Spreading the wealth: using partnerships, trusts and charities

The idea of clustering buildings and splitting the funds generated by one across the maintenance of all
CHORUS
The Self-Help Network of Venice's Historic Churches

Rita Sartori, Ornella D'Andrea
CHORUS
Associazione per le chiese del Patriarcato di Venezia

established: 1997
status: not-for-profit, lay
members: 13 parish priests, 10 laypersons
churches: 17
staff: 25
director: Ornella D’Andrea
CHORUS’s mission

extended opening
safekeeping
care
promotion
safeguarding
conservation
restoration

1. Churches of Venice Città Antica
2. Churches of the Venice Patriarchate
in order to:

• **enhance their value**
  (historical, cultual, cultural, artistic, social, moral)

• **raise growing appreciation and attention**
  (faithful, visitors, scholars, students and residents)

(from Chorus's Statute)
The Making of CHORUS
Venice and Its Lagoon
a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1987

Extension: ca. 550 sq. km.
Venice 'Città Antica'
Total Surface: ca. 62 sq. km.
Walkable Surface: ca. 8 sq. km.

Historic Churches
116
working
90
other use
22
closed
4

(status: sept 2014)
# Venice 'Città Antica'

## Depopulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>174,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>174,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>121,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>93,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>75,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>69,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>56,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Main Factors

- Post-war rush to industrialized mainland
- The 1966 Great Flood
- Skyrocketing real estate prices and maintenance costs
- Decreasing job opportunities
- Low birth rate
A focus on FEBRUARY 1992

• 15 out of 40 **churches already restored** (Law for Venice, 1973)

• the City Council of Venice **stopped release of fundings** for the care and maintenance of the city churches (since 1990)

• **a dramatic depopulation** of the city and a progressive dwindling of the community of faithful:

  40 parish churches in **1951** → residents: 174,808  
  40 parish churches in **1992** → residents: 75,179

• **a pervasive process of secularization**
lack of volunteers
(depopulation, secularization)

lack of offerings and donations
(serving the day-to-day management of the building)

the opening, maintenance, safekeeping
of churches and their artworks
had become just unsustainable
(no alarms, no custodians)
Don Aldo Marangoni
director of the Churches Office of the Venice Patriarchate
president of the Venice Parish Priests' Board
parish priest himself

Venice Churches were due to 'shut down'
Opening time was to be limited 'to Holy Service, only'
the opening of the over 100 churches of Venice had become 'a cultural hazard'
## Funding System in Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Freedom of worship</td>
<td>● Keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Right of public worship</td>
<td>● Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Italian Constitution, 1948, art. 19)</td>
<td>(Constitutional Law 18 Oct 2001, n. 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Income Tax (8xmille)

**the 8‰ system, compulsory**

*(Law 20 May 1985, n. 222)*

→ **CEI** *(Italian Episcopal Conf.)*

* A share is destined to worship needs 1.033 mio euros in 2013 of which
  * new buildings (123 mio.)
  * keeping/restoration of old ones (60 mio.)

→ **State**

* A share is used for
  * keeping/restoration of cultural heritage

---

  * Sintesi per la stampa, aprile 2014 – www.8Xmille.it*
Legal Personality

Churches need to have **legal personality** in order to receive state/regional funds

**Legal personality** is granted only to churches

- that are **open to public worship**

- that have **own means to grant the opening**, the ministering and the day-to-day maintenance
Closing churches

disappointment of the faithful
acts of vandalism
thefts
general decay

+

disappointment of 

tourists, scholars, city lovers
residents, tour operators

... and no public funds
1997: A Turning Point

- 36 months to the 2000 Jubilee
- last fundings insufficient for granting reliable opening times
- 68,600 residents, only
- faithful outnumbered by over 20 millions of tourists a year, thousands in a day → new stakeholders
- increasing demand of access into historic churches
- churches → spaces of conflict (few pious vs. many tourists)
Don Aldo and a group of parish priests started brainstorming.

How much do the care, the day-to-day management and the safekeeping of a historic church actually cost a year?

50,000 / 60,000 euros
116 churches

outstanding universal value
(World Heritage for future generations)

'ecumenical' attractions
(please-all)

dual spaces
(devotion/tourism)

a spread-out museum
(thousands of artworks still in situ)
a few 'stars'

most visited worldwide known

on the main tourist paths
SANTA MARIA GLORIOSA DEI FRARI

SANTA MARIA DEI MIRACOLI

SAN POLO
many 'underdogs'
less known
totally unknown/unheard of
off the tourist paths
= more at risk
'underdogs'

SAN GIACOMO DALL’ORIO
SAN PIETRO DI CASTELLO
SANT’ALVISE
An Unprecedented Project

• an act of **conciliation** between traditional users and upcoming new stakeholders

• an action to guarantee the **opening of churches** beyond the 2000 Jubilee

• **involvement** of the city visitors in the project of safeguarding and promoting Venice religious heritage

• **a fixed contribution for the 'extended use'** of some selected sacred spaces

• creation of **a network of churches** (stars ↔ underdogs)

• activation of **a mechanism of solidarity** amongst churches
The Chorus Network was born (1997)

A first commitment:

Biblia Pauperum, Open Churches towards the 2000 Jubilee

a project designed and managed by Chorus with the encouragement of the Venice Patriarchate
The **Chorus** Network in 1998

13 churches

1. San Giacomo de l'Orio  
2. San Stae  
3. San Polo  
4. Santo Stefano  
5. Sant'Alvise  
6. Madonna dell'Orto  
7. Santa Maria Formosa  
8. Santissimo Redentore  
9. San Pietro di Castello  
10. San Sebastiano  
11. Santa Maria del Giglio  
12. Santa Maria dei Miracoli  
13. Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari
The Chorus Network

START-UP COSTS

258,000 euros

personally borne by the founder,
Don Aldo Marangoni
(a bank credit from Banco Ambrosiano Veneto)
A 'spread-out museum'

same opening times
non-stop (10 am – 5 pm)
safekeeping & care
alarm devices
labels on all artworks
appropriate lighting
infos on history and artworks

for a small fixed contribution
Contribution
(2014)

Chorus Pass
all churches, one-year validity
12 euros

Chorus Pass Reduced
all churches, one-year validity
8 euros (single students, max 29 yrs)

Chorus Pass Family
all churches, one-year validity
24 euros (2 adults + children max 18 yrs)

Chorus Pass School
all churches, one-year validity
3 euros (school & university, max 29 yrs)

Single Entrance
one church
3 euros

Single Entrance School
one church
1,50 euros (school & university, max 29 yrs)
Free entrance

- Venice residents
- Pilgrims
- Members of religious orders
- Disabled and accompanying carers
- Children aged 10 and under
- Members of ICOM and ICOMOS
- Authorised guides and group leaders on duty
- School group leaders on duty
- Journalists (*Chorus* accreditation)
- Researchers and Scholars (*Chorus* accreditation)
All contributions are turned to services
The agreement between parishes and CHORUS approved by the Patriarchate Chancellor (abstract)

whereas

• a parish priest is liable for the safekeeping and safeguarding of each assigned church and its artistic content and must guarantee the opening of churches beyond the Holy Service times

• a parish priest is busy with the care of souls and has no such organizational structure so as to cope with the extended opening of his church

now therefore,
CHORUS commit themselves (in agreement with each parish priest) to provide (away from the Holy Services times)

- regular opening
- safekeeping
- cleaning
- power & lighting
- day-to-day maintenance
- information to visitors
free of charge

7 hours a day, six days a week

ensuring the respectful use of the sacred space
Chorus's Staff

In the office: 5
In the churches: 20

open-ended contract

turn-around every 4 weeks
(safekeeping)

open and close churches,
activate/disactivate alarm systems

promote and illustrate

check and control

An interface between sacred and profane
Design Perspective*

outdoors

an information sign
indoors

a functional box in glass and wood, heated

a mobile phone

a video-camera (when applicable)
Selection of churches

a ‘church mix’

a circuit of diversities

Networking diversities
a church mix

all contributions to the most visited churches also help the management of the least visited

a circuit of diversities

each church plays a distinctive role each one serving the purpose of the network each one providing form and continuity to the network
A two-direction dynamics

churches $\longrightarrow$ CHORUS

churches joining Chorus as the only alternative to closing down

CHORUS $\longrightarrow$ churches

Chorus seeking churches to better serve the territory and the less visited churches (distribution of tourist flows)
The Chorus Network in 2014
17 churches

• Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari
• San Giacomo de l'Orio
• San Stae
• San Polo
• Santo Stefano
• Sant'Alvise
• Santa Maria Formosa
• Santissimo Redentore
• San Pietro di Castello
• San Sebastiano
• Santa Maria del Giglio
• Santa Maria dei Miracoli
• San Giuseppe di Castello
• San Giobbe
• Santa Maria del Rosario
• San Giovanni Elemosinario
• San Vidal (Chorus Cultura)
Status of the 17 churches

10 parish churches
  4 rectorial churches
  3 vicarial churches

Ownership

14 Diocese
  1 Cappuccini Friars
  1 Franciscan Friars
  1 the Venice City Council
Networking **diversities**

**Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari**

the driving church

an *ad hoc* agreement

a guest-star within the network

a plus for the network
Networking diversities

Church of San Vidal

venue for conferences
(Chorus Cultura)

venue for barock music concerts
(managed by Interpreti Veneziani orchestra)

guaranteed opening
(by Interpreti Veneziani)

no entrance fee
(free)
Enjoy & Preserve

Distribution of tourist flows
A map for **new routes** (and new travellers)

**CHORUS**'s churches are scattered all over Venice *Città Antica*

visitors are given a **map** showing their location

an exhortation to go **off the tourist paths** and explore beautiful, less crowded surroundings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHURCHES*</th>
<th>VISITS / YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria dei Miracoli</td>
<td>20,000 - 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Polo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria del Giglio</td>
<td>10,000 - 20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Sebastiano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria del Rosario</td>
<td>5,000 - 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria Formosa</td>
<td>&lt; 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santo Stefano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Pietro di Castello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Giacomo dell'Orio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss. Redentore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sant'Alvise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Giovanni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elemosinario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Giobbe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Stae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2013, excl. Frari
The visitors of the Frari's Church are not included. They, alone, equal the sum of the visitors of the whole Chorus Network.
The Chorus Network
(including the Frari's Church)

the second most visited museum in Venice*

* 2012
Building-up a consensus

Chorus Cultura
(2001)

awareness-raising
conferences
staff training
education for all
promotion
concerts & exhibitions
Chorus Cultura
the venue

Church of San Vidal
The Chorus Network
Friends & Partners

Friends
Amici di Chorus
Artemisia

Partners
Venezia Unica
Azienda di Promozione Turistica
Bassani
Palazzetto Bru Zane
Alitalia
Associazione Veneziana Albergatori
The Chorus Network

Outcomes

extended **opening** times of historic churches

safekeeping and **safeguarding**

a valuable **cultural offer**, now **easily accessible**

a comfortable, **enjoyable visiting experience**
(enhancement of the religious heritage's value)

a **sustainable** way to promote and divulgate culture
(through the creation of an economy of scale)

**enhancement** of historic churches
otherwise at risk of marginality
The **Chorus** Network

**Outcomes**

**benefits** to the Venetian community
(faithful and laypersons)

a **steady job** for 25

a new discerning **public**

a renewed social **engagement**
(landmarks → **lovemarks**)


The **Chorus Network**

More Outcomes

The Chorus Network has recently raised some interest in scholars in terms of

• a possible form of enhancement and safeguarding of cultural heritage in the **territory**

• an innovative approach in the management of sacred spaces as **common goods** ('common heritage' *)

• a conciliation between lay and religious needs, thus **reducing the risk of conflicts** among stakeholders

• a **sustainable, virtuous network**

* Kyiv Statement 2010, 12
This presentation is based on a study carried out within the course of Economics and Management of Arts and Cultural Activities of Ca' Foscari University, Venice, with the support of the Laboratory of Management of Arts and Culture.
Thank you.

www.chorusvenezia.org