We-Traders. Swapping crisis for city

Original

Availability:
This version is available at: 11583/2625746 since: 2015-12-15T18:38:59Z

Publisher:

Published
DOI:

Terms of use:
openAccess
This article is made available under terms and conditions as specified in the corresponding bibliographic description in the repository

Publisher copyright

(Article begins on next page)
COLLABORATIVE CITY

WE-TRADERS SWAPPING CRISIS FOR CITY
WE-TRADING FOR A COLLABORATIVE CITY

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. We 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 crises 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 southwestern 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 diffuse the boundaries between buyers and sellers: consumers become co-producers. The production of space evolves in a collaborative undertaking.

We-Traders are collaborative. We call them "We-Traders" when they are no longer supplicants. Citizens are becoming patrons where they were once supplicants. Communities are becoming patrons where they were once supplicants. We-Traders increase 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 out? 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 presents to us as an opportunity; it would be better if there were no crisis," says Lisbon geographer Jorge da Silva Marques Malheiro on behalf of many We-Traders. If 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 Lecussan from Mix'Art Myrys in Toulouse. "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 Marques Malheiro on behalf of many We-Traders. If 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."

"We want work that we enjoy and that makes us better," is how the Spanish Walhinn Coop describes its motivation to found a We-Trade. Non-hierarchic alliances and fluid identities play pivotal roles - "We don't ask who we are, but with whom we can enter a relationship" [VIC] – and collective authorship. “The author of Campo de Cebadas is Campo de Cebada.” Such collaborative practices put meaning before profits. “AMAP gave me back my pride in being a farmer. Now, we are feeding people, not markets,” says Alain Gatti of Le Potager de Camille in Toulouse.

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.

ANGELIKA FITZ is a curator and author in the fields of architecture, art and urbanism, running her own office in Vienna since 1988. As artistic director she developed the We-Traders project together with Rose Eppe.

ROSE EPPE is an experimental designer and scenographer in Berlin. As artistic director she developed the We-Traders project together with Angelika Fitz.

WELTSTADT
“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 did we get into this deep crisis? What has lead us here is the way we create society, the way we create our space, which 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 our lives being determined by industry, consumption, 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.”

“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 fertilise 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.”

“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.”
MADRID – ON THE GROUND

Javier Duero, co-curator We-Traders

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 Piensa Madrid, networking platforms like Zoohaus and Architecture Collectives, initiatives like Hackitectura, Ecomovilidad and BiciCritical, organizations like Observatorio Metropolitano, projects such as Fresh Madrid, Kulturaner and Mapear Madrid, young architects like Andrés Jaque, Uriel Fogué, María Langarita and Víctor 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-Trades are Campo de Cebada, Todo por La Praxis, Teamlabs/Walkinn Coop, Ellí/Gabinete de Crisis de Ficciones Políticas and Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas, all of them stakeholders that respond to crisis by proposing new urban models of social, economic and ecological resources.

CAMPO DE CEBADA

TRADE Co-productions in public space, promoting neighbourhood spirit, cultural exchange, social exchange, participative strategies, recycling, co-creation, open source design, urban gardening, diverse communities, self-organization, 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.

“Here almost anything can happen without the ‘almost’, it would be utopia.”

— Campo de Cebada

Todo por La Praxis (Everything for Praxis) or TXP is a multidisciplinary team that sees itself as a laboratory for aesthetic projects or public 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.todoaporlapraxis.es
www.arquitecturascolectivas.net


**TEAMLABS / WALKINN COOP**

**TRADE** Social entrepreneurship, learning by doing, low-level initiatives, spaces for co-working, branding, self-organization, market research, micro-patronage models, education and innovation

**WE** Entrepreneurs, economists, biologists, students, young creative professionals, start-ups, programmers, designers, lawyers, non-governmental organizations, small businesses, investors

**CRISIS** Lack of corporate culture, youth unemployment, job insecurity, social discrimination of freelancers, low employee mobility, delayed emancipation

Teamlabs is a cooperative dedicated to designing and implementing business ecosystems. This includes educational, innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives in a start-up environment in which large companies open to innovation projects can become involved. These ecosystems are themselves educational tools in the sense of “Learning by Doing”, allowing personal and professional development of the skills that are needed in the new society. Along with Mondragon Team Academy (MTA) the cooperative coordinates the LEINN, a course in entrepreneurial leadership and innovation that is based on three pillars: teamwork, experiential learning and global vision.

The first graduates of this course in Madrid founded the Walkinn cooperative project consisting of 20 young entrepreneurs with a focus on social innovation projects.

[www.teamlabs.es](http://www.teamlabs.es)
[www.walkinncoop.com](http://www.walkinncoop.com)

---

**ELII/GCFP**

**TRADE** Sustainable architecture, socially aligned street and park furniture, urban planning, renewable energies, temporary architecture, office and work-centre design, industrial construction, exhibition design, cooperation with artists, prototypes for the coexistence of all species, fictional crisis scenarios, conflict mediation

**WE** Architects, teachers, political activists, artists, economists, researchers, philosophers, journalists

**CRISIS** Privatization of public space, social polarization, gentrification, neoliberal urban development, lack of political ecology, economic disparity, bank and financial crisis, the need of a new constitution for coexistence between different species on earth

Elii/Gabinete de Crisis de Ficcionis Politicas (Crisis Cabinet of Political Fictions) is an office that designs and executes architectural projects in the public and private sectors. At present, in addition to this practical work we teach at Spanish and international universities and are active in publishing (UHF architectural magazine). The Cabinet arose from the working group [Inter]sección; a standalone project that produces prototypes for possible forms of coexistence that respond to radical crisis conditions. The aim is to design a possible future by means of a fictional scenario to articulate the framework for a new political ecology. Both initiatives operate in frameworks of very different scales while maintaining feedback and synergy channels between them.

[www.elii.es](http://www.elii.es)
gabinetecrisisficciones.blogspot.com.es

---

**[VIC]**

**TRADE** Entrepreneurship, self-organization, alternative economy, knowledge transfer, collaborative networks, citizen empowerment, use of social innovation in the public space

**WE** Architects, urban planners, sociologists, social anthropologists, social workers, teachers, political activists

**CRISIS** Lack of spirit of citizenship, neoliberal urban development, privatization of public space, consumerism, lack of structures for true participation of all in the use of common resources

[VIC] Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas (Incubator of Citizens’ Initiatives) is an open and collaborative platform designed to constructively promote, analyze and support critical processes, with special emphasis on transfers to the region, the city and public space. [VIC] listens to and examines concrete situations and proposes routes that unite theory and practice. The platform is structured as a web database incorporating all initiatives that, by nature of their social innovation, may serve as models for transferring knowledge to other groups, companies and/or authorities.

[www.viveroiniciativasciudadanas.net](http://www.viveroiniciativasciudadanas.net)

---

“Since fiction belongs to no one, it circulates and encourages this very strong situation of exchange.”

— ELII/GCFP

---

[All project texts by project authors.]
“Perhaps this old square and its new 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.”

— Sonja Beeck

### Diagnoses by Weltstadt Correspondent Sonja Beeck

How can different stakeholders, above all the younger generation, bring about changes that herald a comprehensive societal transformation in the city? In the Spanish capital, young people feel disconnected from the political landscape. They want to participate, have a voice in decision-making, and create a socially economically stable and CO2-neutral city. Pioneering urban development goals and influential roadmaps leading out of the crisis have not appeared. For decades, an elite conducted political affairs in such a way that they conjured up one of Europe’s worst real-estate crises. Everyday was to become a real-estate owner. Many Spaniards gratefully took up this offer and for some of them today, their mortgage is their ruin. But damage control is not all that is at stake here. The true conflicts must be resolved in the real-estate market. Far-fetched answers and solutions are more permissible in the try-out phase than in real situations. That, in brief, is the idea behind GCFP – Gabinete de Crisis de Francisco Pérez. They want to participate, have a voice but do not know how to circumvent the programs and blockades of local politicians with a political bypass. They are still at play and fiction. They are the mirror to the strange play of their own marvellous nature, and this is the way they represent a generation and a value of society? How is sustainable management possible when taking into account all costs?

### Performative 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 situations. That, in brief, is the idea behind GCFP - Gabinete de Crisis de Ficcion Políticas, which every couple of months pitches its political tents in the halls of the Matadero, a former slaughterhouse rebuilt into an impressive art quarter. The discussion partners are disguised, as is right and proper for them. Suitable prominent experts with no lack of hands-on experience are invited for each topic. But the element of fiction is given space well. Even so often, aliens from outer space are quite naturally invited, who for the most part make extraordinary 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 Navollet’s celebrated dictum: “They constitute a world in itself – their play is self-sufficient, they express nothing but the collective unconscious.”

Another time, the group seeks to depict the structures behind visible reality through highly narrative installations and arrangements in public space. CO2 consumption as a constructed diagram. It was in this connection that they also built the humorous “Jane Fonda House”. It illustrates the contrast between laboursome generation of energy by muscle-power and high energy consumption in the household. These narrative installations with pedagogical intentions are not stingy with vividness. They show what is generally taken for granted and goes unquestioned. The group calls itself Ellí when it constructs this performative architecture. Behind the scene is a trio that loves debate, three architects, one woman and two men who inject intelligent answers in the round of We-Trader discussion partners without descending into slogans and who dare to design both games and buildings. Games, whose parallel worlds permit viewers and visitors to learn quite a lot about things as they really are.

### Network and Process Architecture

Apart from imposing projects such as MediaLab Prado, which despite outstanding design by the architect don Langarita–Navarro lacks a program and vitality, there are other attempts at enlivening architecture and urban development and turning citizens into developers of their own city, such as the [VIC], the Vivarium 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 consolidated with the economic network management of a BID.

### Hands-on

In Spain, citizens’ working together on co-operative work platforms, in district initiatives and 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 Pera, who is part of the “hands on urbanism” initiative Todo por la Práctica. 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 themselves in the shaping of urban space. They really are.

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, 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 uninterested in who these flexible co-workers actually are. The young students, whose university is given a group ticket by Hub for 300 Euros, are equally uninterested 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, perhaps even the better school of life. We want work that we enjoy and that makes us better people, is the way they explain their We-Trader approach. Is that still too complicated? What does it look like close-up, out around the corner? Might space be complicated? What does it look like close-up, out around the corner? Might space be there for simple, public ideas?

LIVING MODEL / DEVELOPMENT

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 neighborhood activists have turned it into a lively place. Here, locals meet and meet and the usage of the place anew, over and over again. They plant flowers or dance the Merengue, play soccer or basketball, or they just hang around and chat. At night, the Campo de Cebada pullates, no. Drinks can be served there, or any business conducted. This is unusual for a market whose social purpose mostly consists in exchanging products. But here, by contrast, citizens have appropriated a vacant space and turned it back into a plaza that for now is 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 mate-in-a-bag. But they are sick and tired of chanting no more mafia of Madrid and social action as such. They are tired of saying things, slogans containing the word “Mafia” – they are declaimed rhythmically – clearly and forcefully.

Mostly young people are standing on the street 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 been like this every week since the PP’s swamp of corruption was made public by Luis Bárcenas, 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 declaimed rhythmically – clearly and forcefully.

A few streets further, in the Calle San Mateo 13, in 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 Isabella 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.
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 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.

Miraori 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 workplace and creative hub of Toolbox Coworking.

Finally, in the former Olympic Village, Buena Vista Social Housing offers innovative living models in one of the fastest-changing urban areas. All are examples of how Turin is today recreating itself not only as a city of “entertainment”, but also as a place that reflects the idea of cultural responsibility while experimenting with models and practices for social integration that also stimulate economic development. We believe these are all essential elements for the years to come.

Lisa Parola and Luisa Perlo are part of a.titolo, a collective of curators founded in Turin in 1997 to investigate the relationships between art, society, cities and public space. They are co-curators for We-Traders in Turin.
Miraorti © Giuseppe Moccia

**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 © Gianluca de Serio

**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 and FabLab Torino © Davide Giglio

**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-uppers, 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.fablabtorino.org

“It’s not just about sharing a space, but about a new approach to work.”

— Toolbox Coworking

WELTSTADT

All project texts by project authors.
"It isn’t an interlude but a metamorphosis that will transform the world.”
—Marco Revelli
WELTSTADT EXCURSUS: COLLABORATIVE CITY IN BELGRADE AND THESSALONIKI

DESPAIR AND HOPE – TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE CITY IN BELGRADE

Ivan Kucina is an architect, assistant professor at the University of Belgrade and founder of the School of Urban Practices.

Project postponing is more a consequence of government procrastination than the city's citizens caused by the long-lasting crises and economic depressions, than a disagreement about participatory process. A life shaped by everyday struggles and lost hopes for our surroundings and determined by selfish usurpations and overwhelming corruption, has left deep scars in people's minds. Since they have been treated badly by authorities who were supposed to serve them and robbed by business developers who were out to privatize any and all public resources, it is understandable that they believe that everyone who approaches them has an ulterior motive. After many years of sustaining a self-protective attitude, they have lost the ability to distinguish good intentions from harmful ones. They would rather believe in unrealistic conspiracy theories that may turn up in their backyard than evidence proven before their eyes. All these reasons are providing enough arguments to identify participation as a futile endeavor. However, under austerity measures, without investments and with a bankrupted state, it seems to be the only valid way left to stop disintegration and develop the city. Citizens' initiatives need to be stimulated and nurtured in order to become everyday practice.

Aside from the crises, the citizens' rejection has to do with the systematic collapse of socialist ideology and rise of the new neoliberal order. Under socialism, citizens were declared equal and were united in a collective society that was prospering and proceeding towards a bright future. In theory the citizens' role was celebrated, although in practice it was always limited by the rigid administration and reduced life opportunities. In decision-making procedures and city planning, their rights were presented in the form of public hearings at the end of the process when their approval had already been formally decided – minimal – they would always receive general bureaucratic responses to any comments they made. Obviously considered to be the most important but practically cut off from public resolutions, citizens' initiatives were significantly shifting to the private sector, where they were investing in their own projects. During the 1990s and the ongoing crisis in which the socialist living standard was raised and commercial loans were gradually offered to meet the demands for a better life for the majority of citizens, they were a way, as for the socialist society was acquiring features of consumer society with all its accompanying characteristics – diversification, segregation, industrialization, individualization, and egotism. During this period, political instruments for public engagement remained unchanged or were bureaucratised even more, creating resentment with regard to any intention of participation, as it could not bring reasonable improvement, and even result in persecution for those too seriously involved. As a consequence, citizens found their peace inside their own homes and left the public domain to the city authorities to take care of. Authorities were doing that with practicality, relying on authoritative procedures in order to maintain the comfortable position of the ruler.

The more citizens became wealthy, the less trust they placed in both the authorities and in any other of their fellow citizens. In this way, societal integrity was destroyed long before the collapse of socialism. When socialism did finally collapse and the founding dream of brotherhood, unity and freedom was dismantled, citizens who were supposed to achieve and protect the uncertainty of the aggressive post-socialist times confronting them. In their isolation, they were easy prey for a new business elite that turned them into eager customers. Without mutual trust, they were unable to confront the alliance between the authorities and the new business elites that finally took their city away from them and offered a tempting mirage instead. Citizens were trapped in the world of desires, generating high demands for luxurious lifestyles with never enough resources to pay the costs. Being pushed to the margins, a majority of them chose the only shortcut left in order to satisfy their needs – to become wealthy or poor, citizens started to develop their private wealth by tapping public funds. Stretched this on different sides by many individual appropriations, Belgrade was in a permanent state of disintegration.

It is only through collaboration and sharing of competencies that citizens, architects, authorities and developers may create opportunities to transform the process of urban disintegration into an integrative impetus. Transforming the city involves activating and consolidating of their contradictory interpersonal relationships. It is not based on any of their fantasies of order and omnipotence, but is instead the staging of their discussions and negotiations. It does not aim for stable configurations but for the creation of an open platform that accommodates the processes that are making it. Concentration of diverse initiatives generates instability and dynamism and inspires the creation of new opportunities.

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 not a fusion; 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 who only 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 to allow this to happen as much as possible – to become, discover, and transform again.

Parallaxi, the free press magazine we have been publishing in Thessaloniki for the past 24 years, took 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 organisations and 50 groups, 200 artists and 250 volunteers stirred up the city’s everyday life, suggesting another revision of public space perception. The unprecedented reciprocation by the public, as spectators exceeded 30,000, 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.

Thessaloniki, my city, is a city which has been experiencing economic recession for at least 20 years, from the Serbian war and on, with de-industrialization, unemployment and the brain drain of the city. Its growth opportunities have dramatically diminished, as have the funds invested in it over the last few decades. The result of all this has been a turn towards conservatism in the city, an introduction which has been reinforced by local leaders over the past years, and the sheer robbery of the city’s resources, that also led to a series of convictions, all of which have created a suffocating environment.

Over the past three years, the image of this city, which had reached its limits, has started to change. The change in municipal administration and the assumption of mayoral duties by an open-minded businessman, Giannis Boutaris, the modernist and the first in the history of the city, has changed the overall feeling, highlighting the city’s creativity and artistic and cultural heritage. A series of events, festivals and outdoor activities succeed one another throughout the year, a strong graphic design and music scene has developed and the city seems at this time to be leading role in the Greek landscape in a creative way.

For more than 150 thousand people have watched our activities, nearly 500 volunteers have been involved, more than 2000 creators and collaborators, and they are all held thanks to sponsorships, in cash and in kind, and with free entry – no ticket needed!
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.

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

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

9. Everyone can become a We-Trader!
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 that explore initiatives and producers.
Divided city, reunified city and new, 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 and privatized municipal housing. Project development is increasingly left to big investment groups. But there is resistance: platforms advocate granting public real estate according to social and cultural criteria; building associations are taking projects into their own hands. Hundreds of citizens have united to a cooperative in the Initiative Möckernkiez in order to sustainably develop their own neighbourhood. Long known for low housing costs, 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 Rütli School in Neukölln, both known as a “problem neighbourhood” and highly affected by gentrification, gained sad notoriety. The RÜTLI-WEAR project is attempting to break through the vicious circle of media stigmatization through rebranding and thus profiting from the transformation of the area.

The city is rapidly becoming international. Boom 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 realm 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

**ALLMENDE-KONTOR**

TRADE Urban gardening laboratory/network/showroom, enhancement of biodiversity (traditional seeds), healthy and cheap food; promotion of the commons principle, diverse communities, self-organization, self-empowerment

WE Urban gardeners, political activists, a colourful mix of people from the neighbourhood (approx. 900)

CRISIS Privatization of public space, food industry, social isolation, lack of nature in cities

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

berlin – on the ground

Angelika Fitz and Rose Epple, curators We-Traders

“Actually, out of silly experiments the most awesome projects ever are born.”

— Open Design City/betahaus

**OPEN DESIGN CITY (ODC) / BETAHÄUS**

TRADE Co-working, co-design, open design, tools and skills, community building, start-up hub, empowerment, continuing education

WE Makers of all sorts, start-ups, programmers, artists, architects, designers, academics, lawyers, NGOs, journalists, crafties

CRISIS Precarious working conditions for creative workers, isolation of freelancers (Ich-AGs), lack of flexible and cheap workplace, high costs for high tech infrastructure, consumerism, bad design, copyright

Values are no longer created in traditional offices. Added value is created in different locations, at different times, in changing team constellations and without permanent employment. This new type of work is always seeking new real and virtual places. Since 2009 betahaus is dedicated to innovation, creativity, events and professional work. Open Design City is a creative workshop of betahaus and an education hub for makers. In and around the space our team runs various events, such as courses, workshops, parties, open experimentation sessions and festivals. Within the diverse sessions and the educative activities we are shaping the community of makers, doers and creators.

www.betahaus.de

Crisis and glamour intertwined (poster Volksbühne Berlin) © Rose Epple

Allmende-Kontor at the former Tempelhof Airport © K.D. Grote

www.allmende-kontor.de

— 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.ruetli-wear.de
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 building 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.

“possible worlds”
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 building 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.

AGULHA NUM PALHEIRO
TRADE Scouting and mapping of empty and abandoned buildings in the city centre; training, education and advisory on revitalization processes and permits for revitalization, squatting, high cost of revitalization
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

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 façades 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
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/JornalEspeelho

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

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

— O Espelho

Supposedly there hasn’t been all that much movement in Portugal in recent years. The economy has been tottering along for a considerable time. Lisbon was already high before the crisis, but has risen massively in the wake of austerity measures taken in response to the crisis. Only those people with jobs are in motion, to the extent that they wait at the bus stop for their workplaces. Those who do not wish to live in uncomfortable old buildings in the city center move to more comfortable residential buildings on the outskirts of the city or better yet, build a house in the urban fringe. The opulent revitalisation of Portugal’s entire infrastructure in the past two decades has given people and the elderly living in the dilapidated city centers. But a point came in both 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 also evident in Lisbon’s older districts such as Alfama and Moura as well.

The visible decay of building substance in the city centers was particularly intensive throughout Europe in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. We are all too familiar with the demonization of the city of the 19th century and of yet older buildings, it spans the period from euphoric modernity through to the most recent past. In many areas in the city, only soon urbanized districts remain. The people and the elderly were living in the dilapidated city centers. But a point came in both 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 also evident in Lisbon’s older districts such as Alfama and Moura as well.

The discontent was vented in November 2011, 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 the community of children, actions and meals were held with the aim of promoting the community of children, adults, seniors, neighbours and local small business people.

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 Moura 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 former 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 anymore. 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 backtracking 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 of the municipal administration stand alone with the stilt obstinacy of those who remain. Where is the residents’ obstinance? A city is a system full of obstinacy and self-will – it has as much self-will as it has inhabitants.

BASIC RITUALS

Many older and above all not exactly wealthy people are still living in Alfama. The historic quarter in the vices of the city center. uality attracts square and romantic little alleyways. Today, though, the squares are more often than not deserted, an urban phenomenon density nor 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 national debate of life consists in knowing each other, speaking with each other and helping each other, we-tering, in other words. This is where Lucia Luisa Alpalheo's project A Linha (line) takes its point of departure. She went to London in 2002, in the midst of Portugal’s upswing and long before the crisis. She returned in 2011, 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 performative planning. She laid down routes to lend 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, adults, seniors, neighbours and local small business people.

“Community building” – is the name of the strategy that everyone gets into inner-neighborhood. Well, one can either wait for outside investors or motivate the locals to take matters into their own hands. For this purpose, the two architects, together with a few other colleagues, have created the Internet platform Aguna num palheiro (needle in the haystack). There, houses for sale can be cataloged and offered by private persons. At the same time, they are developing a renovation handbook to allay possible purchasers’ fears of too-great investments, since the renovation of the Old City’s rundown buildings, as much as 41%, will be effected by the citizens themselves. Lisbon is by no means cheap, in spite of the visible decay. Although most in poor housing, apartments are offered at bargain-basement prices. It seems, as if completely different market forces are already at work here. Are investors already waiting for the starting shot of the really big run? Who are the owners of these buildings in the city-center barrios?

The platform is sensibly aiming to create a small market for the empty and decaying buildings via the Internet, but this might possibly be attracting precisely those players with whom many another city center has worse experiences. People with so much money that they do not know where else to park it. And if renovation takes place on a grand scale, the current residents cannot stay. The scale of investment would entail their displacement. Are the architects perhaps naive, or is their strategy the right one? Many things may have been done through use is the best conservation, it too can herald an undeserved development at whose end perhaps none are still living there of those who, for instance, are here and there transforming the old quarter Alfama into a truly magical place.

STIMULATION

Take, for example, the two young architects Lucinda Correia and Ana Jara, who have set themselves the goal of convincing investors to tackle the city center. A vacancy rate in Lisbon’s historic city center. A vacancy rate with a multiplicity of causes. In 2012, under pressure from the so-called Troika, the conservative government eliminated one of the causes by revising the Portuguese rental law. More than 700,000 rental contracts throughout Portugal must now be renegotiated, since
"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."

Sonja Beeck
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.

STÉPHANE GRUET is an architect, philosopher and professor at the École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Toulouse. He is co-curator for We-Traders in Toulouse.
“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 papier”, 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 existence. 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 © MixArts Myris
"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 into account and parallelly 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 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 it 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. Particular 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).
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 gained nationwide. What began as a unison chorus of protest for the right to the city, eventually turned into a cacophony of individual desires and aspirations of mute 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, for better or for worse.

After the control of the inflation rate in the “90s and a decade of growth, credit and policies of income inclusion followed, resulting in a sharp decline of public authorities. But over the crisis that afflicted the financial system, community spirit is fed by the adversities of its past and taking policy decisions. In the case of Brazil, the strengthening of a sense of community, especially considering the renewed connectivity brought by online social networks, to which a better informed “new middle class” also has access, allowing for “new media class” also has access, allowing for mobilization on an unprecedented scale. But although the potential is there, it is not enough. Good results, 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.

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 pursing 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 southwest Europe, there is much work to do across the Atlantic.

**Filipe Serro** is a Portuguese, Berlin based architect. He worked on the Weltstadt project Nós Brasil! We Brazil! focusing on the future of Brazilian cities, in the wake of the emergence of a new middle class in the country.

**Demonstration of DESOCUPA Movement in Salvador against the approval of the New Law of City Land Use © Carlos Americo Barros**
CREDITS

Weltstadt Editors: Matthias Böttger, Angelika Fitz, Tim Rieniets (until 2013)
Editors for this issue: Rose Eppe, Angelika Fitz, Leona Lynen
Weltstadt Project Manager: Andrea Zell (Goethe-Institut), Michael Marten (BMUB)
Graphic Design: Studio Matthias Görlich (Jan Aulbach, Matthias Görlich, Charalampos Lazos)
Translation: Edith Watts, Faith Ann Gibson
Copy Editing: Leona Lynen
Printing: Brandenburgische Universitätspresse und Verlagsgesellschaft Potsdam mbH
V.i.S.d.P. Susanne Höhn, Goethe-Institut Brüssel
Copyright: The layout, graphics and other contents of this publication are protected by copyright law. All rights reserved.
2nd edition, 2014

We-Traders. Swapping City for Crisis
A project by the Goethe-Institut Region Southwest Europe 2013/14
Project direction Goethe-Institut Brüssel: Susanne Höhn, Project coordination: Julia Förster
Co-production Goethe-Institut Lisbon, Madrid, Toulouse, Turin
Concept and artistic direction: Angelika Fitz, Rose Eppe
Co-curators: Julia Alboni (Lisbon), Javier Duero (Madrid), Stéphane Gruet (Toulouse), Luisa Perle & Luisa Perle (Turin)
Partners of We-Traders:

Special thanks to all contributors: A Linha, AERA Habitat, Aquila suom palheiro, Almende-Kantor, BUPI, Bic A Cia, Bueno Vista Social Housing, Buena Vista Social Housing, Casa del Quarto, Città di Torino, Cozinha popular da Mouraria, Cozinha popular de Coimbra, Casa del cuts, Edith Watts, Faith Ann Gibson, Goethe-Institut, Goethe-Institut Brüssel, Goethe-Institut Madrid, Goethe-Institut Madrid, Goethe-Institut Toulouse, Goethe-Institut Turin, Goethe-Institut Turin, Ivan Kucina, Jorge da Silva Macaia Malheiroes, Jürgen Willinghöfer, La paletager de Callie, Leonie Byam, Marco Ravelli, MixArt Myrzen, O Expelho, Open Design City/Bethanien, Paul Stontzaart, Rafael Saldos, Sufi Navy-Hay, Santiago Eraso Beloki, Sonja Beeck, Toolbox Coworking/FabLab Torino, Teamlab: Toolbox Coworking/FabLab Torino, Todo por la Praxis, [VIC] Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas

www.goethe.de/wetraders