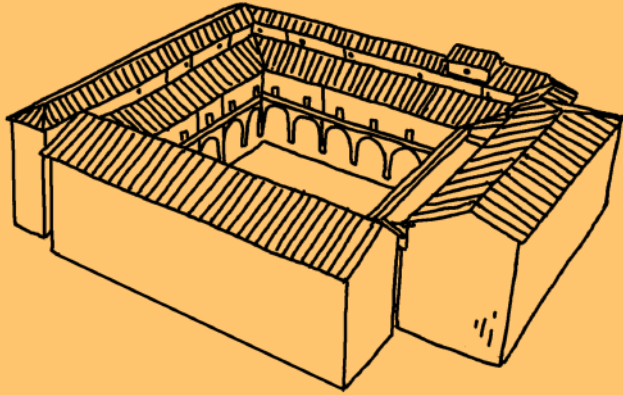


Làbas

A “social city hall” in the heart of Bologna
from 2012



Vicolo Bolognetti, 2
40125 Bologna (BO)
Italy

🌐 labasbo.org

📘 [LabasBo](https://www.facebook.com/LabasBo)

📷 [labas_bo](https://www.instagram.com/labas_bo)

🐦 [@labasbo](https://twitter.com/labasbo)

Làbas is the political collective that occupied the former Masini barracks in Via Orfeo on the 13th of November 2012, and now resides in the former San Leonardo convent in Vicolo Bolognetti.

By occupying the former Masini barracks, they rescued an area of about 9,000 square meters in the heart of Bologna from abandonment, decay and real estate speculation, returning it to the neighborhood, the city and the local community. On the 8th of August 2017, Làbas was evicted by the police. A substantial and successful campaign and a rally called for the reopening of the space and allowed Làbas to find a home in the old Vicolo Bolognetti convent and thus began a new challenge. Since its foundation, Làbas has promoted many initiatives, such as an Italian school for foreigners, film screenings, debates, assemblies, stimulating a constant discussion about what is happening in the world. One of the regular meetings is on Wednesday afternoon with the local organic market Campi Aperti.



WHERE

After almost five years of operation in the former Masini barracks, the Låbas collective was evicted in August 2017, and left without a home. The eviction from the space mobilized thousands of people from all over Italy for a demonstration on September 9, demonstrating the increasing need for inclusive spaces open to citizens. In response, the Municipal Administration identified, in the spaces of Vicolo Bolognetti 2, an opportunity to test a temporary management for the purpose of transition and experimentation of innovative mutualistic practices and, following a public notice within the program Laboratorio Spazi, temporarily assigned Låbas to the management of the spaces.

LOCATION

Urban

TYPE OF SPACE

Building

ORIGINAL FUNCTION

Religious (convent)

YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION

14th century

SURFACE AREA

2,275.51 sqm

OWNERSHIP

Public

CONCESSION

Free cession

CONDITION BEFORE ACTIVATION

Underused

COMPOSITION OF THE SPACE

Reception

Big room (conference and concert hall, indoor events)

Cloister with: agri pizzeria, bar, kitchen,

after school room, do-it-yourself bicycle workshop, general warehouses, brewery

WHEN

TIME OF DAY USED

Morning 7am - 1pm 10%

Afternoon ... 1pm - 7pm 70%

Evening 7pm - 1am 20%

Night 1am - 7am 0%

Wordays 85%

Weekends 15%

Winter 10%

Spring 30%

Summer 40%

Autumn 20%

AVERAGE USERS PER DAY

During events: around 3,000

Everyday: 200-300

WHAT

Låbas defines itself as a real social town hall where, through bottom-up and autonomous practices, different parts of society meet, cooperate and conspire, experimenting with collective solutions to everyday problems and organizing fights for emancipation and against extractive capitalism.

SURFACE IN USE

1,929.51 sqm

THEMATIC AREAS

Activism and politics

Commercial

Culture and arts

Design, crafts and production

Education and training

Food and drink

Sport and leisure

Welfare

Låbas hosts a local weekly organic market, after-school activities, an Italian language school for foreigners,

a free orientation and assistance course for migrants, the people's health laboratory (self-managed by doctors, nurses, and medical students to provide first-aid and to help orient migrants within the Local Health Service), coworking and training facilities on food-related matters, carpentry courses, documentary courses, neighborhood activities and other activities organized by the various partner associations of the project.

USER DEMOGRAPHIC

The activities are open to everyone, with a special focus on children, families and young people.
Under-represented people: homeless people, migrants, women, poor people

COLLABORATIONS

Associations and collectives
Other commons
Universities and schools

NETWORK

Local
National

Labàs is part of the "social town hall" network in Bologna, a political community that also includes TPO, Offside Pescarola and Porta Pratello.

WHO

In order to obtain the concession of temporary use of the Vicolo Bolognetti premises, the collective of Làbas was forced to revise its "independent nature" and constitute itself in a recognized legal form, the association "Nata Per Sciogliersi" (literally, "Created to be dissolved"). After participating in the co-design process and submitting a proposal for use and management, the space was temporarily assigned for 2 years. In September 2019 "Nata Per Sciogliersi" participated in the public notice for the concession of public buildings for cultural and

social purposes addressed to associations registered in the municipal list, obtaining the use of the space for 4+4 years, thus consolidating the dialogue with the municipal administration.

MANAGING ORGANIZATION(S)

1. Nata Per Sciogliersi (association, 2017)

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT

50 people
Around 200 volunteers

HOW

NATURE OF THE INITIATIVE

Bottom-up

TYPE OF MANAGEMENT

Horizontal

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

60% Commercial activities
30% Public grants
10% Tickets and entrance fees

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES

100% Free

Watch the video of
the "RiapriamoLàbas"
demonstration





How did your story begin?

The collective was born in 2012 with the occupation of the former Masini barracks by a group of people belonging to the TPO squat. So the collective comes from the younger generation of the TPO occupiers, from the need to reclaim a public space in the city, as an “assault laboratory” (from which the name Labàs is derived) and at the same time as a laboratory against the economic crisis. In fact, the project comes after the global financial crisis of 2008, during the era of Mario Monti’s technocratic government. The goal was to reclaim an unused and abandoned space by using bottom-up practices, to rebuild a new model of society.

In 2016 the Masini barracks (which were state-owned) was purchased by the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (the national institution that was created to finance public works in 1850).

As a consequence, on August 8, 2017 the Làbas activists were forced to leave the building without any notice from the city. Shortly after the eviction, negotiations with the municipality began; meanwhile, in September 2017, the rally “Riapriamo Làbas” was attended by around 15,000 people. The event showed that the citizens felt the need to reopen and relocate the space. At the beginning of 2018

Làbas reopened in a new venue, in Vicolo Bolognetti, with the first public events.

“Our goal was to reclaim an unused and abandoned space with bottom-up practices, to rebuild a new model of society [...] We define ourselves as a “social town hall”: a place for political action consisting in a physical space but also a network of people”.

Is there a practice or value that represents you and you think may be an inspiration to others?

We define ourselves as a “social city hall”: a place for political action that is fully integrated in the city in which it is located. This social city hall can be interpreted as a focal point within the city which, however, is

composed not only of the physical place (such as Làbas), but of the municipality; therefore it involves interactions with other social spaces and people, forming a network. This network actually manages four spaces, because Labàs is part of a single political community, which also includes TPO, Offside Pescarola and Porta Pratello.

What is the secret ingredient that makes your story unique?

One thing that we learned from our zapatista comrades from Chiapas, that can be summed up in the phrase “we walk while asking questions”, which means to never take anything for granted, always ask yourself what you are doing within the dynamics of horizontality and active community involvement.

Interview with: Lino Bosisio and Enrico Conti



Did you know?

Laboratorio Spazi in Bologna

Laboratorio Spazi, coordinated by the Fondazione per l'Innovazione Urbana (Urban Innovation Foundation), was initiated in 2017 to respond to the needs of the territory for open, flexible, hybrid spaces, capable of facilitating social inclusion and promoting diversity, perceived as social strongholds and as a "bridge" between generations, cultures and needs. The purpose of the process was to redesign policies and tools for the assignment and management - even on a temporary basis - of buildings owned by the municipality, providing the Town Council with some ideas for new regulation and support.

One of the objectives was the recognition of the different forms of management and self-management of spaces, including the experience of Làbas, redefining from time to time also the assurance role of the public administration, as provided by the "Urban Innovation Plan" of the institution.