

ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE DIY/DIT* URBAN— ISM

MitOst Robert Bosch Stiftung

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EXHIBITION+
**URBAN
CHANGE**
TALK PORTO
2017



DO-IT-YOURSELF / DO-IT-TOGETHER

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ROBERT BOSCH STIFTUNG IN COOPERATION WITH MITOST
E.V.

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CONTENT

02–03 INTRODUCTION / IMPRINT

04–05 DIY/DIT COLLAGE ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

06–07 THE PROGRAM ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

08–09 URBAN DO–IT–YOURSELF TOGETHER:

LET’S TALK POLITICS ANKE STRAUß

10–11 BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO

AN *ILHA* CARSTEN JANKE

12–13 A CHILD OF CRISIS CARSTEN JANKE

14–25 TEAMS 2013 – 2017 ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

26–27 FELIPE MOROZINI ANKE STRAUß

28 EXHIBITION PORTO ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

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Our second newspaper focuses on DIY/DIT urbanism, taking the activities of two Actors of Urban Change teams from Portugal as its starting point.

At the core of the projects in Aveiro and Porto lies a hands-on and do-it-yourself attitude that wants to show and shape concrete urban relationships and spaces. The goal is to change the prevailing production of our built environment towards of a more collaborative and use-value oriented attitude.

The Critical Housing Lab works on the refurbishment of substandard housing in the neighborhood of Bonfim in Porto and beyond. Their initiative can be seen as an answer to the fact that, in a climate of growing gentrification through touristification, homeowners in precarious conditions are prone to sell their houses and get replaced on a large scale (p.10).

The cross sectoral team at the core of VivaCidade from Aveiro, south of Porto, built a local plaza in the university city together with local residents and students. The grassroots initiative is a fine example of how self-empowered city inhabitants are able to change their physical environment and the governance of it (p. 12).

At the same time, in times of enduring austerity measures, urban DIY/DIT initiatives can actually be seen as part of the neoliberal paradigm, which offers fewer and fewer resources and asks for self-empowered and responsible citizens. Researcher Anke Strauß claims that the development of DIY politics, which accompany collective and local ways of organization, contribute to slower, simpler and self-organized forms of production and consumption (p.9).

The Actors of Urban Change Newspaper also serves as a catalogue for the Exhibition “Actors of Urban Change 2013–2017”. On page 14/15 you will find an overview of the different teams and projects supported so far within the program. The pages that follow illustrate the different projects and provide further information.

The Urban Change Talk 2017, which will take place on February 17th in the Chamber of Architects in Porto, puts the discussion about DIY/DIT and a more political framework in the spotlight. Here the local experience from the Portuguese perspective is brought together with the Europe wide scope of Actors of Urban Change, reflecting the different perspectives from civil society, the administration and the private sector (p. 28).

Actors of Urban Change brings together change makers from different cities in Europe and beyond. They invest in new ways of cooperating, find new strategies to make positive change for the common good happen faster and be more long-lasting, and make our cities more sustainable and participatory (p. 6).



**SELF-
MADE**

**RETHINK
CONSUMPTION!**

DO IT YOURSELF?

**DO IT
TOGETHER!**

BY MASH

WHAT IS DIY/DIT URBANISM?

**WE DID IT
OUR WAY!**

**SHOW WHAT
IS POSSIBLE!**

**EXPERIMENT
BY DIRECT
INTERVENTION**

BIKE



ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

Urban Development through Cultural Activities and Cross-Sector Collaboration in Europe

The program Actors of Urban Change aims to achieve sustainable and participatory urban development through cultural activities implemented by teams of partners coming from the cultural sphere/civil society, public administration and the private sector. The program participants put their skills into practice through local projects. They strengthen their competencies in cross-sector collaboration and profit from peer-to-peer dialogue, professional trainings with international experts and Europe-wide exchange. The current program round runs from 2015 until 2017. Another call for applications is planned for summer 2017.

PROGRAM OFFERS AND ACTIVITIES

In the program, actors from the cultural sphere or civil society, public administration, and the private sector form a cross-sectoral team to implement an innovative local project. Over the course of 18 months, ten teams from various European cities receive support for the implementation of their joint local projects, obtain professional qualification, and engage in networking opportunities.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL LABORATORIES

- :: Project Grants of up to 5,000 EUR
- :: Tailored support from experts through
- :: Process-Related Consulting Grants of
- :: up to 5,000 EUR

QUALIFICATION

- :: Five international Academy Meetings
- :: in different European cities, based on
- :: a peer learning approach and featuring
- :: lectures, facilitated workshops and ::
- :: field trips
- :: Mobility grants for Shadowing
- :: Internships in other participants' cities
- :: (up to ten days per person)

EUROPEAN NETWORK

- :: Exchange among participants
- :: through in-person meetings during
- :: the international Academy sessions
- :: and Shadowing Internships
- :: Virtual exchange through an online
- :: platform and community

POTENTIAL TOPICS AND SCOPE OF PROJECTS

The program does not focus on urban change through formal processes of urban planning or development, but rather on community-driven engagement for local urban development. In this context, potential topics to be addressed include affordable housing/gentrification, inclusion/integration, cultural diversity, accessibility of (formerly) public urban resources and spaces, sustainable mobility, health and physical activity, green city/climate change, etc., with citizen participation as core element of all the projects.

CULTURE AND URBAN CHANGE

Social change is intensified in the urban context, since opportunities and risks present themselves in different, and more pronounced ways in cities. From a citizen's perspective, the boundaries between sectors become more permeable and allow for cross-sector collaboration in urban development.

We consider culture to be a fundamental dimension of sustainable development. Culture has the potential to create meaning and identity, to promote participation and social inclusion and to play an important role in the positive development of cities for the common good.

THE ROBERT BOSCH STIFTUNG

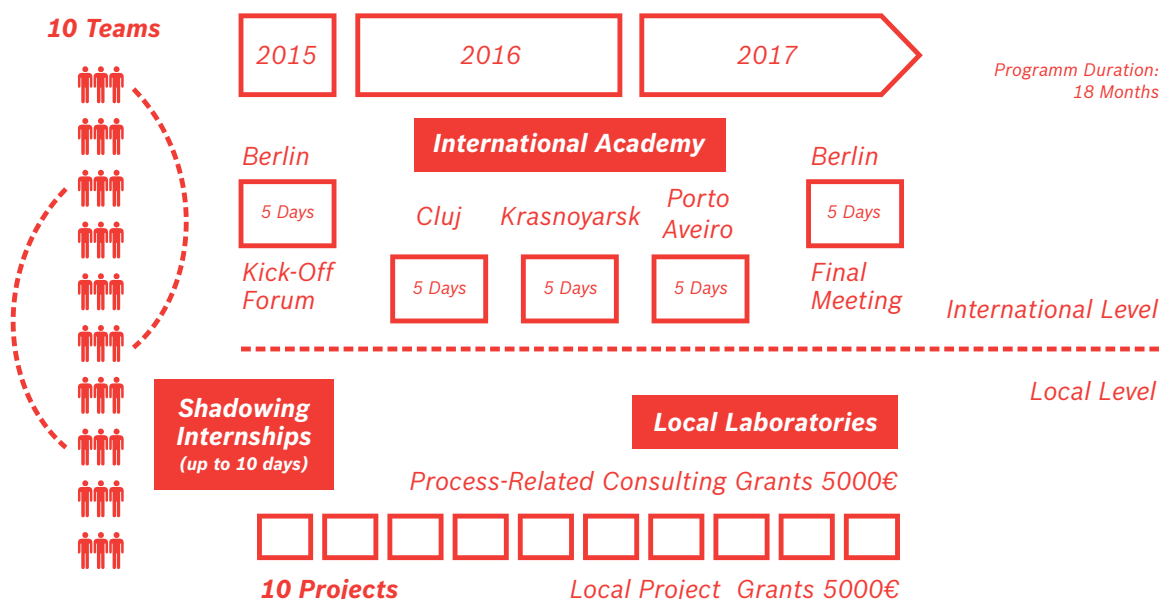
The Robert Bosch Stiftung is one of Europe's largest foundations associated with a private company. In its charitable work, it addresses social issues at an early stage and develops exemplary solutions. To this purpose, it develops and implements its own projects. Additionally, it supports third-party initiatives that have similar goals. The Robert Bosch Stiftung is active in the areas of health, science, society, education, and international relations. Moreover, in the coming years, the Foundation will increasingly direct its activities on three focus areas:

- :: Migration, Integration, and Inclusion
- :: Social Cohesion in Germany and
- :: Europe
- :: Sustainable Living Spaces

Since it was established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has invested more than 1.4 billion euros in charitable work.

MITOST E.V.

MitOst is an international non-profit NGO based in Berlin that promotes cultural exchange and active citizenship in Europe and its neighboring regions, with a focus on Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe. MitOst organizes international programs and projects and serves as a platform for new forms of social engagement to support an active civil society, regardless of cultural, linguistic, and political limitations. With 1,400 members in 40 countries and various partners, MitOst is part of a dynamic European network.





Urban Do-it-Yourself Together: Let's Talk Politics

ANKE STRAUB

Do-it-yourself (DIY) is not a new phenomenon but it has seen a revival in the last decade. DIY appears in different contexts, such as music, fashion, architecture, or gardening, and is linked to different discourses, such as sustainability, creativity, crafts and design.

On the one hand, DIY is highly marketed and hyped, capitalised on internet platforms like Dawanda or Etsy but also home improvement stores or even café chains that not only emphasize their 'manufactured' products but also use a DIY aesthetic for marketing purposes. On the other hand, DIY is also often involved with political criticism, for instance against mass-production and -consumption and its damaging effects on individuals, societies and ecologies. In urban environments, DIY practices often re-evaluate the notions of scarcity, waste and consumption. Urban DIY often constitutes a collective way of organizing on a low budget and an appreciation of slower, simpler, self-organised and local ways of producing and consuming.

This can initiate empowering processes since DIY usually involves re-skilling and reactivating particular practices of self-sustainment. In addition the circulation of this often old knowledge has the potential to create communities – a social texture that goes beyond the immediate learning process.

DIY has the possibility to carve out possibilities where they were not existent – and could not be thought of – before.

This is especially prevalent in cases of DIY in urban environments. Cities are not only sites where economic power and wealth accumulate but also sites where the most vulnerable – the young, the old, and the poor – are concentrated. Especially in times in which austerity politics dominate urban and governmental development schemes, urban DIY often happens in a spirit that can be described not only as do-it-yourself (since no one else is there

to do it for you) but also do-it-yourself-and-do-it-better (i.e. than externally-commissioned or institutional bodies). Whether it is re-developing public spaces with the help of residents, creating festivals, gardening with refugees, or refurbishing social housing, and independent of whether these initiatives are permanent, temporary or a one-off event, they can be considered practical examples in which alternatives can be rehearsed. DIY, and urban DIY in particular, is thus involved with politics as it asks questions regarding present and future practices in capitalist urban societies and their relationship to capital, the state, citizenship and responsibility.

At the same time, however, there are also some legitimate criticisms. Often, such initiatives are rather small in scale, a fact that is often used to argue that they either do not have an impact or that the alternative they experiment with could not be upscaled (i.e. introduced to a broader population). While networking small-scale urban DIY initiatives can considerably increase their impact, the main criticism, namely that these initiatives are part of the neoliberal consumption process, is much more difficult to respond to. On the one hand, do-it-yourself goes hand in hand with the neoliberal ideology of self-sustaining individuals which accompanied the successive retrenchment of the welfare state which increasingly leaves the most vulnerable members of our society to their own resources. On the other hand – and this is especially prevalent for cultural initiatives – urban DIY projects often co-create value with urban dwellers that is then capitalised upon by economically potent actors such as investors. "In other words, such practices often are appropriated to foster the redevelopment of urban areas through financial investors who make it attractive for a rich urban class, and who contribute to the negative consequences of gentrification" (Bialski et al. 2015, p.6). Such initiatives thus run the risk of becoming complicit in the processes that they try to criticize and counterbalance. At the same time, whether they address the broader structural issues involved with these developments, such as poverty or uneven distribution of wealth is debated, as these initiatives often struggle with questions of their own precarious work conditions. No matter whether this holds

true for every initiative, there is clearly a tension between short-term projects and longer-term power relations that leads to initiatives either being rather uncritically celebrated or fully dismissed.

I would like to propose a different approach – one that is aware of and uses this tension productively. Urban DIY projects that do not promote DIY only as a style, i.e. as a unique selling point – promising local, authentic and self- and hand-made production that sets apart its consumers from the more mainstream, mass-consuming population, inevitably create community as they are situated in a post-individualist ethic of sharing and co-creating.

Such initiatives interconnect people with a variety of different resources, knowledge and capacities in an ethics of do-it-together (DIT) rather than do-it-yourself.

While these experiences and community formations are highly valuable in that they can make participants feel empowered, protecting these structures and thriving on the value that has been co-created needs something else. It's necessary to shift gears in the process of production and using one's own practices to address and engage with the broader political and ideological texture in which these initiatives are situated. It needs a DIY politics.

DO IT YOURSELF POLITICS – TOGETHER!

Urban DIY/DIT culture is highly intertwined with temporary shaping the built environment. DIY/DIT gives these projects a special quality that often distinguishes them from classic political activism initiatives, not only in their physicality but also in their rather mild critique of the status quo. Yet, looking at Berlin, for example, it seems that as

affordable space for cultural production becomes more and more contested, urban DIY culture also becomes more openly political. This means that, to a certain extent, it is less spatial, less focused on producing concrete places of interaction but more engaged in the legal and administrative texture within which urban development is situated. Such DIY/DIT politics focus on the legal frameworks within which particular developments are sanctioned or prohibited. They identify the legal, bureaucratic and funding mechanisms that affect everyday work and life in the urban environment and seek ways to influence policy-making. This can happen for instance through lobby groups, such as the recently founded “Koalition der Freien Szene Berlin” (<http://www.berlinvisit.org/>). It can happen by using democratic mechanisms, such as initiating a referendum, for instance the initiatives surrounding Tempelhofer airfield in Berlin (<http://www.thf100.de/start.html>). Or it can happen through interdisciplinary collaborations like those initiated by the Actors of Urban Change Program.

Urban DIY/DIT creates a social body: a bunch of people who follow, support, believe in, work with and work for the idea that connects and empowers them. It has the potential to create a force that can influence the “general climate.”

Urban DIY/DIT politics aims to extend this network, reaching out to engage politicians and government officials. These initiatives need allies among policy-makers to protect the communities and values they have

created from being made complicit in gentrification processes.

Urban DIY/DIT needs both, the development of alternative practices of community-building, sharing, co-creating and re-using and protection through legal and administrative frameworks to make their practices sustainable.

Picture below:
Plaza built by
citizens in Aveiro,
VivaCidade, pages
12/13 and 6.

FURTHER READING:

Bialski, P., Derwanz, H., Otto, B., Vollmer, H. (2015) ‘Saving’ the city: Collective low-budget organising and urban practice, *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 15(1): 1-19. Available under: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/issue/saving-city-collective-low-budget-organizing-and-urban-practice>

DR. ANKE STRAUß

is a post-doc researcher at the European University Viadrina. She is interested in the relationship between art and business, specifically with regard to differing types of knowledge and changing modes of organizing (alternative) work-lives. In collaboration with the performance artist Christina Ciupke, she is currently working on a project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation on artist-run organizations and the performativity of utopian thinking for (re-)organizing cultural labor.



Breathing New Life into an *Ilha*

CARSTEN JANKE

Students are bringing dilapidated buildings in Porto's old town back to life and, in doing so, are giving residents back some of their dignity.

A UFO has landed in Alfredo's house—that's the only way of putting it! There is a large, dark cube in Alfredo's small living room. "To be perfectly honest, I thought it was horrible at the start," Alfredo openly admits, "but now I like it a lot. It looks like a house inside another house," says the 59-year-old proudly. This dark cube, which was built by forty participants of the "Critical Housing Lab" in summer 2016, is actually Alfredo's bedroom. Indeed, their work probably saved Alfredo's house.

The house was one of many in a state of disrepair in Bonfim, a working-class area in central Porto. This district is characterized by closed factories, empty residential buildings and an aging population. For a time, over half of the buildings in Porto's historical old town were empty. However, this trend has now been reversed: tourists from all over Europe have discovered the charms of this district. New life has been breathed into the impressive old residential buildings. Houses are being refurbished to a high standard and then rented out as holiday apartments.

Previously, wooden beams held up the roof of Alfredo's building. The rain was getting in and the floor was damp. There was no electricity and no proper bathroom. Although Alfredo had grown up in this house, he had to move out for a period as he could not afford to renovate it. He was on a waiting list with the city authorities for years, but only for financial support for "minor repairs." However, the Critical Concrete group knew straight off that minor repairs would never be enough the first time they saw the building. They decided to help Alfredo with the first edition of their "Critical Housing Lab," a do-it-yourself project in which architecture students work on a voluntary basis during their



summer vacations to make dilapidated buildings livable again in consultation with the building owners.

What sets this project apart from other summer-break architecture programs is its "good karma," according to Samuel Kalika, a 33-year-old French graduate of mathematics and fine arts who is now the head of the Critical Concrete group. Critical Concrete welcomed around forty participants to its first course in summer 2016. The group worked on two buildings in Porto. During the three-week, fee-paying course, the participants learnt a lot about sustainable construction and, at the same time, about the people who lived in these buildings.

Alfredo's building was part of a so-called *ilha* (island). These "house islands," which were built in Porto in the 19th century, were the only form of housing for poorer people in Porto for a long time. They were generally located in the rear courtyards of elegant middle-class residential buildings and took the form of terraced back-to-back-houses where whole families lived together in less than 25 square meters of space. A number of families shared common bathrooms. There was a time when one out of five residents of Porto lived in these cramped conditions. Even today, there are over a thousand *ilhas* spread throughout the city. Alfredo's house is part of a terrace with six other houses, each with a tiny garden outside the front door. With its 35 square meters, his *ilha* house is actually relatively big.

REAL ESTATE COMPANIES CALLING DOOR TO DOOR

Real estate companies have become increasingly interested in these *ilhas* in



recent years. In 2012, a number of laws that had been in place since the fascist dictatorship period were repealed. These laws had frozen rents at their 1970s level and, as a result, building owners saw no point in investing in the upkeep of their properties, which then gradually fell into disrepair. Today, whole terraces of houses are being bought up—either for demolition or for use as holiday apartments. Real estate companies have already knocked on Alfredo's door over a dozen times to enquire about buying his house since the students helped to refurbish it last year.

However, Alfredo is no longer considering selling his house. In fact, such a sale is no longer possible, as owners like Alfredo had to sign an agreement with Critical Concrete to ensure that the students' efforts would have the desired long-term effect: owners cannot subsequently sell their fixed-up houses unless they compensate Critical Concrete for the work carried out. In this way, these buildings are taken off the market for seven years, explained Samuel.

The two founders of Critical Concrete came up with the idea for this project around three years ago. Alongside Samuel Kalika, the team also includes Juliana Trentin, a 30-year-old Brazilian

Portrait of Alfredo by Carsten Janke with permission by the author.

who came to Portugal to study architecture. Even though the country was experiencing one of the worst financial crises of its history at the time, she decided to stay on in Portugal after

of matters was also very important to us,” adds Pedro, the architect. Over a period of three weeks, all the participants learned how to hold a jigsaw and how to build a rocket stove out of brick.



graduating. Her job prospects were poor, but she was interested in the idea of working with other volunteers to breathe new life into old buildings—without playing into the hands of the real estate market.

To put their idea into action, they cooperated with the local authority of the district of Bonfim, which appeared to them to be the most suitable area for their project. They then enlisted the help of Pedro Cavaco Leitão, an architect who had worked for many years on a freelance basis in Porto. The result was a partnership between the city authorities, the private sector and an NGO that was funded by the *Actors of Urban Change* Europe-wide support program. “This funding helped us to establish a solid foundation for our project,” says Juliana today, “the international partners gave us the credibility we needed to get started.”

A CHINESE ARCHITECT WANTS TO BUILD FOR RESIDENTS’ NEEDS AGAIN

The first summer course in August 2016 attracted around forty participants from 16 different countries—“all with very different interests,” explains Samuel. One had already worked as a carpenter, but now wanted to become an architect. Another participant had previously designed large residential buildings in China for many years and was very unsatisfied with this work; instead, she wanted to work on a house that took the wishes of the residents themselves into account directly, according to Samuel. Around fifteen academics from Portugal and other countries such as the Netherlands and Germany explained their innovative approaches for sustainable architecture to the course participants. “However, the practical side

Alfredo’s house offered plenty of opportunities for gaining practical experience. First, the participants had to renew all the water pipes and install a toilet. Then they laid new wooden floors and installed electrical wires in the walls. At the same time, a new bedroom was created in the front part of the house—this is the cube mentioned above that first looked like a UFO. There were very practical reasons for this, explains Juliana. “We only had three weeks to build a well-insulated room which would be easy to heat.” For this reason, they used wood. But they really underestimated one issue: twenty people working in the confined space of the house for three weeks—“this intrusion was somewhat disturbing for Alfredo,” says Juliana today. Next time around they want to allow more time for “psychological support” for the residents, explains Samuel.

Working with the city authority was also not always easy. Elisabeth Valério—a 34-year-old who works in the district authority in Bonfim but has since moved to another department—says that the project went well overall. The district has significant budgetary constraints and is grateful for every bit of help it receives. In the case of Alfredo’s house, this meant that the district authority paid for the new roof, but did not make any other funds available.

At the same time, the fact that the district had neither the money nor the staff to supervise the project properly was a significant problem. It quickly becomes evident to anyone who speaks to employees at the local authority that the international focus of this project proved to be a major challenge. Elisabeth would

like to have acted more as an intermediary between Alfredo and the project group, but this wasn’t really possible as the district authority did not provide enough funds or personnel for this purpose. The next summer course will take place in a different part of the city, which is something that Elisabeth regrets.

The second building that was refurbished during the summer course was the headquarters of Critical Concrete itself. The group bought a building in the district of Ramalde that used to house a kindergarten. The seminars that were part of the summer course were held here. In addition, the participants converted the ground floor into a project and coworking area. Samuel has many ideas for how the project could develop in the future: they would like to have a bank as a partner that would provide loans for the relatively small investments that are necessary as part of these renovation projects. Up til now, the project has largely been self-financing; each participant pays course fees of around 1,000 Euros. Samuel would also like to recycle plastics and use them for building. There is one aspect where he is definitely optimistic: “The first time is always the hardest.” Prospective participants can register for the next summer course until March 2017.

THE MONA LISA NOW HAS HER PLACE

Much has improved in Alfredo’s life: he has a new roof, a warm bedroom and a proper bathroom with a solar shower. He has now gotten used to the cube in his living room—and he has hung three reproductions of paintings in it, including a reproduction of the Mona Lisa! One thing that is missing, he says, is a ladder that would allow him to access the storage space above his new bedroom. Until now, he has had to borrow a ladder from a neighbor for this purpose. The idea of building a ladder himself hasn’t yet occurred to Alfredo. “Of course, we can’t solve all of Alfredo’s problems,” says Juliana Trentin. He will continue to be dependent on the low level of social welfare that he receives from the Portuguese state. However, at least he no longer has to worry about his housing situation for the moment.



The Critical Concrete group continues to look after Alfredo’s house. In November, they installed a skylight that there hadn’t been time for during the summer course, reports Juliana. The next day, Alfredo called her: “He told me that he actually found his dark living room very cozy.” Taking Alfredo’s wishes into account, the group later removed the skylight again.

Even though Alfredo initially wasn’t impressed with the cube in his living room, he invited friends to come over for dinner for the first time shortly after the students had all left: “This was when we noticed that we had given him back some of his dignity again,” says Juliana proudly.

A Child of the Crisis

CARSTEN JANKE

Residents and the city government work together to build a new plaza, creating a spirit of cooperation in times of financial crisis



Maria Aldegundes feels the reddish brown soil between her fingers. She loves to get her hands dirty. The 65-year-old retired doctor's assistant is pulling weeds in a small garden at an intersection of two streets in the Portuguese city of Aveiro. There are cars passing by all around her, but Aldegundes has eyes only for the plants. A neighbor drops by to bring her a tree sapling to plant. "You plant it," she laughs. "This garden is yours as much as it is mine. It belongs to all of us!"

Three years ago, when the little garden on the edge of Aveiro's city center was started, Portugal was in the midst of a severe financial crisis. As many as 52 Portuguese companies closed each day in 2013, and unemployment rose to 17 percent. Aveiro had no funds to repair its streets. This was when a group of residents and architects brought forward the idea to build a new plaza in their neighborhood. And they were going to decide by themselves what it was going to look like. Back then, the idea seemed even more outlandish than today.

By now, the plaza with the little garden has become reality – and with it, a new



style of politics has gained a foothold in the city. In mid-2017, the municipal government will start granting "micro-subsidies" for neighborhood projects such as this, to be disbursed to residents or local initiatives. As a pilot project, the little plaza has come to epitomize the rewards of cooperation between the city, local businesses, and residents.

On the Largo de São Sebastião, that's the name of the little plaza with the garden, Ms. Aldegundes is still busy between the fragrant thyme and thick agaves. She has just discovered that wild strawberries are growing here. "Before, I only used to take care of the flowers on my windowsill," she says. "But in a garden like this, you find something new every day." The next thing she finds, however, is a discarded plastic cup. The plaza is open to all, and many students from a nearby high school come to spend time here when the sun is out. They like to use the tables and benches on the new plaza – and some leave their trash behind.

Conflicts like this can't be avoided, João Pedro Rosa knows. He works at the University of Aveiro, where he is in charge of the contact between students and local communities. He is also a member of the project group *VivaCidade* (living city) which initiated the idea for the plaza and organized its construction.

In a nearby café, he explains how it all began. The project started out with three people – an architect, a municipal employee, and him. In their home town, they wanted to try out what they'd heard had been done in other European cities: building a new plaza with the help of the residents. During the kick-off meetings in 2014, there were a lot of different ideas what should become of the empty lot – a playground, a small library, a sports ground, a swimming pool, a cinema – or a garden.

It took the participants a long time to find common ground. "Often it was two steps forward, one step back," says João. The exchange with other European projects in the Actors of Urban Change program helped him to keep a cool head. "Even though we said to them, 'you can do something completely new here,' many residents still remained nostalgic. They were yearning for the good old days when the area was famous for its bars and nightlife." After many meetings, the decision was made to build a traditional Portuguese open-air bar and a neighborhood garden next to it. When construction began in March 2015, the true value of the network built by *VivaCidade* during the lengthy preparations became apparent. A local construction entrepreneur provided his excavator to clear the premises. A public

Portraits of Maria Aldegundes by Carsten Janke with permission by the author.



road construction company laid new cobbles. A gardening company donated trees.

Over two weeks, a parade of tile setters, craftspeople and furniture designers showed up to do their part. One reason for the great success of the campaign in reaching out to local companies was the fact that Henrique Praça, himself the head of a consulting firm for cultural events and communication, was a member the core project team and brought his private-sector business acumen to the table. Even a graffiti crew from Aveiro joined the effort. Students helped the residents to build tables and chairs. In return, the older people showed the students how to start a garden, including a home-made irrigation system for the hot summer months. This was a highlight of the cooperation in the neighborhood, and it showed how do-it-yourself (DIY) projects in cities are able to benefit community-building. The plaza became a meeting point, João continues. About 350 people participated, “but first and foremost, we had reached a new level of cooperation between the city government and the residents.”

Preparations took over 18 months – time that was important especially for the city government. “This way, I was able to lobby for support here, while in reality the contracts had already been signed,” Maria Ângela Cunha says with a wry little smile. The 37-year-old works for the city government, where she has been put in charge of citizens’ projects and their financing. She was a member of *VivaCidade* right from the start, contributing to the project both during her regular working hours and in her free time. The integration of the project into an international network through the *Actors of Urban Change* program was a great help, says Ângela, as it energized

and motivated her. The predefined process steps in the grant project also gave her enough time to solicit the support of other stakeholders in the city government.

IMPROVIZATION AT THE CITY GOVERNMENT

“It was a collision of two worlds,” Ângela continues, the world of the city government with its rules and regulations, and the world of the residents with their imagination and ideas for their neighborhood. There were some legal obstacles: for example, Portuguese law requires that all construction projects be approved by officials with an engineering background – even if it’s only a garden and a few home-made chairs and tables. A colleague had to step in for Ângela and grant her approval.

In the end, the willingness to improvise paid off. After several weeks of construction, the plaza was presented to the public. For the opening ceremony, the mayor of Aveiro made his appearance, as did the CEO of the Portuguese branch of Bosch, who had acted as an ambassador for the project. More than twenty companies got involved in the project. The city government was highly satisfied as well, as it didn’t need to commit any resources beyond the labor of its employees.

Ângela, the city official, was especially happy: “We finally had a project that we could point to and say, look here, it works!” Since then there has been a wave of civil engagement in Aveiro. Business owners got together to renovate the city’s old shopping street. Following the example of Detroit, an “AveiroSoup” event was held, a community dinner to support neighborhood projects. There are plans for a street opera where professional artists and residents will sing together. In the future, Ângela will be granting micro-subsidies on behalf of the city to better support such projects.

CITIZENS WERE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

It’s become a little chilly, and Ms. Aldegundes has finished cleaning up the garden and planting the new sapling. She has to take the trash home with her, as the city has yet to install garbage cans. The older residents in the neighborhood are already complaining about the youths, Aldegundes says. Instead of enjoying the new plaza, they now claim that it’s only for young people, not for them. The project has changed little about the fact that the long-term residents and the young students live in separate worlds. In such moments, Aldegundes tries to counter: “Have you ever thought about why the young people are the way they

are? Because we are not setting a good example!” The older people are not used to contributing to the community either, she says.

This is a common problem in Portugal, explains João of team VivaCidade. Many of the people who live here grew up during the dictatorship, which lasted until 1974. To this day, they are not used to being asked their opinion in political decision-making. “Democratic participation of this type hasn’t been around for more than 10 years in this country,” João continues. “The construction of the new plaza was the first time the city cooperated with residents at all.” He still sees a lot of resistance in the city government, he says. “An important part of the success of such projects is that they inspire others, and we’ve seen too little of that so far.” He fears that, while the city government has professionalized citizen participation, there hasn’t been a lot of change at the political level.

Ângela is worried, too. She’d like to see more citizen feedback her office’s construction projects. For example, there is a huge outcry each time the city reduces the available parking space. “But when the city builds narrower sidewalks than required by law, nobody complains.” Politicians would be far more cautious if the constituency reacted more visibly to their decisions. Yet Ângela still hopes for a new impetus from the micro-subsidies that fall within her scope of responsibility and are set to begin in May 2017.



The project members are also worried about speculation and gentrification. In the district of Liceu, where the new plaza was built, entire buildings are being rented out to students. The University of Aveiro is just around the corner; house owners prefer to move out of the city and offer up their houses for rent. While that hasn’t caused any displacement of residents yet, it still makes rents rise, and long-term residents are feeling increasingly alienated from their new neighbors. “The students that helped with the plaza were fantastic,” Ms. Aldegundes recalls, “but there were hardly any young people from Aveiro.” Students who move into the neighborhood are gone after three years at most, and there are hardly any new families with small children. That’s a shame, she says, because it makes it difficult for the elderly residents to meet people, and the population of the area keeps getting older and older.

Yet Ms. Aldegundes remains optimistic. She’s been living in Aveiro for over forty years, she says, but her neighbors still consider her a new arrival. “That’s just what the people here are like.” However, for anybody who feels like it, there is now a plaza and a garden where old and new neighbors can meet.

ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

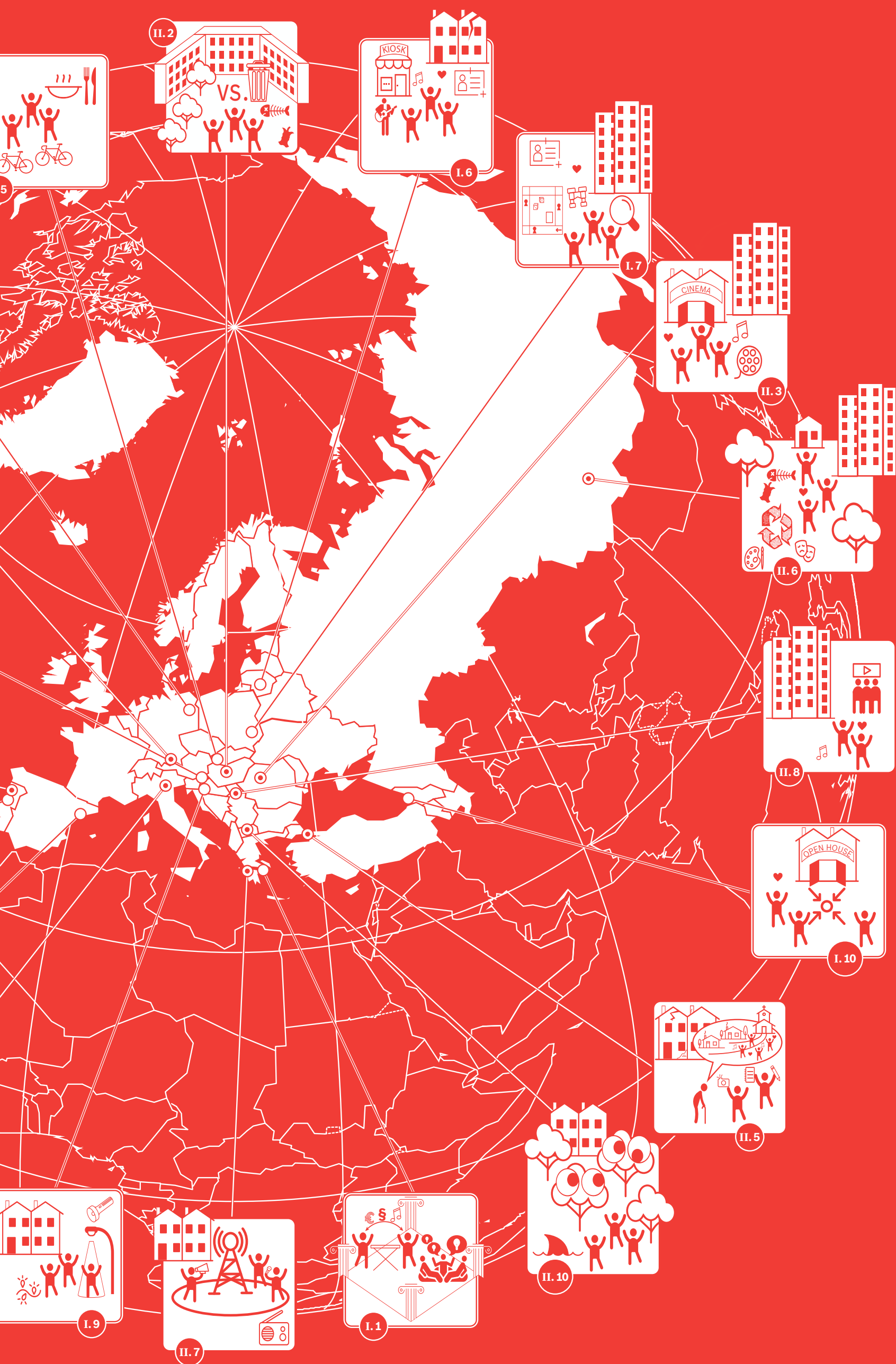
PROJECTS 2015–2017

- II. 1 BOLOGNA, ITALY :: Met BO –
Artistic Training for a Changing City (page 18)
- II. 2 BUDAPEST, HUNGARY :: UTree Greening (page 19)
- II. 3 CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA :: Cinema Dacia –
Mănăştur Central (page 19)
- II. 4 GERETSRIED, GERMANY :: Stories Set in Stone - Creating
Connections (page 20)
- II. 5 ISTANBUL, TURKEY :: 70TK (page 20)
- II. 6 KRASNOYARSK, RUSSIA :: Recycle Art Festival (page 21)
- II. 7 MESSOLONGHI, GREECE :: Speak up! (page 23)
- II. 8 NOVI SAD, SERBIA :: Project NN (page 23)
- II. 9 PORTO, PORTUGAL :: Critical Housing Lab (page 24)
- II.10 SKOPJE, MACEDONIA :: Urban Art Action (page 24)

PROJECTS 2013–2015

- I. 1 ATHENS, GREECE :: PEDIO_AGORA (page 16)
- I. 2 AVEIRO, PORTUGAL :: VivaCidade (page 16)
- I. 3 BARCELONA, SPAIN :: Alice Archive (page 17)
- I. 4 BERLIN, GERMANY :: Moabiter Mix (page 17)
- I. 5 BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA :: More Bike Kitchen (page 18)
- I. 6 KAUNAS, LITHUANIA :: The Šančiai Kiosk (page 21)
- I. 7 LUBLIN, POLAND :: Tenants. Narrations about Urban Utopias
(page 22)
- I. 8 MARIBOR, SLOVENIA :: Living City (page 22)
- I. 9 ZAGREB, CROATIA :: Light in Places (page 25)
- I. 10 ZUGDIDI, GEORGIA :: Open House (page 25)





ATHENS,
GREECE (p. 14/15, I. 1)
PEDIO_AGORA



PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A laboratory for participatory decision making and participatory urban planning .

TEAM
STEPHANIA XYDIA
:: Project Manager, Place Identity GR-Clusters

STELIOS VOULGARIS
:: Assistant to the Advisor on Civil Society Networking, Municipality of Athens

MARY KARATZA
:: Partner and Strategic Designer, TheSwitch

AVEIRO,
PORTUGAL (p. 14/15, I. 2)
VivaCidade

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Engaging the community through place-making by developing temporary interventions in urban voids.

TEAM
JOÃO PEDRO ROSA
:: Director, PUIS-UA - Platform for Social Innovation, University of Aveiro

MARIA ÂNGELA OLIVEIRA E CUNHA
:: Architect in the Urban Planning Department (initially), Economic and Entrepreneurship Division (now), Aveiro Municipality

HENRIQUE PRAÇA
:: Director, SETEPÉS LDA





BARCELONA, SPAIN (p. 14/15, I. 3)

Alice Archive – Childhood, Experience and Public Space

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Creating an interactive online platform to promote children's perspectives about public space .

TEAM

MARTA GONZALEZ FERNANDEZ
:: Neighborhood Agent, City Government
of Barcelona

MARIA GRANDE BAGAZGOITIA
:: Architect, Urbanitas Berlin Barcelona

MARIA MUÑOZ DUYOS
:: Co-Founder, Urbanitas Berlin
Barcelona



BERLIN, GERMANY (p. 14/15, I. 4) Moabiter Mix

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Reinventing cultural formats to empower and involve residents in the appropriation and creation of their neighborhood.

TEAM

ELENA AZZEDÍN
:: Cultural and Program Manager, Center
for Arts and Urbanistics (ZK/U)

MATTHIAS EINHOFF
:: Founder/Director, KUNST-
rePUBLIK e.V., Center for Arts and
Urbanistics (ZK/U)

CAROLA FUCHS
:: Neighborhood Manager, District
Management Moabit West

MIODRAG KUČ
:: Founder and Art Director, Studio
ParaArtFormations

BOLOGNA, ITALY (p. 14/15, II. 1)

Met BO – Artistic Training for a Changing City



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The creation of a new cultural meeting place for migrants, refugees, and long-term residents of Bologna. Using theatre as a means of mutual understanding and identity creation.

TEAM

KAREN BOSELLI

:: Project Coordinator, Cantieri Meticci

MICHELE DORE

:: Artist, Cantieri Meticci

LUCA VIRGILI

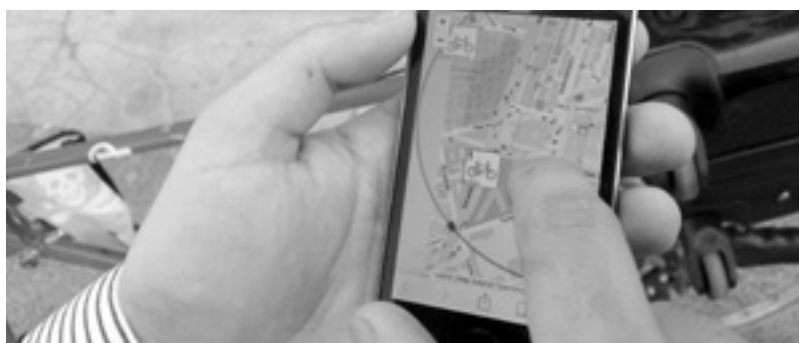
:: Public Relations Speaker, Center M. Zonarelli, City of Bologna

MICHELE PETRIZZO

:: Coordinator for Youth Activities, Coop Adriatica

BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA (p. 14/15, I. 5)

More Bike Kitchen



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Strengthening a local bike community to foster sustainable mobility on diverse scales.

TEAM

TOMAS PECIAR

:: Co-Founder, Executive Board Member and Project Manager, Cyklokoalicia

MELINDA DARÁZSOVÁ

:: State Advisor for the Department of Spatial Planning, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development (initially); Project Manager, PRODEX spol. s r.o. (now)

JURAJ KISS

:: Freelancer, WordPress Development and Online Marketing



BUDAPEST, HUNGARY (p. 14/15, II. 2)

UTree Greening

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The greening and refunctioning of inner city courtyards in order to create meeting points for residents and improve the microclimate in the neighborhood. Using collective courtyard projects to encourage the neighbors' feeling of solidarity and belonging.

TEAM

MÁRTA KISZELY

:: Founder and Future President of the Association, Courtyard Gardens Action Group

CSABA STANISZEWSKI

:: Environmental Control and Climate Adaption Officer of the Local Government, Mayor's Office of the 13th District of Budapest

ILDIKÒ RÉKA BÀTHORYNE NAGY

:: Freelance Landscape Architect, Chief Designer, Assistant Professor, Climate Adaption Expert



CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA (p. 14/15, II. 3)

Cinema Dacia – Mănăştur Central

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Transforming the vacant Cinema Dacia into an important catalyst for a new local identity in Mănăştur. Engaging residents in brainstorming and development to create a central meeting point in the satellite city for and by the local population.

TEAM

LAURA PANAIT

:: Cultural Manager, Colectiv A

SILVIU MEDEŞAN

:: Freelance Architect





GERETSRIED,
GERMANY (p. 14/15, II. 4)

Stories Set in Stone –
Creating Connections



PROJECT DESCRIPTION
New resident house for the satellite district Stein as a meeting place for long-time residents and new arrivals from various countries. Getting to know each other as a means to break down prejudices and to create a common identity.

TEAM
DAGMARA EWA SOSNOWSKA
:: Project Manager, Youth Organization
Trägerverein Jugend- und Sozialarbeit
Geretsried e.V.

ANDREAS PORER
:: Deputy Head of Building Department,
City of Geretsried

MARTINA ROTH
:: Neighborhood Management and
Department for Technics and Insurance,
Building Cooperative Geretsried eG



ISTANBUL,
TURKEY (p. 14/15, II. 5)
70TK

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Preservation and rediscovery of the cultural heritage of Tatavla, the traditional GreekArmenian neighborhood today known as Kurtuluş in the Şişli district of Istanbul. In-depth exchange with the local residents to record the history, and exhibitions and readings to bring it back to life.

TEAM
ÇAGLA PARLAK
:: General Coordinator, Association for
the Protection of Cultural Heritage

ARIANA KAZANCIYAN
:: Expert, Şişli Municipality

BANU PEKOL
:: Assistant Professor, Faculty of
Architecture and Design of Özyeğin
University

TAMAR GURDIKYAN
:: Public Relations and Advertising
Manager, Paros Magazine





KRASNOYARSK, RUSSIA

(p. 14/15, I. 6)

Recycle Art Festival

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The creation of a recycling system with citizen participation. A festival to raise citizen awareness for environmental protection.

TEAM

IRINA ULANOVA

:: Curator of Cultural Projects, Member of the Coordinating Team, Krasnoyarsk Regional Non-Governmental Youth Organisation "INTERRA"

ALEKSEY SAVCHENKO

:: Head of Department, KGBU "KCMP Lider" Regional State Budget Institution

MARIA ZYKOVA

:: Eco Consulting and Public Relation Specialist, "Ecoresurs"



KAUNAS, LITHUANIA

(p. 14/15, II. 6)

The Šančiai Kiosk

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Transforming a kiosk into a new icon for community involvement in a post-industrial neighborhood.

TEAM

KOTRYNA VALIUKEVIČIŪTĖ

:: Co-Founder, NGO studio 54+

RIČARDAS RUSTEIKA

:: Elder, Administration of Kaunas City Municipality, Eldership of Šančiai District

VYTAUTAS BUINEVIČIUS

:: Co-Founder and Director, Strategies for the City (Strategijos miestui)





PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Rebuilding a local community in the once utopian social housing estate Osiedle Słowackiego.

TEAM
PAULINA PAGA
:: Project Manager, Co-Founder and Member of the Board, Open Territory Foundation

RAFAŁ LIS
:: Art Historian and Member, Open Territory Foundation

WOJCIECH KUTNIK
:: Project Manager in International Projects' Implementation Division, Lublin City Office, The Municipality of Lublin

MICHAŁ FRONK
:: Architect, Nizio Design International



LUBLIN,
POLAND (p. 14/15, I. 7)
Tenants. Narrations about Urban Utopias



MARIBOR,
SLOVENIA (p. 14/15, I. 8)
Living City



PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Reactivating devastated spaces in the medieval part of Maribor together with local communities.

TEAM
KATJA BECK KOS
:: President, Manager and Programmer, HOUSE! Association for People and Spaces

ANDREJA BUDAR
:: Project Leader and Developer, Maribor City Municipality – Project Office

KAJA POGAČAR
:: Assistant Professor for Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Maribor, Chair of Architecture at the Faculty of Civil Engineering

ROBERT VESELKO
:: Architect and Partner, MI:ZA



MESSOLONGHI, GREECE

(p. 14/15, II. 7)

Speak Up!

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Citizens' radio as a means for bottom-up urban development in a city with important structural and demographic differences. Giving initiatives a voice and enabling citizens to have more influence on the city administration's policies.

TEAM

OLGA DASKALI

:: Events Facilitator and Member of the Board, "Radio friends," Messolonghi Radio Station

OLGA-CHRISTIANA PAPADIMITRIOU

:: Head of the Informatics Department, Municipality of the Sacred City of Messolonghi

SPYROS TZORTZIS

:: Co-Founder and Interim President of the Sociality Cooperative



NOVI SAD, SERBIA

(p. 14/15, II. 8)

Project NN

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A new cultural center for the satellite town Novo Naselje. Supporting children and youths in their role as the driving force of the district.

TEAM

OGNJEN TOMAŠEVIĆ

:: Co-Director, Novo Kulturno Naselje (NKN)

DARKO POLIĆ

:: Authorized Urban Planner at the Department for Urban Planning, JP "Urbanizam" Novi Sad (Urban Planning and Development and Research Centre Novi Sad)

MARKO JOZIĆ

:: Owner, Café Pizzeria Alo



PORTO, PORTUGAL (p. 14/15, II. 9)

Critical Housing Lab



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A summer school program for international students, local unemployed people and experts to restore a social housing configuration in Bonfim, a working-class neighborhood in the heart of Porto. Cultural and discursive formats open to the local communities to raise citizen awareness and participation.

TEAM

JULIANA TRENTIN

:: Project Coordinator and Architect,
Critical Concrete

SAMUEL KALIKA

:: Director, Critical Concrete

ELISABETE VALÉRIO

:: Psychologist at the Social Office, Junta
de Freguesia do Bonfim

PEDRO CAVACO LEITAO

:: Technical Coordinator and Architect,
Co-Founder of Moradavaga Collective



SKOPJE, MACEDONIA (p. 14/15, II. 10)

Urban Art Action

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Artistic guerilla actions to attract attention to social and urban problems and difficulties. Citizens and the city administration take action towards change with a touch of humor.

TEAM

NIKOLA PISAREV

:: Program Manager, Contemporary Art
Center Skopje

MARTIN POPOV

:: Project Coordinator, Community Center
of Municipality Centar

GJORGJE JOVANOVIK

:: Director TP Kaleidoskop





PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Highlighting forgotten inner-city places through light installations.

TEAM

MARTA KLEPO

:: Program Exchange Assistant
Coordinator, Clubture Network

TEREZA TEKLIĆ

:: Ministry of Culture of the Republic
of Croatia/Curatorial Organization
KONTEJNER | bureau of contemporary
art praxis

TAMARA BRIXY

:: Director and Architect, Brixy & Prostor

KATARINA ZLATEC

:: Co-Founder, Director and Designer,
Oblok

ZAGREB, CROATIA

(p. 14/15, I. 9)

Light in Places

ZUGDIDI, GEORGIA

(p. 14/15, I. 10)

Open House

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Creating a non-commercial meeting place for the empowerment of diverse local communities.

TEAM

MARTA GAWINEK-DAGARGULIA

:: Project Coordinator, Community
Development Center

TAMAR DAGARGULIA

:: Board Member, Community
Development Center

MERAB QVARAIA

:: Head of the City Council, Zugdidi
Municipality

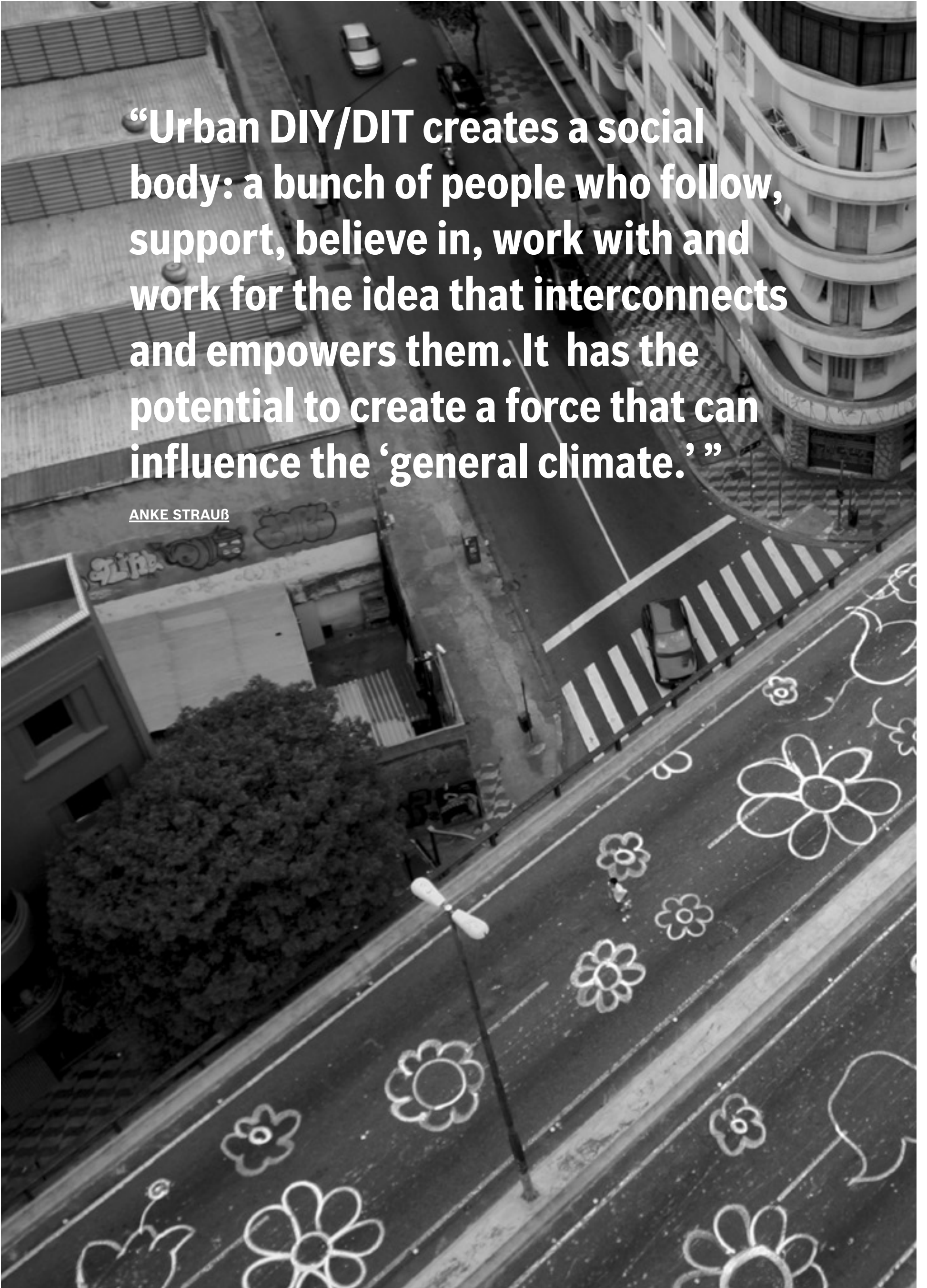
IRAKLI AMANATIDZE

:: Lawyer, Iveria Yseli LTD (initially);
Head of Human Resources Department,
Zugdidi Municipality Mayor's Office
(now)



“Urban DIY/DIT creates a social body: a bunch of people who follow, support, believe in, work with and work for the idea that interconnects and empowers them. It has the potential to create a force that can influence the ‘general climate.’ ”

ANKE STRAUß







URBAN CHANGE TALK Porto -
Urban Do-it-Yourself Together:
Let's Talk Politics
Friday, February 17, 7:30 – 10:00 pm

+

EXHIBITION OPENING
ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE
Friday, February 17, 9:30 pm
February 17 – March 11, 2017

Venue:

Chamber of Architects -
Ordem dos Arquitectos
Secção Regional Norte
Rua Álvares Cabral, 144,
4050-040 Porto
Portugal
Tel +351 222 074 251

in the framework of "Actors of Urban Change",
a Program by the Robert Bosch Stiftung in cooperation with MitOst e.V.

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

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An event organized with the Chamber of Architects Porto.



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