sessions. The continuous co-design approach, forced designer to envision their thinking in order to communicate it to the community, so they could give feedback.