COLLABORATIVE CITY

WE-TRADERS SWAPPING A CRISIS FOR A CITY

WER MACHT DIE STADT? WHO CREATES THE CITY?

DÉFAR DÉKK BI? QUI BÂIT LA VILLE?

ΠΟΙΟΣ ΦΥΣΤΟΥΝ ΤΗΝ Πόλη?

¿QUIEN CREÓ LA CIUDAD?

CHI CREò LA CITTA?

КТО СТРОИТ ГОРОД?

QUEM CRIA A CIDADE?

KURŠ VEIDO PİLSEI? ŠTA SE BĚJÁVA U GRADU?
A group of neighbours transforms wasteland into public space. Garden plot owners open their grounds to unemployed youths to test their small-scale business ideas. Communities are becoming patrons where they were once supplicants. Citizens across Europe are taking the initiative to re-appropriate urban space, and they do it collaboratively. They call them "We-Traders" in the sense that they redefine the relation between value, profit and public good and are able to motivate fellow citizens to follow suit. We-Traders respond to crisis in several arenas of urban life, be it economic, social or ecological. What these We-Trades all have in common is that they diffuse the boundaries between buyers and sellers, consumers become co-producers. The production of space evolves in a collaborative undertaking.

For several years the effects of the financial crisis have been apparent in many south-western European countries, but also in Germany. Real estate speculation has resulted in both vacancies and housing shortages and is pushing lower income people to the periphery. Social polarization is on the rise and individual sections of the population, such as young adults, are being cut off from viable developments. Socially compatible, ecological measures are becoming ever more urgent as is the search for solutions to demographic extremes such as fast growth and strong declines in the population.

Appreciation for self-initiative in urban development increases in times of crisis. In many places, urban planning becomes open to participatory and cooperative methods. The reasons for such paradigm shifts are quite different and range from empty public coffers that demand low-cost projects to social vacancy left behind by excessively rapid growth – and thus a lack of civic sense. The digital media also strengthen demands for transparency and co-creation. In this context We-Trading is particularly interesting because co-determination becomes co-authoring.

We-Trading increases ecological, economic and social sustainability. Any citizen who is actively involved in development, production and exchange assumes responsibility for the outcome.

The Goethe project We-Traders. Swapping Crisis for City connects initiatives by artists, designers, activists and many other citizens from five distinct European contexts in Lisbon, Madrid, Toulouse, Turin and Berlin. It creates a knowledge and production platform for current and future We-Traders. Which practices worked well? Can certain elements be replicated elsewhere? How does the collaboration between private initiative and public bodies work? We-Traders invites interested citizens and groups to participate, becoming in this way a working and growing exhibition. It conveys not only knowledge, but also continually generates new results and transports local contributions to the next stations. The projects are presented in video, object and workshop formats. Statements by urbanists, sociologists, philosophers, political scientists and economists offer diagnoses on the themes of the city and the crisis. Manifestos by We-Traders formulate expectations and demands on their city. Visitors also contribute actively to the exhibition: through their contributions to the "Open Calls," through their participation in "Do-It-Yourself Statistics" and in workshops. The website www.goethe.de/wetraders offers continuing up-to-date information on all projects, events, data and activities. This WeTrading exhibition is not just showing the experience of citizens, it is using to try and reinvent itself. And at the Madrid We-Traders Forum, Santiago Eraso, one of those responsible for the 2016 San Sebastian capital of culture, calls for "anti-monumental activities". It is certainly not about interpreting We-Trades one-dimensionally as a reaction to the crisis. "We are tired of the crisis being presented to us as an opportunity; it would be better if there were no crisis," says Lisbon geographer Jorge da Silva Macaíba. Malheiro on behalf of many We-Traders. If at all, it was a missed opportunity says Davide Ziveri from Turin’s Buenavista Social Housing. "I thought now everything will be different with the banks."

"Are We-Trades reformist projects or do they want a change in the system?" asks Joël Lucusann from MixArt Myras in Toulouse, while his colleagues from Bois & Cie quite pragmatically trust in their makers qualities. "Notre reaction, c'est l'action!" says Alain Gatti of Le Campo de Cebada is Campo de Cebada." Such collaborative practices put meaning before profits. "ARM gave me back my pride in being a farmer. Now, we are feeding people, not markets," says Alain Gatti of Le Campo de Cebada.rose. The Madrid We-Traders Forum, Santiago Eraso, one of those responsible for the 2016 San Sebastian capital of culture, calls for "anti-monumental activities". It is certainly not about interpreting We-Trades one-dimensionally as a reaction to the crisis. "We are tired of the crisis being presented to us as an opportunity; it would be better if there were no crisis," says Lisbon geographer Jorge da Silva Macaíba. Malheiro on behalf of many We-Traders. If at all, it was a missed opportunity says Davide Ziveri from Turin’s Buenavista Social Housing. "I thought now everything will be different with the banks."

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We-Trading for a Collaborative City
Editorial by Angelika Fitz and Rose Epple

A crisis is the saddle point that decides the fate of a city, according to urban planner Sonja Beeck at the We-Traders Forum in Madrid. We are certain that the collaborative practices of We-Trading decisively contribute to the success of a city.
“Swapping crisis for city. It’s the crisis that has brought people together. It’s true, we’re in the middle of a crisis, but how do we move past this deep crisis? What has lead us here is the way we create society, the way we create our space. And that started with the modern day western world.

There was the city as constructed by the state, as constructed by industry, and as it is now, constructed by finance. No, I think if the city is to be an alternative, it is the city as a city. I mean, the city where everyone participates, where everyone plays his or her part. Instead of being run by a technocracy instead of being run by companies, by the industry, industry, finance and so on, everyone does their share, so we have a shared space.

And at that point the city as a place of production, as somewhere decentralised, producing democracy and producing life, in fact. So it is we who are the market, we are the space. It is us! And it’s about acting for our city, so we are not captured by powers that escape us and which kill us.”

— Leonie Baumann

“Participation is essential, but it has to be serious. Being serious means ensuring that those involved are heard, that actors are respected in their transformation process, and that everyone is involved from beginning to end. Otherwise the word ‘participation’ is used in vain, all across the political spectrum in Europe – right and left. And in some cases like the ‘Big Society’ of David Cameron it ends up being made responsible in place of the State, and a distinction is being made between larger issues to be handled by the State and ‘smaller’ or social issues to be handled by communities.

What does it mean to us to get out of the crisis? What does it represent in terms of improvement? And how can capital accumulation be used in future? Today, from another viewpoint, the trading concept of We-Traders, the concept of practical exchange, is what’s key. Experiences. Because the context counts. Madrid, Toulouse, Lisbon or Berlin, to mention just four, have different contexts. In the crisis – both in its intensity and in its manifestations – there are similarities and differences just as there are various responses from the institutional, public, and third – or voluntary – sectors, and differences among people themselves. And out of these practices we can generate collective intelligence and a sharing of experiences, so we can fortify Berlin projects with what’s happening in Lisbon and bring to Lisbon some of what’s going on in Berlin as well as in Toulouse, Turin or Madrid.”

— Jorge da Silva Macaísta Malheiros

“We-Traders is a political experiment, that follows the lovely old motto of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin: Where danger is, there the saving powers will grow as well. That means that in the crisis, the city does not simply go into ruin, but rather starts an impulse for productive ways out of the crisis, in which our social structure can also be somewhat changed.

For many, this reference to the collective, the ‘we’ in We-Traders, looks like some nostalgic reference to the communitarian movement of the 1970s, which, here in Portugal where we currently are, gave rise to a very noteworthy Carnation Revolution that brought in many of these participatory instruments into the regeneration of cities. It might look like nostalgia, which is why the project must always ask what is new in the 21st century.

Yet I believe that the historical context of this effort in the wave of movements that occurred in the 1970s, not just in Portugal, but worldwide, is not without relevance. We can learn from it. We can learn where things might fail, but we can also garner energy from it. We can learn that uniting against these seemingly superior opponents has a tradition, and that progress has been made. So much is built upon the achievements of the ‘60s and ‘70s, so today, nurtured through the tent cities in the Mediterranean countries or through the occurrences in Tahrir Square, the process can find new fodder.”

— Claus Leggewie

“We can safely say that Berlin is a poor city. Berlin has the lowest level of owner-occupied flats in the entire country, out of all the state capitals. Our social standard is comparatively low. The income levels are getting worse and worse, whereas it becomes more and more complicated, to manage one’s life and secure a standard of living.

I’m from an art school background and have been working with artists for a long time, and what I’m noticing is that what made this city so attractive over the last 20 years, which is artists having access to open spaces in which to present and produce their works, and in which to live. We are witnessing a lot of change, and it will become rather complicated for artists to continue to live and work in the city centre.

This means that what has made the city attractive and brought about an upturn over the last few years, namely, the cultural attraction, by saying that this is the economic upturn, is being diminished and being pushed out to the periphery, and some artists will be leaving the city.

There are currently no plans, in terms of perspective, as to what the city as a whole should do, looking forward, in order to support and maintain the city’s cultural standard. The city needs to reflect upon how spaces can actually be designed for citizens even in 20, 30 or 50 years’ time. The form these activities take, by all kinds of arts groups, citizens’ initiatives – from tree pit maintenance to the Allmende-Kantor allotment cooperative and urban gardening etc. – is about taking possession of your own city again.”

— Leoni Baumann
The City of Madrid presently offers a highly stimulating challenge to its inhabitants. It is experiencing a time of deep economic and identity crisis, thus a unique opportunity in which to reflect on their future with leaders within society, specialists in architecture and urbanism, with creative groups and citizens' initiatives with horizontal structures. Madrid is a creative incubator in which institutional and private, individual and collective initiatives have worked for years on a new vision of urban life and the introduction of changes designed to make the city more liveable, with a more sustainable management and greater public spirit. This set of cultural and social agents constitute a very vulnerable ecosystem, which, however, creates high added value in social innovation. All are responsible for protecting their work as an essential city heritage. These processes involve active agents such as the public *laboratories* for social innovation and citizen participation Medialab-Prado and Intermediae, the departments of culture, solidarity, environment and education of the Casa Encendida, outreach and citizen encounter programmes such as Pianoa Madrid, networking platforms like Zoohaus and Arquitecturas Colectivas, initiatives like Hackitectura, Ecomovilidad and BicCrítica, organizations like Observatorio Metropolitano, projects such as Fresh Madrid, Kulturmeter and Mapear Madrid, young architects like Andrés Jaque, Uriel Foguè, Maria Langarita and Victor Navarro, collectives such as Zuloark and Basurama, cultural associations and visual artists, etc.

Several initiatives of this network are involved in the project We-Traders. The Madrid We-Traders are Campo de Cebada, Todo por la Praxis, Teamlabs/WalkInnCoop, EII/Cabina de Crisis de Ficciones Políticas and Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas, all of them stakeholders that respond to crisis by proposing new urban models using social, economic and ecological resources.

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**CAMPO DE CEBADA**

**TRADE** Co-productions in public space, promoting neighbourhoo spirit, cultural exchange, social exchange, participative strategies, recycling, co-creation, open source design, urban gardening, diverse communities, self-organisation, self-empowerment, skill enhancement opportunities for all, sport and leisure

**WE** Neighbours, merchants, architects, municipal employees, civil servants, creative communities, cultural associations, artists, students, families, pensioners

**CRISIS** Lack of citizen participation, weakness of neighbourhood associations in the face of construction projects, accelerated by authorities, lack of communication between citizens, associations and institutions, privatization of public space

Campo de Cebada (The Barley Field) is an open community of active citizenship that emerged from a conflict situation: the rehabilitation of disused public spaces by citizens. It aims to generate the inclusion of more stakeholders in decision-making to create an open infrastructure to serve the public. It is a space for dialogue between the citizens and the city administration that facilitates comprehensive participation in urban planning. The process by which the neighbours recovered the site is an example of peaceful coexistence, transparency and open data. The residents themselves participate in decisions about what activities are implemented and what projects are initiated, whereby they share responsibility in the usage of the space. The project includes a digital platform where the different *fields* of action – cultural, social, artistic, and athletic - are compiled and documented.

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**TODO POR LA PRAXIS (TXP)**

**TRADE** Self-management of empty urban plots, community facilities, urban movable infrastructure, intervention in public space, DIY strategies, unregulated educational system, co-creation, networking

**WE** Architects, artists, lawyers, designers, anthropologists, students, cultural mediators, researchers

**CRISIS** Lack of participatory urban spaces, lack of social sensitization for community resources, too few incentives for cooperation, privatization of public space, gentrification, consumerism

Todo por la Praxis (Everything for Praxis) or TXP is a multidisciplinary team that sees itself as a laboratory for aesthetic projects of cultural resistance. The initiative develops intervention strategies for public spaces with the ultimate goal of creating a catalogue of socially effective tools. They encourage “do-it-yourself” as a methodology that involves direct responsibility for all project phases. Thus users identify with the projects and become aware of what they can bring about themselves. TXP is part of a large network of people and groups interested in creating a participatory urban environment. This network presents an alternative approach to conventional architectural practice by introducing collaborative work, a database of knowledge and the use of common resources.

www.todoperlapraxis.es
www.arquitectascolectivas.net

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Javier Duero, co-curator We-Traders

Javier Duero is a cultural producer. He is co-curator for We-Traders in Madrid.

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“The district belongs to us” © Todo por la Praxis

In February 2014 they will present a set of proposals intended to contribute to the process of collective action and citizen participation at MadrideMadrid. All of this will occur shortly after learning of the decision taken on Madrid’s bid to host the Olympic Games. Regardless of the outcome, they will think about what the city we live in will be like in the year 2020, this being the task and responsibility of us all.
“Since fiction belongs to no one, it circulates and encourages this very strong situation of exchange.”
— Elii/GCFP
HOW CAN DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS, ABOVE ALL THE YOUNGER GENERATION, BRING ABOUT CHANGES THAT NEEDED A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE SPANISH CAPITAL?

In the Spanish capital, young people feel disconnected from the political landscape. They want to participate, have a voice in the creation of solutions, and be part of the process. In the Spanish capital, young people feel that they need to be more involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

Another time, the group seeks to depict the structures behind visible reality instead of simply trying to solve the problems. They might start with a simple observation, such as: “What if people no longer go to work by car, but by bicycle?” They can then get answers and solutions in various ways. Far-fetched answers and solutions can be intensified in harmless ways. Questions can be formulated or simply tried out. But sometimes they crystallize more easily into a scenario than into a proposal. The right questions, their engagement began already in the planning phase, as the residents, with an eye to the construction plan, decided assign more storeys to the buildings. They realized right from the beginning that high-quality intermediate space is one of the decisive conditions for the success of a modern residential settlement. They thus not only developed the intermediate space together, but also invited artists to submit designs for surfaces and pathways, and to implement them together with the district's children. Scarcely anyone would imagine that art plays an important role in improving living quality in this difficult social environment. The slogan “EL BARRIO ES NUESTRO” (i.e. the district belongs to us), built on one of the public squares gives an impression of considerable self-assurance, and evidently not all identify with it. It is primarily active, involved older ladies and less so the young men with their attack dogs who are likewise to be seen at the square.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSES

The right solutions only result from the right questions. The right questions, obviously, can emerge from discussions. But sometimes they crystallize more easily in play and fiction. There, extreme positions can be formulated or simply tried out. Questions can be intensified in harmless ways. Far-fetched answers and solutions are more permissible in the try-out phase than in real-life situations. That, in brief, is the idea behind OCF - G vh dso in its aka Ficciones Politicas, which every couple of months pitches its political tent in the halls of the matadero, a former slaughterhouse, rebuilt into an impressive art quarter. The discussion partners are disguised, as is the right and proper for them to be. Suitable prominent experts with no lack of hands-on experience are invited for each topic. But the element of fiction is given space as well. Every so often, aliens from outer space are just as naturally invited, who for the most part make extravagant demands but also leave some wiggle room for their victims, the discussion partners. The arrangement is as impressive as it is strange. The viewer feels reminded of Novally’s celebrated dictum: “They constitute a world in itself – their play is self-sufficient, they express nothing but their own marvellous nature, and this is the very reason why they are so expressive, why they mirror the storage play of relationships among things.”

NETWORK AND PROCESS ARCHITECTURE

Apart from imposing projects such as MediaLab Prado, which despite outstanding design by the architect duo Langarita-Navarro lacks but a program and vitality, there are other attempts at enlivening architecture and urban development and turning marginalized into developers of their own city, such as the [VIC], the Viverismo of Citizens' Initiatives, [VIC's founders seek to create networks, to develop a wide range of proposals for a sustainable urban development. For instance, they developed alternative bicycle maps for Madrid with the aid of a widely disseminated appeal to the public. The network and process architects are directly discussing with the district's business people the question as to whether the market for the vicinity of the Antón Martin district should be a local, neighborhood market for vendors and residents, or a glossy tourist market such as what the city administration has in mind. In Germany, a similar independent initiative is under discussion as a Business Improvement District, but here in Madrid there is more at issue. The social and planning aspects of the normal district management are to be generation with the economic network management of a BID.

HANDB-ON

In Spain, citizens' working together on co-operative work platforms, in district initiatives, or citizens' parliaments has been established practice since the 1970's. This means not just speaking, debating and planning, but also to lend a hand themselves in the shaping of urban space. “They call me, I'll fix it”, is the mantra of Diego Peris, who is part of the “hands on urbanism” Initiative Todo por la Praxis. Likewise established in the 1970's, a citizens' initiative in the Carabanchel district far away in Madrid's south-west, is at work on improving living conditions in their settlement. Their engagement began already in the planning phase, as the residents, with an eye to the construction plan, decided assign more storeys to a number of blocks, for the purpose of gaining more green surface area between the buildings. They realized right from the beginning that high-quality intermediate space is one of the decisive conditions for the success of a modern residential settlement. They thus not only developed the intermediary space together, but also invited artists to submit designs for surfaces and pathways, and to implement them together with the district's children. Scarcely anyone would imagine that art plays an important role in improving living quality in this difficult social environment. The slogan “EL BARRIO ES NUESTRO” (i.e. the district belongs to us), built on one of the public squares gives an impression of considerable self-assurance, and evidently not all identify with it. It is primarily active, involved older ladies and less so the young men with their attack dogs who are likewise to be seen at the square.

DO IT YOURSELF!

The point is to master the crisis, administer intelligently and above all to do things differently than in the past. The initiative created by a couple of Basque students offers no less than a concept for the future of Spain. The name of their initiative is an anagram. Two letters were reversed, and not only a new word resulted, but a new idea as well: a privately sponsored course of study entitled LEINN (“Learning entrepreneurship and innovation”). Previously, companies were forced to pay a kind of revolutionary tax to the ETA, today they are investing in the new university to which LEINN belongs. Learning is by doing. During their studies, all students must also earn money in projects, and can then travel to San Francisco to get to know Silicon Valley. They must be able to see beyond the borders of Spain.

Spaces in the city center are of course required for start-up businesses, and therefore the LEINN students have organized themselves in Hub Madrid, a co-working space in a prime location. Each student has his or her own working space for 200 Euros a month. The Hub is a broker and leases out surfaces that are then rented out on a temporary basis and with the necessary infrastructure to flexible and creative young people and enterprises. Each month, the Hub must pay the rent demanded by the landlord, and is therefore ultimately uninhibited in who these flexible co-workers actually are. The young students, whose university is given a group ticket by Hub for 3000 Euros, are equally uninhibited in the question of who the landlord actually is. The empty office building, which was formerly used by an advertising agency, now serves joint practical learning on two storeys. “Joint”, however, can also mean that one doesn't inquire too deeply about what the other fellow is doing. The agreement runs: we're setting something up together, and you can participate with your projects in one way or the other. It is a wonderful opportunity for individuals, but also for non-individuals.

The Hub is a suitable accommodation for representatives of larger communities that are still unsure about where and how long they will stay. How do they make their money? Even they don't know and why should they? “Social” means first and foremost “together.” The market is a
place where interests are exchanged. — And who is the owner of this building in a prime city-center location, who evidently rents it out cheaply? A man who also has other buildings. Strictly speaking, the entire street belongs to him, an old family property. The program “Learning by doing” is decidedly ambitious, but as a social structure it is quite simple, a school, decisively ambitious, but as a social structure it is quite simple, a school, whose social purpose mostly consists in conducting. This is unusual for a market where interests are exchanged. – Perhaps, in times of crisis, it is precisely the Campo de Cebada is like a manifesto in building traditional structures. A generously curved roof reigns in the building.

The Campo de Cebada is an ancient square, to be found on late-medieval engravings. It is in the immediate vicinity of the Plaza Mayor, at the metro exit La Latina. In the 20th century, a market hall and public swimming pool were built on it. The market hall still exists, but the swimming pool was closed and torn down. Now there’s a gaping hole in the middle of Madrid, surrounded by a construction fence, but a group of neighbors and activists have turned it into a lively place. Here, locals meet and renegotiate the use of the place anew, over and over again. They plant flowers or dance the Merengue, play soccer or basketball, or they just sit around and chat. At night, the Campo de Cebada pulsates, no drinks can be served there, or any business conducted. This is unusual for a market whose social purpose mostly consists in exactly this. But here, by contrast, the citizens have organized themselves in a cooperative, Decisions and change and turned it back into a plaza that for now is being kept free of commercial interests, but whose future is uncertain. Even now, at this late hour, young Pakistanis and Bengalis are wandering about with inviting smiles and plastic bags filled with cold beer and Coca-Cola cans that they surely have no intention of heading out for free.

Each piece of furniture was made in workshops or students or were designed by a scenographer based in Berlin. She is WELTSTADT correspondent for We-Traders in Lisbon and Madrid. The Campo de Cebada is like a manifesto in building waste. The British expedition is the best example of a living conquest is the best example of a living sketch of city planning, a concrete image of how many young people envisage the future of Madrid and social action as such. They are sick and tired of chancing no more mafia in front of Rajoy’s official residence. Bu as long as the situation does not change at all, a little and noble is not taken of the fact that here, simple and convincing examples of a different kind of community life are arising, they will have to keep on holding their banners high and spreading the ideas of the Campo de Cebada. Perhaps, in times of crisis, it is precisely complicated and time-consuming ideas that lead to the discovery of future-oriented patterns. They often do not work in one-on-one terms, they have to be tried out, deciphered, adapted and perhaps at some point be transported into planning and administrative action again. But without patience and persistence, there is no change.

Mostly young people are standing on the standing on the roof at Plaza Colón, facing the normal traffic, which came to a halt an hour ago, chanting slogans and holding many clearly legible banners. Units of the Guardia Civil, in heavy armour and not exactly looking like Mr. Nice Guy, are lined up on the Calle Génova, in front of the building with the number 24, headquarters of the Partido Popular Rajoy. Again and again, impressively loud chants erupt. It’s the end of the PP’s swamp of corruption was made public by Luis Bárdenas, explains a young journalist student while photographing the demonstrators from the direction of the police. The banners proclaim among other things, slogans containing the word “Mafia” – they are declared rhythmically – clearly and forcefully.

Few streets further, in the Calle San Mateo 13, is one of the many elegant chambers, one catches a glimpse of a picture of a stately equestrienne on an enormous horse, Isabel de Borbón y Borbón-Dos Sicilias, the full name of the Spanish queen Isabel II. Her star sank swiftly in the course of her ill-fated reign. From on high on horse-back in the National Museum of Romanticism, the archive of the 19th century in Spain, in which the country lost everything and gained itself, one looks into a well of the past.

Next day: spring-like sunshine, a huge bicycle column on the Paseo de la Castellana. Entire families, associations, neighbourhood communities and clubs cycle down the street. The surrounding streets are also wide, and cordoned off for bicycle helmets, wind-breakers and reflective vests.
TURIN – ON THE GROUND

Lisa Parola and Luisa Perlo, co-curators We-Traders

Over the past decade, Turin has experienced profound changes to its urban structure. By transforming itself from an industrial city into a place of culture, it gained a significant position on the Italian and European scene and the result of this extensive transformation is a new urban model. Turin is nonetheless in the throes of a dual crisis. Following the disappearance of the automobile industry, which dominated the city in the last century, the cultural sector is now also in a state of distress.

The debts inherited from the Winter Olympics and the global economic crisis raised the question of what role creativity and new skills that connect knowledge, innovation and experimentation play in the city’s future development. One might say a strategic one, but only if Turin recognizes the importance of the many projects aimed at new methods and practices of participation that arose here thanks to a fertile environment and the encouragement of institutional policies. We-Traders is the attempt to bring together five independent realities, which, as open models, are alternative forms of social, professional and cultural dialogue.

Miraorti in the Mirafiori district, historically linked to Fiat, is a current map of urban gardens. At the other end of town, not far from the motorway to Milan, Il Piccolo Cinema is actively experimenting with different models of cultural production. In the city centre, the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of San Salvario gathers in the Casa del Quartiere, not far from the shared workspace and creative hub of Toolbox Coworking.

Finally, in the former Olympic Village, Buena Vista social co-housing in the former Olympic RADERS – TurIn – On ThE gROUnD

WE-TURIn
— Buena Vista
Social Housing

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL HOUSING

TRADE Co-housing, social housing, communal facilities for diverse neighbourhoods, shared spaces, social networks, solidarity economy, urban renewal, conversion of urban buildings, empowerment, social capital, beauty, participation, sustainability

WE Social Club (network of associations and cooperatives promoting solidarity economics, mutuality and solidarity between people), social workers, architects, students, co-habitants, migrants

CRISIS Expensive housing market, lack of public housing, lack of communal facilities

In 2012, the social co-housing project opened in two buildings of the former Olympic Village of the 2006 Winter Games. It combines the idea of living space as a necessity, right and symbol with the unused buildings and the Social Club, a network of associations and social co-operatives seeking solutions together. The participatory project development used street art and attention to detail to create 44 dwellings for families of social workers and students as well as social services like bike sharing, book sharing, roof gardens, a small fair trade grocery, a laundry and a fibre optics network. The challenge of the housing model is to be equally open to beauty, participation and sustainability. Ten nationalities are represented in the building, not just exchange ideas.” —Buena Vista
Social Housing

CASA DEL QUARTIERE DI SAN SALVARIO

TRADE Regeneration of the district based on economic and social sustainability and participation, enhancement of the resources of the neighbourhood, social and cultural reuse of abandoned architectures, laboratory for social and cultural activities, networking and consulting for civil initiatives, co-working time bank, collective recreational activities such as creative workshops, repair workshops, swap events, cafeteria

WE Associations and other stake-holders of the neighbourhood, inhabitants and in particular migrants, students, families and children, social workers, architects, representatives of local institutions

CRISIS Lack of community spaces in the neighbourhood, lack of access to cultural and social activities and low cost spaces, social isolation

The Casa del Quartiere di San Salvario (Neighbourhood House San Salvario) is a space for social and cultural activities that has been utilized by associations, individuals, informal groups, artists and cultural professionals since 2010. It offers culture, training and services for the residents of the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of San Salvario and the entire city. Located in the former municipal baths, it is a laboratory for the design and implementation of initiatives; an open and multicultural meeting place that fosters exchange on varied activities. It hosts a cafeteria, a bike workshop, a co-working office, a time bank, information desks, courses and seminars, listening spaces and public services open to all visitors. Workshops, conferences, events and parties can also be held here. The Agenzia per lo sviluppo locale di San Salvario, that comprises 23 associations and other institutions such as religious facilities, cooperatives and citizen committees, manages the jointly founded Casa del Quartiere.

www.casadelquartiere.it
www.sansalvario.org
MIRAORTI
TRADE Collaborative park keeping, urban transformation through spontaneous agricultural practices, shared space, ecological/sustainable urban farming, upgrading of informal structures, active citizenship, participatory urbanism, workshops in environmental education
WE Landscape architects, agronomists, urban farmers, inhabitants of the neighbourhood, children and families, students, artists
CRISIS Post-industrial wasteland, informal privatization of public land, lack of collective spirit and ecological awareness, lack of youth facilities, empty coffers – lack of public money for park keeping

Miraorti is a participatory project started in 2009 with the aim of promoting urban agriculture. As part of an urban and environmental realignment, it became an engine of transformation in the area between the Sangone River and the south of the Mirafiori district, historically linked to Fiat. The idea is to unite social actors and institutions and to test methods of reinvigorating the gardens through the involvement of the population and schools. The results intend to provide a scenario for the future use of the area. So far it has involved about 300 gardeners in 1,000 collective gardens, 100 of which are already registered. Miraorti is based in the offices of the Casa del Parco di Mirafiori Sud.

www.miraorti.com

IL PICCOLO CINEMA
TRADE Dialogue and mutual assistance via film, a place to live for all and for cultural production, education through collaborative learning (anti-school), independent filmmaking, crowdfunding, cinema, film forum
WE Artists and filmmakers, inhabitants of the neighbourhood and of the city, students
CRISIS Domination of blockbuster film industry, lack of money for independent films, art losing touch with society, “star principle” in cultural industry, search for new collaborative working models

The Società di mutuo soccorso cinematografico (mutual aid film society) – inspired by the nineteenth-century model of workers’ societies in the district of Barriera di Milano on the outskirts of the city – is a place of open discussion, an image laboratory and a studio of ideas that uses the cinema as an instrument to better understand the world: a new model of co-existence without hierarchies. It is also a small centre for storytelling through images and a platform for the promotion of independent production. Il Piccolo Cinema (The Little Cinema) is an anti-film school, with no teachers and no students. The activities consist of film discourses (on documentaries, screenplays, editing, sound, make-up, web-doc), I Martedì del Piccolo Cinema (Tuesday film screenings, meetings with authors, retrospectives) and presentations of crowd-funding projects. Il Piccolo Cinema arose from the Antilochos cultural association.

www.ilpiccolocinema.net

TOOLBOX COWORKING / FABLAB TORINO
TRADE Promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment, promoting open source and open share hardware, Fab-Lab, co-working, co-production, networking, community, sharing economy, start-up hub, self-produced design, ideas in the making, digital fabrication
WE Digital craftsmen, knowledge workers, freelancers, innovative small businesses, start-unders, students
CRISIS Precarious working conditions for creative workers, isolation of freelancers, lack of flexible and cheap workspace, high costs for tech infrastructure, lack of public funding, lack of companies recruitment.

Toolbox derived from the idea of new uses for former industrial buildings and offers a creative and entrepreneurial environment for new knowledge economy and creative professions. Toolbox organizes workshops, pitches and conferences and a festival and hosts the FabLab Torino, the first Italian FabLab. Active since 2011, FabLab Torino is a place for experiments and a makerspace. Its aim is to unite digital fabrication and open-source culture in a single physical place where machines, ideas, people and approaches can freely mix. In this sense, it also functions as a hub for the development of single and group projects. FabLab Torino is supported by Officine Arduino, Italian headquarters of Arduino. An international community has formed around Arduino that exchanges projects of all kinds from interactive games to robots.

www.toolboxoffice.it
www.fablaborino.org

“It’s not just about sharing a space, but about a new approach to work.”
— Toolbox Coworking
**SONJA BEECK**

professor for urban planning, Berlin

“A crisis is a saddle point in time. It’s the exact point at which it is decided whether a situation gets better again or ultimately slides down towards an even worse situation. For a city, this either means that an improvement is brought about by action or it can potentially descend into lethargy. This constitutes a dangerous moment for a city.

In these situations the concept of time plays an important role. The major resources which becomes very interesting during a crisis. In modern society time is organised due to the division of labour. We try and use our personal resources as efficiently as possible. But now, in a time of crisis, time management changes. All of a sudden, many people have more time to help, to do community work, to be active. They also spend a lot more time getting involved to benefit the city. This is a particularly good point at that moment in time, work suddenly not being abstract anymore, like it was during the division of labour, but instead work being able to provide a high degree of identification. And it’s exactly this non-alienated work with its high level of identification that becomes all-embracing and can mean a lot to a lot of people.

It is therefore important for future policies to take on this point and provide a good framework for individual involvement, for getting involved in the city and contributing time. And so the system of abstract work and of division of labour could potentially be broken up in times of crisis.”

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**CARLO SALONE**

geographer, Turin

“The We-Traders rather than put forward ideological proposals for social regeneration through mass movements, work instead on the fissures within society, on its unexpressed needs, which public policies in general aren’t addressing properly.

An urban space which, in the mainstream, is often used in a hegemonic and formalised way. But here, as we can see from what we’ve learned during the We-Traders Forum, it is reinterpreted as differential space, as Henry Lefebvre once said, which is the true essence, in my view, of urban democracy. The very nature of a public space is, in my opinion, put to the test as a conceptual category, and made to seem outdated here. In the sense that the public space becomes an active citizenry experimenting with forms of sharing, from public art and urban agriculture to the definition of innovative shoplog, language in the field of audiovisual research.

So, all these experiences shape a space that takes on a social and collective relevance without necessarily evoking the somewhat formal idea of a public space we’ve inherited from the last century.”

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**FLORIAN SCHMIDT**

urban sociologist and founding member of “Initiative Stadt Neudenken”, Berlin

“I think the crisis that we speak of in general terms is a different one for each city. And the space of Turin is full of empty shops, abandoned buildings, squats and also in the richer areas of the poorer countries. It is happening in the richer countries, and also in the richer areas of the poorer countries. It’s happening more in Turin than in the rest of Italy, more in Athens than in the rest of Greece. It is always more obvious in city centres than in the periphery.

The good practices we’ve discussed during this wonderful We-Traders Forum, do express a new culture able to read in the signs of the city the nature of the crisis, but also the small potential portals into a new dimension, a new paradigm. It is possible to invent new ways of relating, new ways of living in the city, by organising relationships and, through them, producing not just added value, but also relationships. I think this is the key to the future. Even these tiny steps are charged with potential. We could even speak of minimalism within the crisis. They have huge potential because they show us a different way of using our spaces.

People continue to see this crisis as a kind of interlude, and that afterwards everything will carry on as before. It isn’t an interlude but a metamorphosis that will transform the world.”

—Marco Revelli

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**SANTIAGO ERASO BELOKI**

philosopher and cultural manager, San Sebastian

“When one encounters situations such as these, here at the We-Traders Forum, one feels the hope in thinking that the city is being reconstructed from the energy emanating from many initiatives, from the work of local associations, social movements, businesses and collectives who have taken the reins in their hands to invent and to construct new subjectivities, to generate new social connections, and to refocus on founding the city from bone, muscle and nerves, and not just from the skin or the outward appearance.

There are cities with a brand, and cities with publicity, there are cities that insist on attracting only financial capital. Yet here, it’s stimulating to find yourself amongst all this energy that is flowing thanks to the idea of social capital and the strength and energy of civil participation.”

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**MARCO REVELLI**

political scientist, Turin

“If we allow the crisis to unfold within the system that produced it, then the crisis is destined to devour us, to destroy the social fabric. Turin is an example of this. The centre of Turin is full of empty shops, abandoned spaces. It is as if what happened in Athens is starting to happen here. And it will, unless we opt for a new paradigm. I am not saying we should move away from capitalism, make a revolution. These things belong in the 20th century. But we must rebuild our social and economic system along radically new lines. Because the earlier system, the 20th-century financial system that has followed us into the new century, is causing social disintegration. It is happening in the poorer countries, and also in the richer areas of the poorer countries. It’s happening more in Turin than in the rest of Italy, more in Athens than in the rest of Greece. It is always more obvious in city centres than in the periphery.

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People continue to see this crisis as a kind of interlude, and that afterwards everything will carry on as before. It isn’t an interlude but a metamorphosis that will transform the world. If we can perceive the signs of this mental and practical transformation then other things will come into play, other practices, other types of social relationships. It means reinventing our way of being together and working together to rebuild our lives.”

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**Marco Revelli © Il Piccolo Cinema (produced for Goethe-Institut)**

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DIFFERENTLY to be playing a leading role in the Greek feeling, highlighting the city's creativity and the groups and the initiatives that have assumed of mayoral duties by an open- ness and transparency, the movement of citizens. In this way, the of simplicity and social solidarity.

Over the past three years, the image of the city, which had reached its limits, has been publishing in Thessaloniki for the past 24 years, an initiative in the summer of 2010 to try to change the city's everyday life with activities. During the first weekend of June 2010, an urban experiment of 48 hours with more than 64 activities, 120 organizations and groups, 1000 participants and 250 volunteers stirred up the city's everyday life, suggesting a fundamental revision of public space perception. The unprecedented reciprocation by the public, which exceeded 300 people, triggered our first thoughts about continuing the experiment. Thus, the urban activism action Thessaloniki Differently was born, extending the presence of Parallaxi in the city. From that moment on, a group of 15 people of different occupational origin and experience was formed, who created the core of Thessaloniki Differently, and who, with the contribution of hundreds of volunteers, have organized a series of activities of reflection and suggestions for the future of the city and supported the citizens in their fight for the city. Such patterns of behavior are in constant flux, continually disrupted by new and improvised encounters. Therefore transforming a city involves uneven, uneasy intersections of citizens who perform their actions in the context of others, and to find ways to work with each other. They struggle to connect and sometimes they manage. The way to live in such city seems to be allow this to happen as much as possible – to become, discover, and transform again.

The capacities to coordinate and synchronize diversity, to incorporate many unpredictable rhythms, to make choices within multiplicity – to groove and to improvise in real time – these are the attributes of a transforming city. It is not a mix of styles; it is an overlap of communities, it is a net of social relations; it is juxtapositions, collisions, and ruptures. Such patterns of behavior are in constant flux, continually disrupted by new and improvised encounters. Therefore transforming a city involves uneven, uneasy intersections of citizens who perform their actions in the context of others, and to find ways to work with each other. They struggle to connect and sometimes they manage. The way to live in such city seems to be allow this to happen as much as possible – to become, discover, and transform again.

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We-Trades redefine the relationship between value, profit and public good.

We-Trades show a flexible and playful handling of economic rules.

We-Trades produce tangible results in their immediate urban surroundings.

Everyone can become a We-Trader!

We-Trading marks the shift from co-determination to co-authoring.

We-Trades introduce new actors into the field of urban planning.

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We-Trades redefine the relationship between value, profit, and public good.

We-Trades show a flexible and playful handling of economic rules.

We-Trades produce tangible results in their immediate urban surroundings.

We-Trades diffuse the boundaries between consumers and producers.

We-Trades create value beyond financial profit.

We-Trades are initiatives that explore new forms of exchange.

We-Trades produce and produce beyond that explore initiatives.
Divided city, reunified city and now, old capital city. In Berlin, special status has become routine, as has a chronic lack of public funds. The unemployment rate lies far above the national average, there is hardly any industry, but young people continue to pour into the city. The governing mayor once described Berlin’s appeal as “poor but sexy.” The city’s greatest resource is its unusual spatial reserves, including such spectacular ones as the 386-hectare former Tempelhof Airport in the heart of the city. On the site of the famous post-Second World War airlift, civil society collectives such as Allmende-Kontor are now active – temporarily for the time being. The dispute over whether the airfield ought to remain a place of urban improvisation or whether parts will be built over is well underway.

In recent years the City of Berlin has transformed much real estate into fast cash industry, social isolation, lack of nature in cities, privatization of public space, food. The hunt for concrete gold also began in Berlin over the course of the financial crisis. Real estate prices are rising, the polarization between the quarters increases and along with it segregation in the school system. The Röttli School in Neukölln, both known as a “problem neighbourhood” and highly affected by gentrification, gained sad notoriety. The RÖTTLI-NÄHR project is attempting to break through the vicious circle of media stigmatization through rebranding and thus profiling from the transformation of the quarter.

The city is rapidly becoming international. Booming tourism and the massive conversion of housing space into holiday flats is seen in many places as a threat to the social and economic Berlin milieu. But many young people from Spain, Greece and Italy come here to stay. In co-working projects such as the betahaus they find networks – in the realms between international ghetto and new world community – that are building their own piece of Berlin.

“Allmende-Kontor is an initiative that has actively been networking Berlin communal gardens since 2010. We provide public relations and educational work, support research on urban agriculture and advocate self-organization, cooperative community building and negotiations with administrations. Our topics are practical ones: urban development, food independence and commons, as practised in the community garden Allmende-Kontor right on the Tempelhofer Feld, where people are made aware of and can experience urban open space as “Allmende” (common property) in cooperative use and development. At present about 900 gardeners and supporters are working on more than 300 beds in the Allmende-Kontor community garden.

www.allmende-kontor.de

“Actually, out of silly experiments the most awesome projects ever are born.”
—Open Design City/betahaus
“We fill a gap left by false policies over the last few years. We push the boundaries of what community involvement can achieve, and sometimes we go beyond them.”

— Initiative Möckernkiez

“We wanted to personify human resource allocation instead of constantly going on about deficiencies.”

— RÜTLI-WEAR

**INITIATIVE MÖCKERNKIEZ**

**TRADE** Civic initiative and housing cooperative, civic planning and construction of an integrative housing quarter, communal and cross-generational living (ecologically sustainable, barrier-free, intercultural and socially integrative)

**WE** Neighbours and future neighbours, political scientists, economists, urban geographers, architects, social institutions

**CRISIS** Neoliberal urban development, real estate policy without common welfare, privatization of public space

Who builds the city? According to what criteria? When a former railway property at the Gleisdreieck (triangular junction) in Berlin Kreuzberg went up for sale, some of its neighbours decided not to put their confidence in an anonymous investor. They launched the Initiative Möckernkiez with the goal of creating the new urban district on their own. A cooperative was founded that purchased the 30,000 square metre property and became the supporting organization of a unique model project: a collaborative and cross-generational housing complex that is ecologically sustainable, barrier-free, intercultural and socially integrative. An ensemble of small units with 450 flats, community rooms and commercial areas was planned in a participatory process. Construction will be completed in late 2014.

www.moeckernkiez.de

**RÜTLI-WEAR**

**TRADE** Branding, fashion design, textile production and distribution, silkscreen printing, further education, training in business skills and PR, empowerment of disadvantaged youngsters

**WE** Social workers, teachers, pupils, young creative professionals

**CRISIS** Stigmatization of city quarters as no-go areas, social polarization, discrimination in the education system, youth unemployment, gentrification

RÜTLI-WEAR was launched in 2006 as an anti-stigmatization campaign after unprecedented media hype made the Rütli secondary school in the impoverished neighbourhood of Neukölln synonymous with misguided educational and failed integration policies. Rather than talking about and judging teenagers of non-German origins, the project gives them back the prerogative of interpreting their own lives and their own issues. In an extra-curricular open workshop under expert supervision, they try out craft projects, learn techniques of design expression and create their own fashion label, selling the hand silkscreened clothing as a pupil company. The association produces positive synergies from urban transformation processes and opens new perspectives through unusual, creative alliances.

www.ruetti-wear.de

All project texts by project authors.
LISBON – ON THE GROUND

Julia Albani, co-curator We-Traders

In the urban vocabulary of Lisbon, slogans like “Together we make a city”, “The town is in you” and even “You are the city” are just as obvious today as the alarmingly high number of vacant dwellings (around 50,000) and the skyrocketing unemployment rate (around 18%) that hovers above the national average. With its proclaimed appreciation of civil society initiatives in city development, the city administration has recently energetically engaged in the fight against the direct impact of the financial crisis. Rising unemployment and lack of opportunities, an empty treasury, vacancies and housing shortages and the urgent need to break down red tape make it fertile ground for co-determination and participation.

BIP/ZIP, an exemplary We Trader project, is a non-bureaucratic micro- and short-term fund for micro-projects in the most affected districts. For three years it has been promoting initiatives such as the exemplary neighbourhood kitchen Cozinha popular da Mouraria and the project A Linha (The Line), a colour-based signage for playful movement and revitalization of the neighbourhood of Alfama. This paradigm shift is, however, not only promoted by the central city council, but can also be seen in the cityscape and numerous budding initiatives, most of which are of low-cost and voluntary nature. A sense of collectivity, participation, social justice and transparency are the hallmarks of these players who, in spite of unemployment and no public contract as urban protagonists, are looking for creative solutions, often arising from existential and social need. In the crisis-ridden everyday, projects such as the critical wall newspaper O Espelho (The Mirror) or the programme to identify and reduce urban vacancies Agulha num Palheiro (Needle in a haystack) send signals that, based on new values and exchanges, re-evaluate self-directed, self-responsible action for the city (and with the city) in urgent expertise.

A LINHA

TRADE Re-evaluating spaces, re-vitalizing misused spaces in historical Alfama, co-working, crafts, re-use and recycling, workshops, product design, urban gardening, day care
WE Artists, architects, social workers, local community
CRISIS Urgent need for social and urban micro intervention, lack of urban furniture, decadence of urban spaces, crime, drug traffic, wastefulness, lack of activities for youngsters and elderly people

The project A Linha (The Line) by the Urban Nomads studio aims to revitalize the numerous abandoned spaces in Alfama, the oldest district of Lisbon, through a strategy that overlaps four lines. Together they mark different routes through the neighbourhood, past identified and revitalized sites, creating a connection between the river and the Campo de Santa Clara. Each line has a theme: green - green spaces, red - arts, blue – commerce, yellow – games and recreation. The different lines define the type of intervention for each location. The local population was directly involved throughout the development of A Linha. The facilities were built by builders in the neighbourhood using only reused and adapted wood and furniture. A Linha is one of the projects selected for the programme BIP/ZIP 2012.

www.alinhaalfama.wordpress.com

AGULHA NUM PALHEIRO

TRADE Scouting and mapping of empty and abandoned buildings in the city centre; training, education and advisory on revitalization process (legal and practical consultancy), intuitive knowledge tools for citizens, development of spatial reading and abstraction capabilities
WE Architects, designers, cultural activists, locals who would like to live in old houses/ old city centre
CRISIS High vacancy, lack of affordable and quality living space, missing transparency in ownership, non-transparent administration processes and permits for revitalization, squatting, high cost of revitalization

Agulha num palheiro (Needle in a haystack) is a useful interface by people who love old houses developed by Artéria. It arose from the difficulties experienced by people looking for old residential houses in the city centre. The project compiles a specialized “showcase” of old houses and buildings offered on various real estate websites and seeks new owners and tenants to bring life back to these properties. It was designed as an explanatory and intuitive tool to support the citizens and to help rehabilitate Lisbon. The beta phase of the project was supported by the BIP/ZIP programme in 2011. Expansion of the database to include the entire centre of Lisbon with support from the “Crisis Buster” of the 2013 Architecture Triennale is presently underway.

www.agulhanumpalheiro.pt

“IT IS AN ARCHITECTURAL WORKSHOP THAT INTENDS TO EXPLORE A WIDER FIELD OF WHAT ARCHITECTS CAN DO IN THE FUTURE.”
—— Artéria/Agulha num palheiro

WELTSTADT
“We felt a sense of responsibility – that it was time to do something.”
— O Espelho

**BIP / ZIP**

**TRADE:** New models of localism, devolution of powers and responsibilities to local parish councils, participatory budgeting and funding, local development incentives, micro urban interventions and bottom-up strategies, adaptable urbanism, participation

**WE:** Government, local community, lawyers, architects, urban designers, social workers, sociologists, start-ups, neighbourhood associations

**CRISIS:** Lack of community partnering, fragile neighbourhoods, precarious living conditions, bureaucratic central planning, shrinking city

The programme BIP / ZIP (Bairros e Zonas de Intervenção Prioritária/Neighbourhoods and areas of priority intervention) created by the city of Lisbon in 2013 continues the two editions of BIP / ZIP in 2011 and 2012. Again the initiative is in the scope of the Local Housing Programme (PLH) as an instrument of public policy aimed at boosting municipal partnerships and small local interventions to improve the “habitat”. It is based on supporting local projects that contribute to strengthening social and territorial cohesion in the neighbourhood. This year, 108 applications were received by the BIP / ZIP platform. The budget for the 49 approved applications is 2 million euros. In July 2013, BIP / ZIP was awarded the seventh Best Practice in Citizen Participation award by the OIDP (International Observatory of Participatory Democracy).

habitacao.cm-lisboa.pt

**O ESPelho**

**TRADE:** Publishing, co-working, networking, crowd funding

**WE:** Writers, political scientists, sociologists, philosophers, artists, journalists, architects, designers, students

**CRISIS:** Austerity, unemployment, unconstitutional tax hikes, sluggish judiciary, oppressive partisanship, lack of team/co-work

O Espelho (The Mirror) is an urban wall newspaper, food for thought and fleeting opportunity for reflection and, above all, a mirror of society. The use of this traditional communication format as the voice and means of agitation and instrumentalization of urban space, is the result and response of a group of journalists, artists, architects, writers, photographers — many of them without work — to the precarious situation and social injustice due to the economic crisis and austerity frenzy of the troika. The first edition of O Espelho appeared for Angela Merkel’s visit to Portugal in November 2012 and since then is always published for important events and funded through personal initiative, crowd funding and subscribers. In critical essays, graphics, illustrations and photographs, the editors undertake collective self-reflection and call out to the people of the 21st century within the crisis vortex.

www.facebook.com/JornalOEspelho

**COZINHA POPULAR DA MOURARIA**

**TRADE:** Co-cooking, community building, sustainable co-learning, multi-generation workshops, trading of recipes and cooking-techniques, urban gardening

**WE:** Chefs, photographers, writers, journalists, social workers, locals

**CRISIS:** Abandoned lots/houses, loss of the diversity of cultural gastronomic heritage, crime and drug traffic

The neighbourhood kitchen Cozinha popular da Mouraria is a social, civic and cultural project initiated by photographer Adriana Freire. Activities are free for residents; other guests pay a fee. It is not a charity project, but an incentive for entrepreneurship. Since cooking is a universal language, the project aims to engage all available resources in the Mouraria quarter. It combats situations of marginalization, unemployment and conflicts between drug traffickers, and also enables immigrant communities to intersect with the local population. The community kitchen is an engine against local unemployment, for joint experimentation, for improving the image of the neighbourhood, knowledge in producing quality food, training neighbourhood youths, countering isolation and promoting active citizenship of the elderly. Neighbourhood residents are also made familiar with innovative farming in urban gardens.

www.cozinhapopularmouraria.org

All project texts by project authors.
Supposedly there hasn't been all that much movement in Portugal in recent years. The economy has been tottering along for a considerable time now. Unemployment was already high before the crisis, and has risen markedly since. This has not yet been reflected in the streets of Lisbon, even today, some of whom had a name: Angela Merkel. If one speaks different in Lisbon.

Displacement and gentrification are under development programs. Today, in Vienna's 1st District, top-market penthouses are attractive through large-scale urban development programs. As early as the late 1970's attempts were to Vienna – mostly initiated by the state – in both east and west, from Amsterdam to Lisbon's a dedicated team of women. Directness. Most striking is the fact that the process, and they are the opposite of the small, strategic and cooperative initiatives of “we-trading” that can make the transition possible. And an attentive and often astonishingly open-minded administration and policy-makers supported these initiatives; not with large-scale programs for which the funds simply do not exist. Instead, ideas of engaged citizens are given support in amazingly uncomplicated ways. The citizens draw attention to themselves, whether loudly or quietly, they have visions they try things out, they learn in the process, and they are the opposite of the universally lamented inertia. They proceed pragmatically and begin with astonishing directness. Most striking is the fact that the solutions for abuses are being developed by a dedicated team of women.

The visible decay of building substance in the city centers was particularly intensive throughout Europe in the 1950's until the 1980's. We are all too familiar with the demolition of the city of the 19th century and its replacement with modern buildings, it spans the period from euphoric modernity through to the most recent past. In many areas in the GDR, only socially marginalized people and the elderly were living in the dilapidated city centers. But a point came in the 1980's, when east and west, from Amsterdam to Vienna – mostly initiated by the state – when countermeasures began to be taken. As early as the late 1970's attempts were made in the German Federal Republic and in Austria to rescue building substance and to make living in the city centers attractive through large-scale urban development programs. Today, in Vienna's 1st District, top-market penthouses are being sold and experts are writing about an urban renaissance. In many major cities, displacement and gentrification are under discussion rather than decay. Things are different in Lisbon.

The discontent was vented in November 2012. The disaster came from without and had a name: Angela Merkel, if one speaks with demonstrators today, some of whom underwent an awakening back then, one feels this statement today is even more far more anger about the situation within the country. The younger generation does not have the impression that the state is mastering the situation with dedication and drive. Unlike in Germany, people here have scarcely any faith in comprehensive urban development programs, the “social city” or identifying areas for financial support, or all the other instruments of sovereign urban and regional planning.

However, although enjoying little visibility now, in the last 10-15 years the demographic and physical decay of Lisbon's inner city has been countered by a few initiatives. At the municipal level, renovation programs in several city districts have taken root and are gradually changing the face of these districts, in many cases in close partnership with authorities, landlords and local organizations. Limited demographic and economic dynamics can now be observed in a few areas of inner-city neighborhoods. Furthermore, the national political discourse has discovered the theme of urban revitalization and renovation as an issue for stimulating the economy and employment. Despite these interventions, Lisbon's inner city is still markedly lagging behind most other EU capitals with respect to renovation efforts and investments. But they do exist, these individual measures, which as with acupuncture, can have great effects. The small, strategic and cooperative initiatives of “we-trading” that can make the transition possible. And an attentive and often astonishingly open-minded administration and policy-makers supported these initiatives; not with large-scale programs for which the funds simply do not exist. Instead, ideas of engaged citizens are given support in amazingly uncomplicated ways. The citizens draw attention to themselves, whether loudly or quietly, they have visions they try things out, they learn in the process, and they are the opposite of the universally lamented inertia. They proceed pragmatically and begin with astonishing directness. Most striking is the fact that the solutions for abuses are being developed by a dedicated team of women.

Using new systems

Take, for example, the two young architects Lucinda Correia and Ana Jara, who have set their minds on counteracting the vacancy rate in Lisbon's historic city center. A vacancy rate with a multiplicity of causes. In 2012, under pressure from tourist— whether more or less deserted— or policy density or communication in the quarter are no longer anywhere nearly as intensive as in the past, when residents still knew each other over generations. But an urban neighbourhood's life consists in its people knowing each other, speaking with each other and helping each other, we-trading, in other words. This is what Lucía Luísa Alpalhão's project A Linha (line) takes its point of departure. She went to London in 2002, in the midst of Portugal's upsizing and long before the crisis. She returned in 2012, to apply what she had learned at The Bartlett School of Architecture University College London (Faculty of the Built Environment) in her quarter, to promote participation and engagement by means of artistic interventions and informative platforms. Today, in Lisbon, the possibility of visibility to special and valuable features of the quarter. During one summer, joint actions and meals were held with the aim of promoting the community of children, families, seniors, neighbours and local small business people.

“Community building” – is the name of the strategy in which everyone gets involved with one's partner. And the renovation as the functions of public space and piercing through lethargy. Furnishing the city and festivities are aimed at strengthening the sense of community through joint activities. Why did this project, which had been initiated with such enthusiasm, fail to take root and flower, as the architect self-critically reported. Because it rained? Because things were stolen? Because residents complained about the lively discussions on the streets? Did this social animation in the spirit of The Bartlett not fail to interest the residents? Where were the mistakes? What can be learned from this experiment? Is Alfama perhaps not so easy to revitalize – or instead with small-scale interventions only with the stoic obstinacy of those who remain? Where is the residents' obstinacy? A city is a system full of obstinacy and self-will – it has as much self-will as it has inhabitants.

Basic rituals

Self-will can also be observed in another quarter, and what is being referenced here is not the Mouraria's steep slope or noticeably dilapidated building substance. Many buildings have already been secured by the city to prevent injury to passers-by through falling stones or dusty plaster. There are many problems in this neighbourhood, ranging from drugs and poverty to unemployment, violence and a prostitution. Real-estate developers haven't discovered Alfama as yet, but if one wanders through the fairy-tale-like gardens and discovers the beautiful views, anybody will understand what will happen when the next economic upsizing comes. What can the residents do themselves to contribute to solving the problems? Cook, maybe?

Adriana dreams of expanding the Cozinha popular © Jürgen Willtinghöfer

Adriana Freire lives here, is from here and is staying here. She in fact started cooking one day, not just for herself, but for others as well. Adriana is an institution, she is known in the Mouraria quarter, but also the readers of the magazine Monocle have heard about her. Two years ago, Adriana installed a kitchen and dining-room in a farmer garage. The place is lively, inviting, unpretentious, and at the same time modern and elegant. And the food is simply delicious. People in the know come here every Wednesday. Some help out, and others come out of curiosity. A meal costs five Euros. In this way, the project finances itself one way or another; but Adriana would like to have the City of Lisbon support her and expand the project. She dreams of the vacant property across the street, where today only cats live and a restaurant set up by the city for which she need not pay rent any longer. The burden of Adriana's 2000 Euro monthly overhead, including a paid cook, is too great and can scarcely be covered by what is earned; visitors are disconcerted by the fact that she pays 500 Euros rent for a self-built garage. Obviously, public sponsorship is needed in addition to self-will. And time and again, small institutions, such as Adriana's, have to stand behind these persons and their ideas, providing the first impetus and in Adriana's case financed the first kitchen equipment.
during the Claus Leggewie never tired of emphasizing programs, legislation and strategies on this projects and construct advanced support or other will exert itself to analyse the withdrawn into a real-life fado. They do for city districts mentioned above, that strategically? They are the acupuncture neighborhoods and organizations on-site projects. Available capacities are operational, networking, forums, and existing neighborhood groups and organizations energized.

O ESPELHO

"There where danger is, the rescue grows as well," as Leggewie encouraged the lively We-Traders round table with Hatidé's words, and one might add "near, but hard to grasp" are the simple little solutions. The word of the Lisbon Mirror, O Espelho. It intensively criticizes public discussion and beyond this the media. O Espelho does not emulate television and is also no typical print magazine, but instead a message posted on walls. A wall newspaper coming from below. Editors sit together and publish their various opinions. Is it art or fact-based communication? Who is the sender, who the receiver?

They are words that move people, words on walls that draw attention to themselves. For instance in the next edition, aligtop to make the workers finally wake up, is being revived in the digital age. O Espelho recalls Friedrich Wolfs dictum that art is a weapon, in other words a medium to bring about concrete, palpable change. A wall newspaper seeks to create a public that identifies with the spirit of the demonstrations of April 25, 1975. It is no accident that O Espelho arose in the wake of the demonstrations during the visit of Pinochet in Lisbon in November 1992. What all seventeen editors throughout Portugal felt and are still feeling was a lack of team spirit and cooperation in all the "co-working" and "network" projects. The need of a community of funding, born out of need, that the wall-paper's opinion-makers set in motion anew with each edition, is a product of contemporary, diverse electronic connections. Digital networking enables analog engagement. The paper's muted graphics deliberately eschew the sensationalistic design of mainstream media. Texts are set in neutral, clear letters and are written by a variety of authors, some well-known, others less so until now. However, the Mirror enjoys the greatest attention not on the street, but in other newspapers, on television and above all in the Internet on its Facebook page. The movement's voice be heard on one's smartphone, but it is also perceptible in old, analog contexts, on the walls of the city, where urban and therefore public life cannot shut itself off from it.

What is public space? Who informs, who discusses, who asks, or what in fact holds society together? Who is the antidote to narcistic stuper? Who will you? Aesthetics contra anaesthetics, as alternative to the 24-hour TV programs oozing the soap operas that drag all of Portugal to sleep every day. But will the Mirror reach the people to which they are directed, whether they watch TV and are expected to read close-up all of a sudden? Will a collective self-reflection take place? There is currently also a great deal of hope in the mix of factors, and a pleasant activism that aims at the micro-level, the local neighborhood. Editor Maria Tengarenha does not seek to publish throughout Portugal, but rather in one particular quarter, in the bairros, to give the people there the opportunity to share experiences and take positions on local issues. To speak about what they deal with every day, what annoys them or makes them happy, what is causing problems, but also what enables withdrawal. All such things must be discussed if things are to be actively and carefully changed, and gradually begin to bloom again.

No consumer potential here. The old customers have either passed on, or go to Lidl next door, which is open from 9 AM until 9 PM. Here, in the market hall, the customary business hours are from 5 AM until 1 PM; from early in the morning when the fresh fish is delivered, until midday when the poor things get tired and only want to smoke or feed the pigeons. Even as early as 10 AM, the city is already sounds alive. There are many protecting the pigeons from the cold. Scarcely any stand is still displaying merchandise, but in all likelihood there weren't all that many more, earlier in the morning. In the evening, an old woman feeds hundreds of pigeons and refuses to leave. Of Lisbon's formerly 30 or 40 markets, fewer and fewer are still in existence. A few are managing the shift to specialized delicatessen markets, but most simply disappear. A designer trained in Amsterdam who runs a FabLab for the City of Lisbon in one of the annexes, shows us all the things that can be done with vacant spaces. Converted machines of recent date stand there in an old rabbit slaughterhouse. The sign with the rabbits arranged as a triskel is aptly chosen, after all, the place is a market based on mutuality; where machines and infrastructure are used that would be far too expensive for individuals. From a 3-D printer to a laser cutter, CNC router and desktop miller machine and vinyl cutter; everything is available for use in the FabLab and solve known problems together, as the designer explains. "Do it yourself! - the old slaughter the animo was minimally renovated: toilets, a couple of doors and the lighting were installed, everything else will develop more or less ad hoc. There's no money for anything else, either. The fact that in the evening, the old woman isn't feeding the pigeons, but instead wine and sandwiches are being served to the We-Traders Forum from a patio ambulante, a converted Mercedes truck from the Gerhardsried fire department, is perhaps a sign of change. Perhaps triple-rabbit production potential is emerging here!

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PRAÇA POR BUNDA

Jürgen Willinghoff

No consumer potential here. The old customers have either passed on, or go to Lidl next door, which is open from 9 AM until 9 PM. Here, in the market hall, the customary business hours are from 5 AM until 1 PM; from early in the morning when the fresh fish is delivered, until midday when the poor things get tired and only want to smoke or feed the pigeons. Even as early as 10 AM, the city is already sounds alive. There are many protecting the pigeons from the cold. Scarcely any stand is still displaying merchandise, but in all likelihood there weren't all that many more, earlier in the morning. In the evening, an old woman feeds hundreds of pigeons and refuses to leave. Of Lisbon's formerly 30 or 40 markets, fewer and fewer are still in existence. A few are managing the shift to specialized delicatessen markets, but most simply disappear. A designer trained in Amsterdam who runs a FabLab for the City of Lisbon in one of the annexes, shows us all the things that can be done with vacant spaces. Converted machines of recent date stand there in an old rabbit slaughterhouse. The sign with the rabbits arranged as a triskel is aptly chosen, after all, the place is a market based on mutuality; where machines and infrastructure are used that would be far too expensive for individuals. From a 3-D printer to a laser cutter, CNC router and desktop miller machine and vinyl cutter; everything is available for use in the FabLab and solve known problems together, as the designer explains. "Do it yourself! - the old slaughter the animo was minimally renovated: toilets, a couple of doors and the lighting were installed, everything else will develop more or less ad hoc. There's no money for anything else, either. The fact that in the evening, the old woman isn't feeding the pigeons, but instead wine and sandwiches are being served to the We-Traders Forum from a patio ambulante, a converted Mercedes truck from the Gerhardsried fire department, is perhaps a sign of change. Perhaps triple-rabbit production potential is emerging here!

With the train from Rossio to Sintra, it's three steps to the Cave de mourha, the dark, illegal quarter. Outside, the light is sparse, indoors all the more glaring, in one of the restaurants of the quarter, where wonderful Cape Verde dishes are served. On this evening a few corners further, in the youth center, no cheer is to be expected. In the staile, muddy air, forming by deep basses, they sing – or better speak - about their marginal existences. Their casually demonstrated pride can no longer be taken from them - and yet they remain broken, in every sense, in the midst of the crowd. Liz, from Louven, studied psychology there and once she had arrived in Portugal, she left her family behind in the Azores in a house without utilities on an undeveloped piece of real estate. And as always, she says that she has been here in this community longer than she can remember, more than thirty years now. This community would break up if one were to give her the land, someone in the group predicts. Then they might even sell it, and in the end those very people would end up owning the land whom all here legitimize. Here, as always in the case of real estate, who owns the land is the perenniel question. In Lisbon, the Cova da Moura stands for criminality, a quarter that has not been legalized, where many residents hail from the old Portuguese colonies, from the Cape Verde Islands, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique or Angola. It all began 25 years ago with a small miller machine and vinyl cutter; everything is available for use in the FabLab and solve known problems together, as the designer explains. "Do it yourself! - the old slaughter the animo was minimally renovated: toilets, a couple of doors and the lighting were installed, everything else will develop more or less ad hoc. There's no money for anything else, either. The fact that in the evening, the old woman isn't feeding the pigeons, but instead wine and sandwiches are being served to the We-Traders Forum from a patio ambulante, a converted Mercedes truck from the Gerhardsried fire department, is perhaps a sign of change. Perhaps triple-rabbit production potential is emerging here!

Jürgen Willinghoff

“how citizens draw attention to themselves, whether loudly or quietly, they have visions that thrusts out the learn in the process, and they are the prototype of this, the universally lamented inertia” — Sonja Beeck

WELTSTADT
TOULOUSE – ON THE GROUND

Stéphane Gruet, co-curator We-Traders

Capital of the counts of Toulouse in the Middle Ages, Tolosa was the heart of the resistance of Langue d'oc countries during the Crusades led by the barons of the north against the Cathar “heresy”. It won its independence in 1147 under the Capitouls government and became one of Europe’s great cities. Its location far from Paris and at the gates of Spain, its university – the second largest in France – and its radical republican tradition (it took in many refugees from France) determined the city’s character and a certain cultural and political originality. The Carrefour Culturel Arnaud Bernard initiative defends the universality of this continuing story.

Toulouse, capital of the largest rural area in the south of France, did not experience an industrial revolution, but in the twentieth century developed industries from the two world wars (powder, cartridge and chemical factories), and the conquest of sky and space (Airbus, Ariane, CNES). The urban area of France’s fourth largest city of 1.2 million people grows by 20,000 annually. Long described as a “sleeping beauty,” its local middle class and political representation, rooted in a vast rural area, delayed the development of the ville rose, but its industrial and demographic growth, its increasing cosmopolitanism and lively youth – among them 100,000 students – now make Toulouse a creative and activist city. Le potager de Camille revives the traditional relationship between Toulouse and its territory, between rural producers and urban consumers. Mix’Art Myrys reflects the creativity of urban youth that rejects the dominant development model based solely on the market.

As a scientific and technological metropolis, Toulouse is also a city of immigration (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and North African). Its wealth and climate attracts the least advantaged people, who are concentrated in the post-war high-rises where urban violence has broken out repeatedly (1998, 2005 and 2007). The AERA social housing cooperative measures aim for the reappropriation of these neighbourhoods by their inhabitants. Similarly, Bois & Cie promotes their autonomy, the integration of young people and the provision of temporary housing for homeless families.

We-Traders Forum Toulouse © Rose Eppie

“Being anchored in the local community and a collective drive are crucial.”
— Bois & Cie

AERA HABITAT

TRADE Participative housing, low-cost housing, sustainable city development, active citizenship, community building

WE Architects, philosophers, sociologists, citizens interested in sharing (for social, economic and environmental reason)

CRISIS Housing Crisis, social, economic and environmental Crisis, lack of participation in the housing sector, top-down planning

AERA (Action, Studies and Research on Architecture, Living Space and City) has been working since 2003 in so-called problem neighbourhoods on social housing strategies that put people at the heart of the project. In times of economic, social and environmental crises, families are invited to share everything worth sharing to restore a sense of their community within their living environment, as well as to strengthen the importance of architecture and the city. To ensure that families without access to mortgages have social inclusion and a roof over their heads, AERA has worked for ten years with the government and housing agencies on legal cooperative arrangements that benefit all.

Since 2006, AERA has been developing and testing methods involving residents who are members in the cooperative in planning, design, management and maintenance of their habitat in order to promote the success of a project for the long term. Of twelve, two projects are nearing completion and six will be delivered in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

www.aera-cvh.org

BOIS & CIE

TRADE Carpentry shop and joinery, low-cost timber houses, integration of young employees, shared knowledge, co-production, recycling

WE Educators, carpenters, youths, citizens

CRISIS Consumerism, unemployment, poverty, housing shortage, throwaway society, citizens losing touch with materials and production

Bois & Cie (Wood & Co.) aims to share and transfer knowledge and know-how about woodworking that favours recycling and green building to fulfil ecological demands. Its commonly used workshop promotes encounters between a variety of visitors and participants. Following an introduction, the members acquire skills in collective projects to then pass on to newcomers. Young people in integration measures collect scrap wood from industry or construction that is reused for composting, garden design or mobile residential units. Against the background of the housing crisis and increasing quantities of scrap timber, Bois & Cie produced a lightweight, modular housing prototype. Consisting of pallets, doors, windows, crates, etc., it shows that it is possible to use scrap timber to create high quality, ecological and economical dwellings and thus avoid disposal, incineration or industrial processing of this wood and the resultant pollutant emissions.

www.bois-et-cie.asso.fr

Low-cost house from scrap timber © Bois & Cie
“We cut all ties with the markets. No more of that! Finis!”
— Le potager de Camille

CARREFOUR CULTUREL ARNAUD BERNARD

TRADE Creating publicness, forum for debate, neighbourhood activities, fostering local language + interregional exchange, urban renewal
WE Artists, musicians, political activists, all citizens with their talents and differences
CRISIS Lack of lively public spaces, hierarchical society, top-down planning culture, weak civil society, decline of regional cultures

In the heart of the city of Toulouse, Carrefour Culturel Arnaud Bernard (Arnaud Bernard Cultural Crossroads, CCAB) combines cultural programmes from neighbour to neighbour, but also for the entire city, and cultural activities with political ambition in the sense of a genuine “polis” and international significance. According to the western idea of culture, the greatest achievements of the human mind are rooted deeply within a district from which cosmopolitan values can arise. The dual objectives and effects of Carrefour Culturel are based on this conviction. The association also organizes the Forum des Langues du Monde (Forum of World Languages), Repas de Quartier (Neighbourhood Meals) and Conversations Socratiques (Socratic Conversations). It is also the origin of the “Declaration of Obligations to Languages and Language” and the proposal for a general introduction of studies of French languages and cultures to all French.

www.arnaud-bernard.net

MIX’ART MYRYS

TRADE Cultural and artistic co-production, fair knowledge exchange, low threshold spaces and shared equipment, workshops, film and concert hall, exhibitions spaces
WE Artists collective, citizens
CRISIS Precarious conditions for creative workers and “sans papiers”, isolation of freelancers, lack of flexible and cheap workspace, high costs for high tech infrastructure

By providing affordable multi- and transdisciplinary spaces for production, “monstration” and exhibitions, Mix’Art Myrys created a place for meetings and exchanges between artists and audiences, and between various visitor groups. Incorporated as an artists’ collective, the association is organized around the principle of self-management. Its funding is based on “free and necessary participation” (both for the public and members), as well as sharing of human, artistic and economic resources and the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Mix’Art Myrys strives to create a space for cultural democracy between individual and collective existences. Always questioning the space-art-society relationship, the group was recognized by the state in 2001 as belonging to the Nouveaux Territoires de l’Art, which include cultural and societal laboratories for artistic experimentation such as wasteland, intermediate places or factories.

www.mixart-myrys.org

LE POTAGER DE CAMILLE

TRADE Organic food, direct sale from local farmers, participatory farming
FINANCING members commit to fixed purchase volume per year
WE Farmers, 350 families (1000 persons)
CRISIS Long supply chains in agricultural industry, ecological footprint, global price fight in food industry, search for healthy local food and direct contact to farmers

An AMAP (Association for the Preservation of Rural Agriculture) aims to preserve local farms operating sustainable, socially equitable and environmentally sound agriculture. These farms allow consumers to buy quality products at a fair price; the consumers know the origin and mode of production of these products, while also actively supporting the preservation of local farming. A number of consumers and a farmer use an AMAP at the beginning of the season to agree on what part of the harvest is delivered to each family periodically at constant costs. The producer undertakes to provide quality products in compliance with the Charte de l’Agriculture Paysanne. Le potager de Camille (Camille’s vegetable garden) located in the former Toulouse vegetable belt distributes its entire production (250 varieties on 4 ha) to 350 families of the town, who are also involved in the selection of crops.

www.lepotagerdecamille.fr

Affordable spaces for cultural production © Mix’Art Myrys
LISTENING TO THE INDIAN CROWD

Anne-Katrin Fenk, Tine von Damm, Rohit Bhatia, MOD/Nextbangalore

“What to do... it’s how it is.” An often heard phrase in Bangalore, sometimes meant as a statement, sometimes as a question. Said with a wink, Bangalore is not a static city, furthermore it is changing rapidly and its inhabitants are not accepting the given. It seems that most stories and ideas are just waiting to be shared, for starting a discussion.

The crowdsourcing platform Nextbangalore is host to a lot of discussions on urban development in one of the fastest growing cities in the world. The contradiction between modernity and acceptance, between people’s own culture and global urban planning, is motor to most inputs. “That’s India”, summarized a visitor of the Nextbangalore:Space, and actually perfectly described the apparent contradiction between local codices and global market conditions, particularly apparent in Bangalore. As a participative crowdsourcing platform, Nextbangalore can take into account and parallely enable an active and inclusive approach. This is of course one of the most important intermediate results from the numerous discussions and conversations the project has seen so far.

But besides fruitful discussions on the future of Bangalore, participants are asking about the financing of the project. Living in a market-driven city such as Bangalore, it is somewhat new to most Bangaloreans that a crowdsourcing project is designed as non-profit and is not dependable on a corporation. Crowdfunding and crowdsourcing have become buzzwords in marketing since 2006. Now the phenomena have reached Indian shores. Though still in a nascent stage, the fertile ground for the growth of crowdfunding has been against a backdrop of creative lethargy and shortfall of ideas among creative agencies. In India, main forces for actively using social media are market-related interests.

In fact the number of social media users is continuously growing. At this point, 5% of the users in India are active social media users. Even though this is far below the global average (which is 23%), this also shows the opportunities of growth in the Indian social networking market. With Facebook being number one of social media in India, it is estimated that India will overtake the amount of Facebook users in the United States in 2015, as the number of Indian users is already up to 63 million at this point. Also, India is LinkedIn’s second largest market, which also shows the business-related online networking.

As the largest democracy in the world ideas of participation and philanthropy are of course not new to India. Places of worship are built overnight using a large number of donations and India has seen a massive crowdfunding success story many years before the term was coined: the story of the Reliance Industries founder Dhirubhai Ambani. His textile business was crowdfunded by communities across the Indian state of Gujarat. And the last years also saw a growing number of interactive platforms on urban development.

But usually most of them are either designed as an information tool or as an idea collection tool. The challenge is to implement a crowdsourcing platform that enables participation and an active role in implementation. The difference of that approach is best illustrated by asking two questions: How can an alternative urban development in an Indian city actually look like? And how can it be designed jointly with residents?

These two questions represent the major challenges and opportunities of a participatory urban approach in India.

Therefore, Nextbangalore remains an experiment, a tool to meet the different situations in a rapidly growing metropolis, and at the same time to enable new approaches. As everywhere, the essential basis is primarily the understanding of culture, including political, economic and social conditions. Even if this approach should be accepted as an essential basis, de facto many urban projects are implemented separate to existing conditions of life. From an European perspective, the image of an Indian city is often highly mystified, which impedes a sustainable urban development. For Nextbangalore this results in a fundamental reflection on the project approach, the methods and the instruments. First, Nextbangalore sees itself as a design project, which provides a technical infrastructure and operates within the urban space. A huge set of instruments and methods are provided to understand urban planning as a social momentum. Important is, that participation must first provide access. Which means, not to forget facts like the official illiteracy rate which remains at around 30% in Bangalore. Methods of visualization thus play a major role to describe complex urban processes in a comprehensive way. Also, the establishment of an urban space (Nextbangalore:Space) is an important starting point, because places that allow explicit discussion are rarely to be found in Bangalore. Nextbangalore has also been active in the urban area by interviewing and involving many residents. Particularly highlights were the numerous invitations to people’s homes that resulted in very personal conversations. Methods like simulation games or mapping were part of Nextbangalore:Space. At last, the understanding of Indian history and culture can be a major basis for future urban development. By starting an urban history forum, Nextbangalore was able to recover stories of a largely unknown Bangalore.

Participatory urban planning is not automatically a solution to the many social, structural and political problems of the city of Bangalore, yet it offers more than just an utopian approach, because it raises the view on the greatest potential of a city: its people – and it can gain prabhava (impact).
“While in the countries of Southwest Europe it’s a ‘growing crisis’ that is at the root of experimental initiatives of social cooperation, in Brazil, the most interesting results seem to be produced by a stance on ‘critical growth’.” – Filipe Serro

A NEW “WE” IN BRAZIL’S MIDDLE CLASS

Filipe Serro

In June 2013, as several Brazilian municipalities were getting ready to raise public transportation fares, citizens flocked to the streets in a movement of popular unrest that quickly grew nationwide. What began as a unison chorus of protest for the rights to the city, eventually turned into a cacophony of individual desires and aspirations ofmute ideology, orchestrated by rubber bullets and riot police batons. It was the country’s middle class who took over the public space of the main cities, definitively revealing the existence of a new “we” in Brazilian society, better or for worse.

After the control of the inflation rate in the ’90s, a decade of easy access to credit and policies of income inclusion followed, resulting in a sharp decline of poverty levels and the establishment of a solid “new middle class” in Brazil. Poor families arose to a new condition of consumption and have now access to goods and services inaccessible to previous generations, a circumstance that naturally conveyed a widespread optimism. But while in southwestern Europe the renewed aspiration of civic spirit is fooded by the adversities of the financial crisis, how to understand the mobilizing force of a solid “new middle class” in Brazil.

In Porto Alegre, the residents’ association of Bairro Farrapos, one of the city’s poorest areas, mediates between population and public authorities in order to ensure the sustainable development of the community threatened by the land valorization that followed the completion of a nearby soccer stadium. This and several other self-driven associations refer to participatory budgeting, a municipal tool of micro-funding for local projects. In Salvador, on the other hand, processes of real estate speculation in a central neighborhood lead to the establishment of the civic movement Nosso Bairro é Dois de Julho (Our Neighborhood is Dois de Julho) that has been fueling a growing activism in defense of the right to the city. It seems therefore to be important to undo the installed misconception that opposes “crisis” to “growth”. Actually, if thought collectively, these two terms even enclose the potential of a solid “new middle class” in three different cities: Porto Alegre, Salvador and Curitiba.

Facing these changes, it seems we can speculate on two possible scenarios: either the new middle class unifies, understanding the process of social mobility as something collective, hence fostering community bonds — June demonstrations can be seen as a point of inflection suggesting this path — or else people see this promotion as a personal achievement, choosing the road of a growing individualization and pursuing ideals of consumption that surpass the car and homeownership, such as the experience of gated communities instead of the aggregating potential of public space, or even access to private education and healthcare and the consequent marginalization of public services. Whatever the future holds, it is important not to deny the potential of Brazil’s new middle class under the argument that it arose from a growth without development, or mystify and oversize its importance because, as in the countries of Southwest Europe, depend on several factors, both in terms of the structures of power as of the actual involvement of the population.

For the adversities of its past and taking into consideration the opportunities of the circumstances of its present, Brazilian society reveals a huge potential regarding the strengthening of a sense of community, especially considering the renewed connectivity brought by online social networks, to which a better informed “new media class” also has access, allowing for mobilization on an unprecedented scale.

In order to understand the mobilizing force behind the recent wave of protests in Brazil, one should avoid seeing it as a renewed form of collectivism, but rather as the late contradiction exemplify the paradoxes around the new middle class, a term that meanwhile has become something of a commonplace, widely exploited by the media and politicians in affected speeches ranging from an alienating, illusory swallowed-optimism to an inoperable, uncreative and prejudice-based pessimism. But if one can argue that income raise instilled individualistic values in society, economic development has also produced significant synergies, some of which were identified during the project Nós Brasil! We Brazil, as reactions to adversities caused by the very economic prosperity. Nós Brasil! We Brazil, this years German contribution to the X Bienal de Arquitetura de São Paulo, staged workshops on the role of the so-called “new middle class” in three different cities: Porto Alegre, Salvador and Curitiba.

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WELTSTADT
We-Traders. Swapping City for Crisis
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www.goethe.de/wetraders

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