

The Alliance for the Great Age: a model of proximity-based welfare for longevity

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Abstract

Milan, with a total population of approximately 1.4 million residents (as of 31 December 2024), has one of the largest elderly populations among major Italian cities, with more than 28% of residents aged over 65. The city counts more than 100,000 older adults living alone, while around 90,000 family caregivers carry out care work that often lacks adequate recognition and institutional support. These figures make longevity not only a demographic trend, but also an urban and social challenge. At the same time, Milan has a dense ecosystem of capable actors—philanthropic foundations, social cooperatives, universities, cultural institutions, health and care providers—which nevertheless operate largely independently of one another, with limited integration among them. The strategic opportunity is therefore not simply to create new services but to connect and systematize the energies that already exist: reducing fragmentation, activating connections among complementary actors, and turning individual philanthropic contributions into a shared systemic investments in longevity welfare.

Fondazione Ravasi Garzanti ETS operates in this context. Established at the behest of the prominent Italian publisher Livio Garzanti, its mission is to promote the well-being of the elderly population in Milan. It operates across three fields of action: services, culture, and research.

In 2026, the Foundation launched the 'Alliance for the Great Age', a civic and philanthropic platform bringing together foundations, proximity-welfare operators, public institutions, universities and cultural organizations, and where each partner contributes its own assets—financial, relational, and expertise—according to the logic of “*contribute less and generate more.*” The aim of the Alliance is to build a stable, citywide ecosystem of



proximity-based welfare for longevity in Milan by coordinating actors, skills, resources, and initiatives already operating in the territory, in order to provide older people and their caregiver with accessible, integrated responses close to the places, services, and relationships of everyday lives.

At the heart of the program designed to be replicable and scalable in other contexts through training and dissemination—lies the experience of *CuraMI & ProteggiMI*, a pilot proximity-based project launched by the Foundation in 2019 together with local welfare actors. The project offers an integrated portfolio of services aimed at improving the well-being of older people and their caregivers. The project offers listening, orientation, and accompaniment through accessible neighborhood access points, integrating free services with affordable solutions. Its evolution provides a practical basis for a model that can be trained, adapted, and replicated in other contexts.

Beyond service coordination, the Alliance seeks to enable different actors to recognize shared responsibilities and foster collective capabilities, generated through collaboration among actors and through the creation of relational networks that activate a collective agency.

Our commitment to supporting the second edition of the World Longevity Summit is rooted in this perspective: the creation of enabling environments, enriched by the convergence of knowledge, experience, and cooperation among diverse national and international stakeholders. In this talk, I will discuss how philanthropic actors can move from isolated giving to coordinated and systemic investment in longevity welfare. Drawing on Milan's place-based and human-centered experience, the presentation will explore what this model may offer to other ageing cities seeking to build environments that make longer lives healthier, more connected and more meaningful.