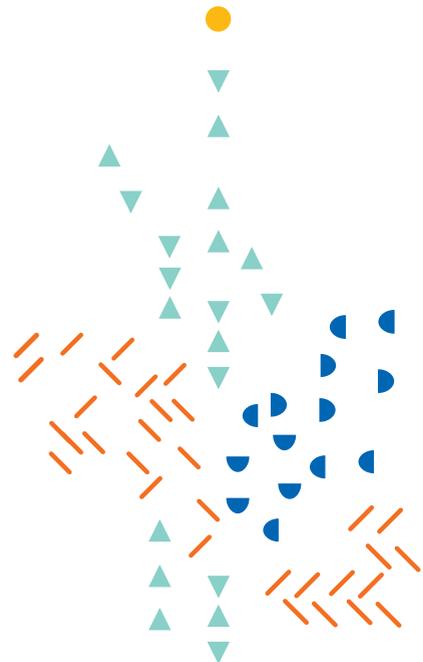


AGENTS OF ALTERNATIVES

Re-designing Our Realities



Edited by:
Alastair Fuad-Luke
Anja-Lisa Hirscher
Katharina Moebus



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Edited by: Alastair Fuad-Luke, Anja-Lisa Hirscher, Katharina Moebus

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Re-designing Our Realities

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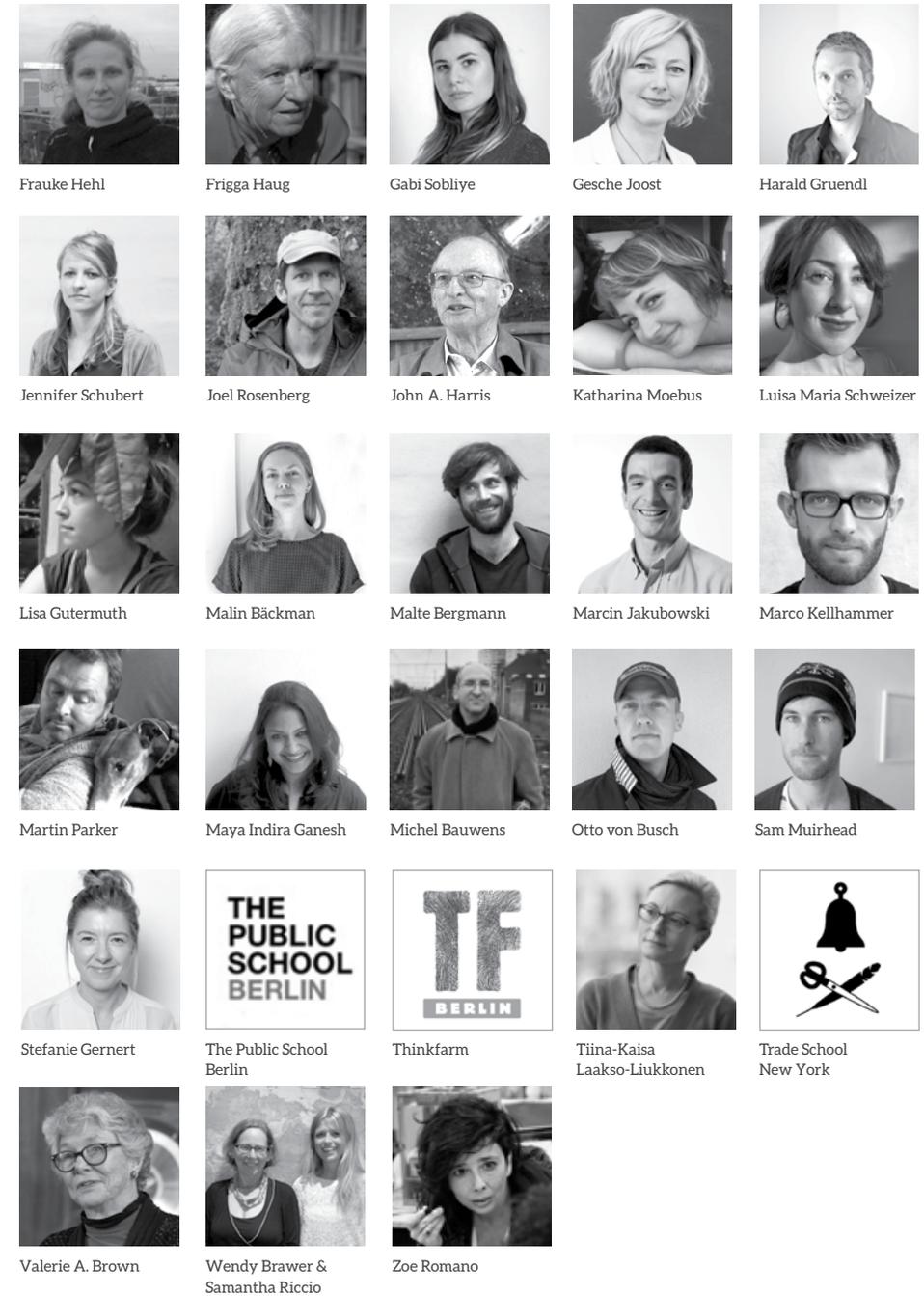
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The contributors to this book come from diverse fields including architecture, art, design, landscape architecture, urban planning, education and research, to name a few. They are practitioners, activists, designers, artists and academics. This book would not have been possible without their commitment to challenging the paradigm and their belief in creating alternatives.



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INTRODUCTION

You hold in your hands a book which is really a manifestation of an evolving vision to link designing with everyday 'active-ism' which helps materialise plausible 'alternatives' to the global economy and neo-liberal capitalist practices. This was driven by an underlying belief that we need to 're-design our realities' to better reflect and respond to our pressing contingent challenges about our social, ecological and financial condition.

Exploring 'agents of alternatives' demands a multidisciplinary dialogue within and between citizens, practitioners and academics who make things happen. So, you will find contributors from diverse fields: design, the arts, architecture, education, politics, economics, urban planning and city administration, social enterprise and the informal sector, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), experts on the commons, and others. We encouraged activists, researchers, educationalists, strategists and facilitators to share their views. In this book we mix the voices of well-known contributors alongside lesser-known active local agents. We look for emergent ways of learning-by-doing, of designing, of manifesting things differently and catalysing positive change, and we present these ways of thinking and practicing so that others might fruitfully experiment with, explore and generate alternatives for themselves.

Agency

Our position is that *everyone* and *everything* has agency, that is, the capacity to change what happens next. A position reinforced by certain philosophers – for example, Bruno Latour's human and non-human 'actants', Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's 'social material assemblages', and Jane Bennett's 'vibrant matter'.¹ We, and our contributors, also adopt more accepted sociological and anthropological views of agency involving the social structures, systems and rules which bind or break them. Those with agency are actors, stakeholders, shareholders, institutions, organisations, diverse communities and other social groups. We would also invoke 'political agency' as a healthy form of disagreement and discourse as part of our civic and human condition, not confined within formalised institutionalised practices of 'politics'. In this sense we see the political agency of this book and its

¹ See, for example, Latour, B., 2005. *Reassembling the Social. An introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; and Bennett, J., 2010. *Vibrant Matter. A political ecology of things*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press.

contributors as a means to re-examine and explore our social relations and our relations with the wider world so that we might, individually and collectively posit or construct alternatives.

The agents

Who are these agents of alternatives? They exhibit some common features: they are independently minded, but share a critical awareness of our social, ecological and economic condition; they have a vision but it is adaptive to changing circumstances; they are open and transparent, showing their processes and sharing their expertise; they start their journey with the (often meagre) resources at their disposal and show perseverance; they believe their voice counts and encourage others to add their voices too; they turn rhetoric into action; and they reveal opportunities and possibilities. Most importantly, all our contributors here are 'making things happen', they are active not passive, caring not distant, and different not conformist. Read their voices in the essays, interviews and case studies.

Alternatives

Anyone, or anything, contesting the status quo, societal 'norms' or contemporary paradigmatic forces, is, potentially, an 'alternativ-ist'. To be an alternativ-ist is not a new position but has an illustrious history which embraces daring individuals, collective movements, specialised groups and minorities.² Here we define our alternatives through a series of imagined worlds – Thinking, Learning, Sharing, Making, Intervening, Working, and Living – worlds which evolved as the content for the book grew (see p.18-19). We see these worlds intertwined, joined by a series of emergent practices (p.462) and expressed through an evolving lexicon (p.22-37). These alternatives are still young, yet they are potentially catalytic and, if scaled-up, can encourage a transition towards more sustainable, equitable and adaptable futures. We found professionally organised alternatives that try to bridge policy-making and grassroots activism as well as small initiatives that have spread all around the world, because their underlying ideas are so simple, accessible and welcoming to a wide range of people. There are different ways of changing society, and this book tries to have a closer look at the potential of the informal and formal worlds of change makers.

Re-designing

Our shared vision for this book was also underpinned with a belief that the field of design is diffusing out into wider society and is no longer just the primary concern of professionally trained designers, but is actually being practiced by other profes-

² Parker, M., Fournier, V. and Reedy, P., 2007. *The Dictionary of Alternatives: Utopianism and Organisation*. London: Zed Books.

sionals, professional amateurs and citizen designers. We share and update Victor Papanek's view that 'all people are designers',³ and Joseph Beuys' political position making all citizens 'artists' that shape the 'social sculpture' of our society.⁴ And, we believe that a sustainable way of designing is to work with what is existent in a 'locale'⁵ – a diverse array of human, social, public, commercial and natural capitals. In this sense 're-designing' makes more sense than 'designing', because it involves re-configuring the potential of what already exists. This might, of course, involve bringing in new ingredients and smartly combining them to create fresh potentialities. The initiatives, projects and ideas collated in this book are representative for a growing global 'zeitgeist' (spirit of the time) around openness and sharing. This means making ideas accessible to everyone so that they can be adapted to diverse local conditions. Most of them are open source so individual authorship becomes less important and the positive impacts and potentialities of sharing are emphasised. They bring different communities and places around the world together in a dynamic self-organised and, often, surprising way.

To summarise, it is our hope that this book will stimulate you, the reader, to become an agent of alternatives too...

3 Papanek's original quote was 'All men are designers', p.17 in Papanek, V., 1974. *Design for the Real World. Human Ecology and Social Change*. St. Albans, UK: Paladin.

4 See, for example, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_sculpture and <http://www.social-sculpture.org>

5 'Locale' has an etymological root in 'locus', Latin for place, and is a French word defining local. More importantly, locale, is a combination of unique ingredients or characteristics which differentiate what it means to be local. Locale is a scalable phenomenon that, like the famous Charles and Ray Eames' film *Powers of Ten*, can be felt at many scales from one square metre to a hectare or more. It is also a meeting place of various communities, it is the location of specific human ecologies. So each locale has a unique combination of communities of place, communities of practice, communities of interest and communities of circumstance and other types of communities. Source: Fuad-Luke, A., 2012. *Locale*. Window874, available at <http://window874.com/2012/05/29/locale>

Editors' notes: We added editors' footnotes to interview and case study texts where we thought it would assist the reader. In the essays these are marked as such, to distinguish them from the original contributor's footnotes.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The founding principle of this book is that the diverse content provided by the contributors would drive an emergent structure.

We came together in November 2013 in Helsinki to analyse the content we'd already received and to develop the language for the book (Figure 1.). We believed, and still believe, that genuine empowerment happens by locating ourselves within an alternative framework, by seeing positive disruptions to the status quo, by re-positioning what designing can do, and by focusing on Our Commons (we use 'our' not 'the' to emphasise that the default ownership is 'us' and 'we', not 'them') and how we can share in better ways for the common good.

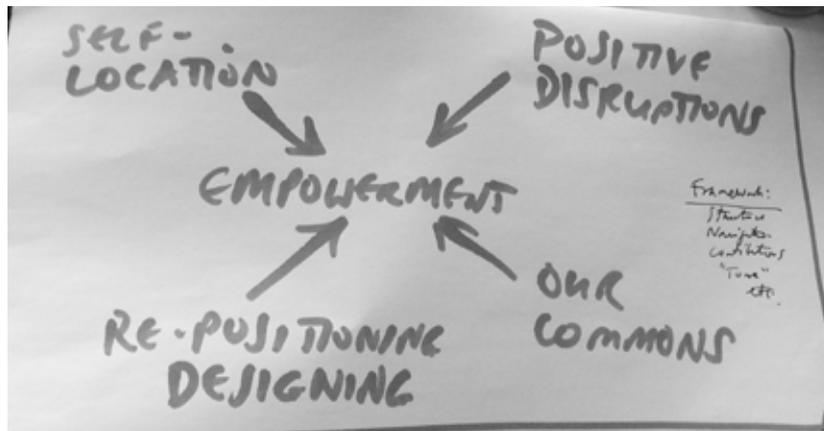


Figure 1. Some emergent keywords from the editors' conversation in November 2013. © AoA.

In February 2014 the editors came together in Berlin to further explore and understand the content we had already received and do an initial mapping of its relations (Figure 2.).

These two meetings led us to create an active vocabulary and initiated a conversation about whether we could analyse and synthesise the content into a more constructive and practical arrangement that would inspire. We understood that people were acting and taking action around different focal areas – we called these areas 'alternative worlds' (see next page). They are/were developing [design] practices that help encourage a transition from the existing situation to a preferred situation (to borrow from the words of Herbert Simon¹). We analysed these prac-



Figure 2. The editors having a 'eureka' moment with Cathérine Kuebel in Berlin, February 2014. © AoA.

tices and have presented them as 'Stuff that works' (p.462). These practices range from those based upon eminent common sense to ingenious ways of encouraging transformation. We hope you will recognise some, and add your own. We also observed that people were talking and writing about their 'worlds' and 'practices' with new language, so we created an 'evolving lexicon' (pp.22-37). We hope that these collated 'insights', 'practices', 'emergent words' and, of course, the detailed content from our contributors, will stimulate you, the reader, to reflect and re-think your own position. We hope that flipping between this synthesis of the content and the actual content will provide its own stimulus. In short, we hope that this extra joining of information at a 'meta' level, might provide some magic ingredients to generate, nourish and sustain alternatives.

Map of contributions

Each contribution in this book was assigned to a 'primary' world with other worlds as 'secondary' influences to see how the different projects, initiatives and philosophies interweave and cluster. The outcome is a 'map of contributions' (pp.20-21) which allows a different way of navigating through the book and making sense of its contents. It serves as an addition to the traditional list of contents and invites you, the reader, to experience the book in many different ways: non-linearly, according to chapter, interest, theme, format and so on. Enjoy the journey.

¹ Simon, H., 1996 (1969). *The Sciences of the Artificial*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

ALTERNATIVE WORLDS

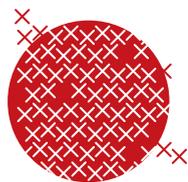
We believe that alternatives are best created and designed together by thinking differently and making those thoughts tangible by taking action. The diversity of contributions in this book highlights that there are many intertwined worlds with which we can engage. We offer working definitions of these worlds, without asserting them to be either final or complete, hoping that you will add your own. We believe that by combining these worlds in different ways, we can 're-design our realities'.



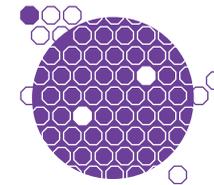
Thinking – the diverse acts and practices of discursive activities, free association, ideation, inquiring, intuiting, philosophising, reasoning, reflecting, ruminating and synthesising individually and/or collectively as a means to nourish our human, social and other capitals.



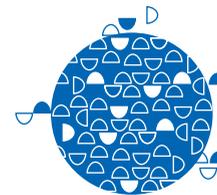
Learning – the activities of acquiring, giving and exchanging skills, knowledge and experiences by teaching oneself and others, and learning from each other to encourage healthy social discussion, evolution of new wisdoms and activation of hidden capabilities.



Sharing – acts, actions or reciprocal relations between individuals, groups and communities to enjoy and enrich something together (time, objects, experiences, etc.) based on respectful mutuality, interdependency, openness and generosity.



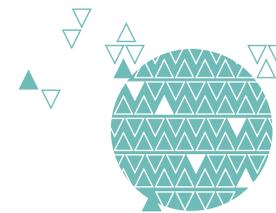
Making – the act of bringing a form, process, service or experience to life, while realising individual and/or collective creative human potential and capital.



Intervening – introducing activities and/or artefacts to engage, by consensus or disruption, to stimulate dialogue and actions towards a common purpose as a means to better our world.



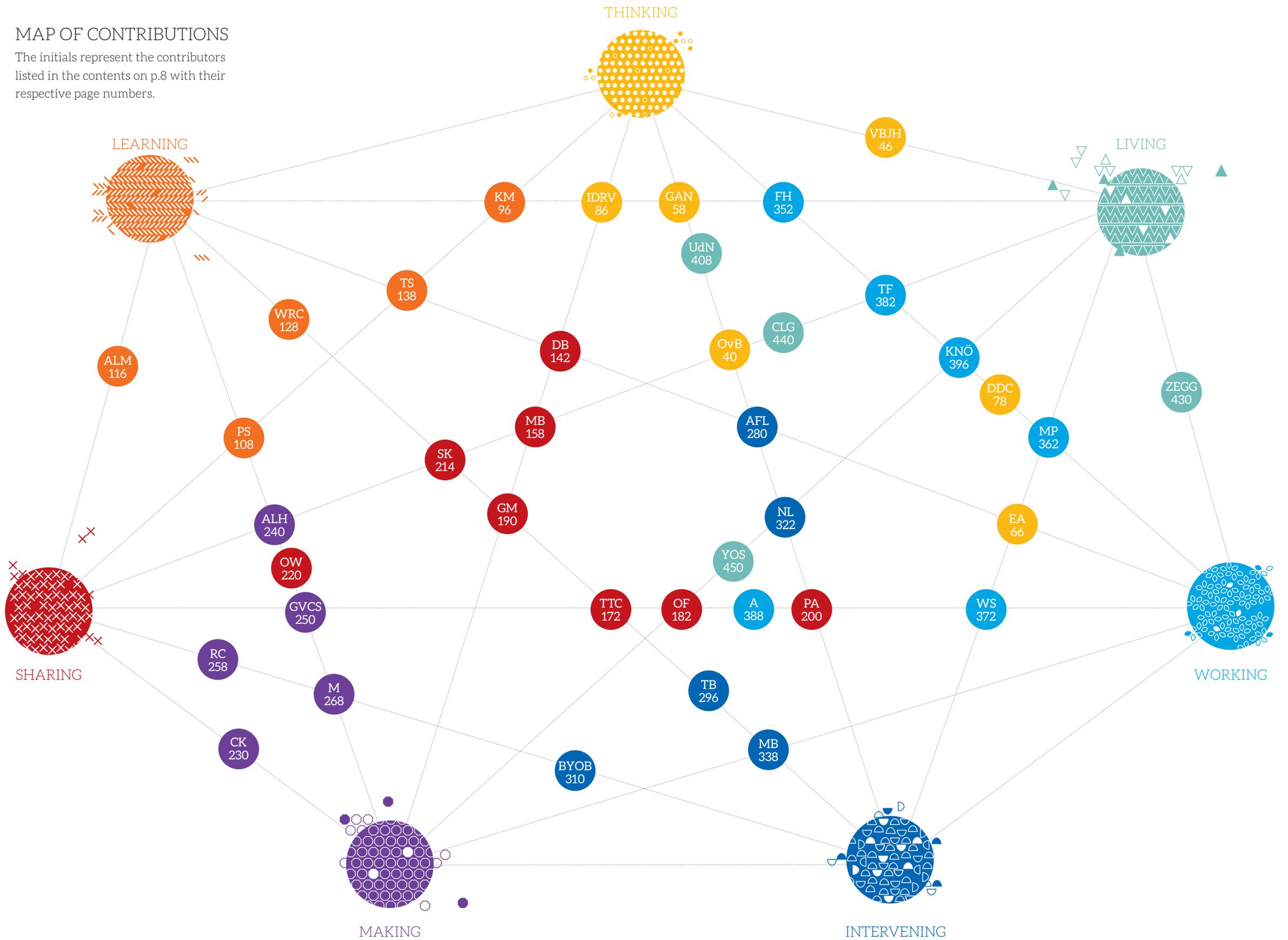
Working – modes of being active, of acting, operating, functioning, organising and practicing to achieve something, to earn or make a livelihood, to be a valued contributor to society, its individual members and to oneself.



Living – human activities of alive-ness, being-ness, existences, livelihoods and other ways of being that affect our individual and collective condition, our thriving and flourishing, and our natural, spatial, physical, mental, spiritual and other dimensions of being in the world.

MAP OF CONTRIBUTIONS

The initials represent the contributors listed in the contents on p.8 with their respective page numbers.



AN EVOLVING LEXICON

Here are words and expressions used by our contributors to describe their beliefs, thoughts and activities – see the emboldened words in each contribution. We think they deserve further explanation as they point to a shift in language and emergent concepts. We believe these constitute an interesting vocabulary which can help shape alternatives.

A

activism: efforts to promote and further social, political, economic, or environmental change, which can manifest itself in an unlimited variety of forms such as political campaigns, boycotts, street marches, sit-ins, performances, pop-ups, physical interventions and much more.

advocacy: involves proposing, championing and supporting a cause or issue with, or on behalf of, a minority or interest group or community for taking action to change a situation.

agency: the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices; the capacity of an agent (a person or other entity, human or any living being in general, or soul-consciousness in religion) to act in a world.+

agent of an alternative way: a person using their agency to change the current situation towards a more desired alternative to the mainstream.

agents of alternatives: those seeking to challenge and change the existing paradigm. They aim to be catalysts and enablers of transition, from one state of a system to a new state.

agents of change: raise awareness, build capability and capacity and enable people to change their existing behaviour towards more positive outcomes for all.

agonism: a political theory, also known as 'agonistic pluralism', which sees continuous (political) conflict as a necessary means to achieve diverse democratic expression and resolution in addressing society's challenges. Leading theorists Chantal Mouffe and Ernest Laclau frame agonism as an arena where confrontations and differences are central to contemporary meanings of democracy.

agreement: to reach the same point of view or harmonious opinion by conversation, discussion, dialogue or other means of verbal, written or visual communication.

alternative economy: emerging parallel economic model based on other values than the prevalent neo-liberal values. Alternative economies are often experimental and iterative on a small scale.

alternative ways of knowing: knowledge that is collectively constructed, context-specific, partial and provisional, making a distinction 'between knowing something and knowing better', after Marianne Maeckelbergh.

amateurism: often associated with clumsy work, but the term originally stems from the Latin word *amare*: love doing something with passion without having been educated in it.

antagonism: an open way of provoking, disturbing or unsettling people to contest the status quo by embracing an act/action of resistance, opposition or contestation.

Anthropocene: a popular environmental term to describe the geological age in which we live now, in which humanity is influencing every aspect of the Earth and its systems.

Anthroposphere: one of the Earth's 'spheres', like atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere, except that this is the one that is made or modified by humans for human activities and living environments. It includes synthetic, man-made, materials.

art activism: any form of art that is motivated by political change using artistic formats or claiming to be an artistic practice (which is often difficult to distinguish from 'everyday activism').

Note: + indicates that the source is taken, or adapted, from Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org.

B

architecture of participation: a phrase coined by Tim O'Reilly that is used to describe the nature of systems that are designed to encourage a community of users to contribute to the content, or to the design and development process.+

attainable micro-utopias: a suggestion by design theorist John Wood, that micro-utopias are far more doable and reachable than grander Utopian projects or visions, and that they can be achieved by applying a holistic conceptual design framework which he calls 'metadesign', whereby social, economic and technical infrastructures can enable new forms of collaborative design.

autonomy: the capacity of an individual or group to make informed and independent decisions.

Bar Camp/BarCamp model: an international network of user-generated conferences and an open participatory workshop format where the content and structure are provided and decided by the participants, involving many short presentations and discussions. Bar Camps were originally focused around technology and the web, but have been adapted by many other industries and interest groups.

barter: a system of exchange in which goods or services are directly exchanged without the use of a medium of exchange, such as money; to be distinguished from gift economies, because the reciprocal exchange is immediate and not delayed in time.

basic income: also known as 'unconditional or citizen's income', a concept where all citizens are granted a regular payment of an unconditional sum of money to secure social security and give the individual freedom to choose activities independent from financial remuneration.

biopoetics: a metaphysics and a biological theory, after Andreas Weber, that can explain 'the deep relationship between felt experience and biological principles' and expands conventional science, providing 'a new holistic account of biology as the interaction of subjects producing and providing meaning and hence laying the ground for understanding the meaningful cosmos of human imagination'.

bitcoin: is one of the more popular digital (virtual) currencies. It is a decentralised, international, digital payment system (there is no central bank), protected by very strong encryption.

bottom-up: from the lowest level of a hierarchy or process to the top; term often used for political initiatives that aim to change things in society 'from the bottom-up'.

buena vivir: 'good living', as expressed in Spanish is an alternative concept of development that emerged as a response to traditional development strategies and their negative environmental, social, or economic effects; where the focus is on the attainment of the 'good life' while living in harmony with other people and nature.+

business model canvas: this is a concept for developing business models proposed by Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur. The 'canvas' is a visual diagram of the key elements of a business which enables one to model the essential value proposition of the business and how this relates to the key activities, resources and partners; how it affects the cost structure and revenue streams; and how this determines customer relationships, customer segments and the channels for communication.

C

capability: is the ability to perform or achieve certain actions or outcomes through a set of controllable and measurable faculties, features, functions, processes, or services. In the 1980s Amartya Sen proposed the 'capability approach' as an economic theory for approaching welfare. Central to his proposal was that it is a kind of freedom to have alternatives to choose from.+

capital (cultural, social, symbolic): these three forms of capital were described by Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher. He saw prestige, honour and attention in society as a form of symbolic capital; competences, skills and the abilities to mobilise cultural authority as cultural capital; and described 'social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition'.+

citizen innovation: see 'social innovation'.

citizenship: has dual references today, being a formal, legal recognition of an individual to be part of a state and to have a nationality, and as a set of skills and capability to be a citizen who contributes to the good of society as a whole.

City Designers: a term coined by the Design Driven City (DDC) project in Helsinki, Finland, which was initiated in 2013. DDC has its own design experts, called 'city designers'. They originate from a variety of design professions and are not necessarily urban planners or architects. They deploy participatory design and co-design methods to involve multiple interests in a project.

clicktivism: internet activism which is criticised as half-hearted since it is often lacking actual direct, physical engagement with the real world issues.

is a collaborative and, often, multi-disciplinary cooperation as a means of creating together. It involves

methods where customers/users/participants are actively involved in the ideation process of a new product/service/experience to create a more valuable outcome. Co-creation has been adopted by business management, design and other fields wishing to benefit from the unpredictable outputs and outcomes of the co-creation process. In the design field it is sometimes synonymous with 'co-design'.+ **co-design/co-designers/co-design workshops:** co-design is designing together. It has gained in popularity amongst design researchers and is gaining traction in private and public sector projects. There is 'open' co-design where the processes and outputs are open source (see below) for all to use, and 'closed' co-design where only the participants and their organisations have access to the intellectual property and its exploitation. Co-designers are professional designers, other professionals, amateurs and citizens who identify problems, needs and challenges, develop a design brief and then design the solution or outcome together. A workshop format is often best to encourage people to co-design as it allows everyone to contribute, especially in the hands of a skilled facilitator.

collaboration: a way of working together to combine intellectual, practical and aesthetic capabilities to a greater effect than working on one's own.

collaborative design sessions: see 'co-design', 'co-creation'.

collective action: an action that can only be achieved collectively; after Penta, L.

collective thinkers/thinking: are those who value collaborative, inclusive processes which bring together different fields of knowledge. These thinkers share their knowledge, on a personal and introspective level with the collective, which in-turn enables a collective mind which accepts the dynamic nature of systems and the benefits of rational and creative knowledge to respond to those changes. Advocates of collective thinking include Valerie Brown, John Harris and Judith Lambert.

collectivism: is any philosophic, political, religious, economic, or social outlook that emphasises the interdependence of every human being. Collectivism is a basic cultural element that exists as the reverse of individualism in human nature. Collectivists usually focus on community, society, or nation.+

commodity logic: a mode of thinking that always refers to commodities and profit-making

commoning: living and practicing the commons; coming together to do things together for the communal good of a community, a neighbourhood or other social group.

communism: new term which merges communism with the commons – an emergent movement without a strict political ideology, but underpinned by the philosophy of sharing.

commoners: people who contribute to and have rights to the commons. See also 'commoning'.

commonplace: ordinary everyday things, places and experiences of which we all share knowledge of, in our own particular cultural context(s).

commons: a general term describing all cultural and natural resources accessible to every member of a society, including natural materials such as air, water, and a habitable earth, but also immaterial goods like knowledge and such; derives from the traditional English legal term of common land, colloquially the 'Commons'.

commons-based economics: economic structures based on non-privatised, publically owned and common-owned goods.

community: a group or network of people tied with social relations that are held important for their social identity and social practice; with the advent of the internet, the term extended to virtual and online communities.+

community infrastructure: a flexible, open and re-configurable assemblage of social and material elements that give communities the capability of developing authorship, after Neighbourhood Labs.

community initiatives: any project or work begun by, owned by or acted upon by a community.

community organising: a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organisation that acts in their shared self-interest.+

complex systems: are difficult to model or simulate. Most natural systems are complex. Complexity science investigates how relationships between parts give rise to the collective behaviours of a system and how the system interacts and forms relationships with its environment.+

content management system (CMS): is a computer application that allows publishing, editing and modifying content, organising, deleting as well as maintenance from a central interface.+

consensus: general agreement on something, but also it is about group solidarity and feeling united.

conviviality: the quality or state of being social, friendly and lively; time spent together socially.

cooperation: is the process of groups of organisms working or acting together for their common/mutual benefit, as opposed to working in competition for selfish benefit.+

cooperative: an autonomous association of people who voluntarily cooperate for their mutual social, economic, and cultural benefit.+

cooperative lending systems: are similar to cooperative banking systems and can include retail banking carried out by credit unions, mutual savings banks, building societies and cooperatives, as well as commercial banking services provided by mutual organisations (such as cooperative federations)

to cooperative businesses.+

cooperativism: see 'cooperative'.

co-working space: shared work spaces where anyone can rent a table for either a day, a week, or a month to avoid working from home or in a café; usually, there is a strong community which enables new projects to be born, collaborations and learning from each other.

Creative Commons/Creative Commons licence: open licenses that enable the free distribution of an otherwise copyrighted work; used when an author wants to give people the right to share, use, and build upon a work that they have created, providing an author flexibility while protecting the people who use or redistribute an author's work from concerns of copyright infringement as long as they abide by the conditions that are specified in the license by which the author distributes the work.+

creative industries: sometimes synonymous with the 'cultural industries' and seen as an integral part of the 'creative economy' – the kind of industries which can bring wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. Typically this includes: advertising; architecture; arts and antique markets; crafts; design; designer fashion; film, video and photography; software, computer games and electronic publishing; music and the visual and performing arts; publishing; television; and radio.

critical consciousness: a term coined by Paulo Freire describing the state of liberated thinking.

critical or radical pedagogy: an educational approach coined by Paulo Freire which puts critical thinking and self-determined learning of the student at the centre of the learning.

cross-fertilise/fertilisation: in biological terms it means introducing new genetic material into existing varieties, cultivars or breeds to increase the range of genes and improve resistance to disease and/or create increased vigour. In design terms it means taking the 'design code' of an object or product and introducing new elements of code from another object or product.

crowdfunding/crowdfunded: collectively funding costs for a project, where mostly, people from the 'crowd' don't know each other; internet crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter or Sponsume are most widely known.

crowdsourcing: ideas, know-how and skills are sourced from a large group of people, often through online platforms or communities, to solve a challenge or problem rather than using more traditional (re-)resources such as employees or suppliers.

crusaders: people who typically take up an issue or have a vision and initiate and/or lead projects, campaigns and initiatives.

cultural advocacy: active presentation of arguments, activities and/or actions to support an artistic, creative or social issue, area, or field to ensure it gains wider attention.

cultural provocateurs: are those who question our socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic values and systems.

customer co-production: joint production of an object between, for example, professional designers or companies and the end-consumer of the product.

D

degrowth: a worldwide political, economic, and social movement that advocates the downscaling of production and consumption to solve environmental issues and social inequalities without decreasing people's well-being, but by maximising happiness by working and consuming less to have more time for recreation, family, culture and society.+

democracy (deep): a community practice that includes democracy as it is now understood but goes deeper with skilled facilitators working and feeling with people. Deep democracy is linked with the work of Arnold Mindell, who proposed a theory and practices for working with conflict, leadership and social issues by applying process orientated psychology in group work.+

democracy (direct): is a political system where the citizens participate in the decision-making personally, contrary to relying on intermediaries or representatives. It is also known as 'pure democracy', a type of democracy where the people govern directly.+

deschooling: a concept and educational philosophy coined by Ivan Illich in his 1971 book, *Deschooling Society*, which was a 'radical critical discourse on education as practised in 'modern' economies'. 'Deschooling is the idea that learning can take place everywhere (not just in schools and other educational institutions). He presciently proposed 'educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one [of us] to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring.' He suggested that de-institutionalising education would help de-institutionalise society.+

design activism, design activist: as this is an emergent sub-field in the discipline of design there isn't a single agreed definition, however there is an agreement that design activism encompasses design practices related to: raising awareness; advocacy; actions; intentions towards social change, social and/or ecological causes; challenging the conventions of design knowledge through radical and

disruptive practices in terms of thinking, processes, imagination and aesthetics; creating counter-narratives and counter-dialogues. A design activist, is often a 'non-aligned social broker and catalyst; a facilitator; an author; a creator; a co-author; and a 'happener' (someone who makes things happen); after Alastair Fuad-Luke.

Design as Infrastructuring: emphasises the inclusion and empowerment of citizens to take over the collectively developed framework; after Binder, T. et al. 2014, *Design Things*.

design for social innovation: see 'social design'.

Design for Sustainability (DfS): any design practice orientated towards development which balances environmental, social and economic impacts and concerns for sustaining the present and the future.

design probes: a design method developed in the middle to the late 1990s at the Royal College of Art, London, UK, by Bill Gaver, Antony Dunne and Elena Pacenti. Probes aim to explore the lives and habits of people as they interact with objects, products and spaces by giving them the means to record and reflect on their everyday practices. The 'means' may be a diary, a camera, a set of questions, visual prompts or other devices to enable the people to document their lives so that designers and design researchers may better understand the issues people face and their needs.

design thinking: design-specific cognitive activities that designers apply during the process of designing; combining empathy for the context of a problem, creativity in the generation of insights and solutions, and rationality in analysing and fitting various solutions to the problem context.+ Design thinking is applied to different perspectives: strategy, management, operations, research, prototyping and detailed design content.

digital commons: refers to data, knowledge, resources, networks, software and hardware to which we can contribute, access, use and help govern for the greater good. See also, the 'commons'.

digital fabrication and manufacturing: any manufacturing process where the equipment and its functions are controlled by software and, hence, digital source code.

digital strangers: a person that you temporarily treat as a close personal friend but which you have only met via digital means and have yet to meet face to face in real life.

distributed manufacturing/production: a form of decentralised manufacturing, which is benefiting from information technology to coordinate a network of geographically distributed production facilities. It is also known as distributed production and local manufacturing.

domestic manufacturing: when individual citizens can digitally manufacture components and products from home using, for example, 3D printers.

do-it-together (DIT): is an emerging movement originating from the do-it-yourself (DIY) concept, where activities are done together in a group, not by oneself, for mutual benefit.

do-it-yourself (DIY): the method of building, repairing and modifying without the aid of professionals, taken up by environmental movements and ordinary citizens in the 1960s and 1970s, and continuing today.

do-it-yourself agency: self-motivated acting, using one's own capacity and skills.

dwelling-as-practice: is a practical and theoretical way of evolving architectural and spatial solutions by living and working within the architecture and responding or adapting to the changing conditions of the context over time. The term was originated by those involved in the University of the Neighbourhoods, Hamburg. See also 'enabling architecture 'Ermöglichungsarchitektur''.

E **eco-tourism:** responsible tourist experiences which successfully combine environmental conservation and protection with the use of local resources, community participation and equitable, profitable enterprises.

embedded researchers: a strategy where researchers live in the real-life surroundings and directly experience the place where their research is taking place.

empower/empowering/empowerment: the process of encouraging and developing skills to enable people to become self-sufficient and autonomous with the goal of eliminating the future need for charity or welfare.+

enabling architecture 'Ermöglichungsarchitektur': architectural 'settings for spatial and programmatic changes that emerge in specific situations and contexts rather than being planned in advance', after the University of the Neighbourhoods (UdN). See also 'dwelling-as-practice'.

engagement strategies: methods used to motivate people to become and stay an active participant in for example, community projects, citizen movements, activist group and so on.

Enlivenment: a new type of rebirth to succeed the Enlightenment that can be reached by mediating, co-operating, sanctioning, negotiating and agreeing to experienced reality, after Andreas Weber.

ethnographic research: scientific study of societies and cultures by detailed first-hand observation

and documentation of everyday life practices by being immersed in a specific socio-cultural context. **everyday practices:** the diverse daily working, living and leisure habits, customs, traditions and ways of doing things which we do without thinking. Everyday practices tend to reflect and/or maintain the accepted systems and structures.

existential ecology: its primary concern is subjects, not objects alone, with human beings and human subjectivity not being separate from nature.

experiential learning: see 'mutual experiential learning'.

experimental set-up 'Versuchsanordnung': an artificially created situation that allows experimentation and research, after UdN.

experimenteur: people who are not afraid of failure, trying out different things in an iterative process rather than planning and knowing everything in advance.

expert of everyday life: term to describe a member of a community or neighbourhood who knows best what their everyday life looks like.

extreme learning, production and manufacturing: learning as collaborative making to produce a working manufactured product from a blueprint. It is 'extreme' as the process makes high demands on all the learners-as-teachers and is conducted in a specific timeframe, so the learning experience is intense, after Open Source Ecology.

F **fab labs, hackerspaces and makerspaces:** usually public places where anyone interested can come in and start making/inventing with a range of digital machines, supported by a community of makers and hackers (see below).

fabbing: activities where hobbyists, professionals, inventors and the curious can experiment with and realise their own ideas; usually associated with digital fabrication laboratories or FabLabs.

field: one of the core concepts used by French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu; describes a setting in which agents and their social positions are located, which are a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, the agent's habitus (mindset and behavioural patterns) and agent's capital (social, economic and cultural).+

flash mob: a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual and seemingly pointless act for a short time, before quickly dispersing for entertainment, protest or artistic expression; mostly organised via telecommunications or social media.+

FLOSS manuals: are more than a collection of manuals about free and open-source software, they also represent a community. The contributors include designers, readers, writers, illustrators, free software fans, editors, artists, software developers, activists, and many others. Anyone can contribute to a manual – to fix a spelling mistake, add a more detailed explanation, write a new chapter, or start a whole new manual on a topic.

foraging: see 'urban foraging'.

free culture: the academic and political activist Lawrence Lessig popularised the term 'free culture' in his 2004 book, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*. Today, it is an amalgam of socially concerned movements gathered around the idea of free access and use of creative works which can be modified and distributed, albeit with a primary focus on digital content and its circulation through the internet.

fruit maps: online maps showing where to pick edible fruit legally and for free.

G **Gaia:** the Greek goddess of the Earth; by calling the system of our planet Earth 'Gaia', industrial chemist James Lovelock connected the biophysical planet with the human social, ethical, aesthetic and sympathetic systems that determine our planet's future.

genius of the place/genius loci: also the spirit of place; the unique, distinctive and cherished invisible aspects (such as history, tales and culture) and physical and personal aspects of a place.

GitHub: 'git' is a free software system which enables a decentralised, speedy and efficient network for the collaborative development of software. A 'GitHub' is a web-based graphical interface which hosts and enables easy access to a repository of Gits to facilitate projects and their development.+

good life: a term for the life or happiness that one strives to live; after Aristotle's concept of 'eudaimonia', or human flourishing. See also 'buen vivir'.

grassroots approach: grassroots refers to the origination of ideas, activities and, potentially, community, social and political change, through initiatives led by local people, or an online network focused on specific issues, or other social groups often outside traditional political power structures. It is a 'can-do' approach characterised by social and/or cultural actions.

grassroot projects: movements whose creation and support is often spontaneous and distributed

at a local community level, driven by its own political convictions, independent from ruling power structures with the potential of growth and having an impact on society and social change.

growers: people who seek to exploit digital fabrication in more ecologically oriented urban practices.
guerrilla gardeners/gardening: the individual and collective activity of growing food and other plants in public spaces in the city without formal permission from the local authority or municipality.

H

habitus: a mindset involving organised patterns of thought or behaviour which is itself characterised by learnt and/or socially and culturally acquired tastes and behavioural orientations.

[a]hack: is the result or outcome of a hacking activity to de-code or re-code artefacts or products in order to repurpose them.

hackers: the term originated in the 1960s as a positive description of someone who was efficient and creative at computer programming by bringing together existing codes and creating new codes. Today it has positive and negative associations depending upon the purpose of the hacking and the perspective of the individual or organisation who has been hacked. Hacking can be for getting around or inside computer security systems, for solo and co-creation of new digital code and software, and for creating new software or hardware by amateurs, hobbyists or enthusiasts. Hacking is also applied to the de-coding and re-coding of artefacts or products.

hackerspace: is a community-operated workspace where people with common interests, often in computers, machinery, technology, science, digital art or electronic art, can meet socialise and collaborate.+

hacking,hardware/software: building on the digital codes or technological product or equipment inventions of others to make them either better or to corrupt them.

half-way: is a concept that invites the user to become part of the design process. Half-way items are designed unfinished by intention. The functionality of the item is achieved through the user's input to complete the design and making process.

haptic: any form of interaction involving touch, often making things more easily accessible and usable.

Healthy Cities: a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative to engage local governments in the development of better health through collaborative planning and capacity building in local communities.

heretic: a person holding an opinion at odds with what is generally accepted in a particular socio-cultural or socio-political context.

heteronomy: the opposite of autonomy; that is, being influenced or controlled by outside forces rather than being independent.

holacratic model: a system of governance in which authority and decision-making are distributed amongst self-organising teams, rather than being vested at the top of a hierarchy.

I

idle-sourcing: crowd-based problem-solving by reducing the difficulties of making a contribution.

immersive learning: refers to learning within virtual reality (computer simulated) environments where the learner takes on a role or adopts an avatar (digital identity) to directly experience and gain knowledge through experiencing the environment. It is also applied to intense learning experiences where the learner has to take an active role and participate in a direct activity such as making, playing or acting.

inclusion: treating and welcoming groups or individuals with different backgrounds equally.

information commons: see the 'commons'.

innovation: original new ideas that apply better solutions to meet new requirements, and that are successfully adopted by society; also see 'social innovation'.

integrated systems: when different systems are able to communicate with each other using a common framework, language and tools so their net effect is greater than the sum of their parts.

Intellectual Property (IP): patents, copyrights and trademarks are all examples of Intellectual Property that is owned by the creators and can be exploited by them or anyone to whom they legally agree to give a licence, giving the rights of exploitation.

inter-agent: a person or organisation that brings together people, resources, knowledge and technologies in imaginative and effective ways, often encouraging innovative outcomes.

intercultural practice: any aspect of interaction between any culture; a dynamic and cross-disciplinary concept that focuses on the possibilities, potentials, conditions and consequences of intercultural exchange.

L

interdisciplinary: combining two or more disciplines into one activity, often leading to something new by crossing boundaries and thinking across them.

intervention: disruptive public event, performance, installation or other activity drawing attention to a specific theme or issue.

L'hôte: a figure that is both guest and host at the same time (inspired by Michael Serres).

learning experiment: a term to describe learning initiatives and movements around the world that experiment with new ways of exchanging, creating and distributing knowledge.

liberal universalism: liberalism is a political philosophy or worldview founded on ideas of liberty and equality. Universalism is a religious, theological, and philosophical concept with universal application or applicability. Liberal universalism is the belief that societies should be based on allowing all individuals the freedom to determine their own place in society. +

libre, libre-license: is also known as 'free-license' is a term applied to a legal agreement to enable free use of digital source code for software. Some people prefer the use of 'libre' as it implies one is at liberty to use the code, whereas 'free', as in 'free-ware' means you don't have to pay for it but you are not entitled to modify the source code.

lifelong learning: self-motivated, voluntary learning and pursuit of knowledge by informal, formal, professional, solo and group ways to advance one's own knowledge and skills as a means of personal development and contribution to our collective social wisdom.

local creative hubs: a hub is a centre of activity or interest where people can gather, work and network. A local creative hub is a space (real or virtual), which offers a meeting platform for interaction between different actors to enhance their individual and collective creative action in a local territory.
local experts: a term applied to people who live in a specific locality and, therefore, have expert knowledge of that locality relating to its history, people, ecology, culture or other aspects.

local 'transition' currencies: there is a global movement concerned with how we change the energy plans of our towns, cities and communities in order to be independent from fossil fuel energy. This is known as the 'Transition movement'. Part of their philosophy and practice is to re-focus people on creating a strong local economy, less reliant on imports. One of their strategies is to create alternative currencies which have a locally agreed exchange rate with the national currencies, having the local retailers and service providers give more generous pricing discounts to local products and services, thereby encouraging people to spend their money in the local economy. The first transition currency was the 'Totnes Pound' launched in 2007 in the ancient town of Totnes in Devon, UK.

localism: a range of political philosophies that emphasise the local; localism generally supports local production and consumption of goods, local control of government, and the promotion of local history, local culture and local identity.+

locally embedded economies: local trade structures that often exist in parallel to the prevalent one, such as local currencies or neighbourly or community exchange of non-monetary services.

low-budget architecture: buildings and such made from scrap, recycled and found materials, often constructed by non-professionals.

low-threshold: also low-barrier; a term to describe the level of accessibility – a low threshold encourages a wider range of people to participate in activities.

Lunch of Love: everybody brings one ingredient he/she loves dearly, from which a shared meal is prepared for everyone to eat together.

M

maker culture and makers: maker culture is a contemporary sub-culture representing a technology-based extension of do-it-yourself (DIY) culture. Typical interests enjoyed by the maker culture include engineering-orientated pursuits such as electronics, robotics, 3D printing, and the use of computer numeric controlled (CNC) tools, as well as more traditional activities such as metalworking, wood-working, and traditional arts and crafts.+

makerspace: also referred to as 'hackerspace', or 'hacklab', is a community-operated workspace where people with common interests, often in computers, machinery, technology, science, digital art or electronic art, can meet, socialise and collaborate.+

making: the act of bringing things, processes or experiences into being, often by creating physical or material forms through direct fabrication or crafting, or through the application of digitally controlled equipment.

massive [online] collaboration: is a form of collective action that occurs when large numbers of people work independently on a single project, often modular in its nature. Such projects typically take place on the internet using social software and computer-supported collaboration tools.

Massive Online Open Course (MOOC): is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. Many MOOCs provide interactive user forums to support community interactions between students, professors and teaching assistants.+

Minimum Viable Product (MVP): is the product with the highest return on investment versus the risk. It is a term frequently applied to new product development in the electronics, internet or information technology industries.+

multitude: a term for a group of people who cannot be classed under any other distinct category, except for their shared fact of existence; a concept of a population that has not entered into a social contract with a sovereign political body, such that individuals retain the capacity for political self-determination, after Spinoza and Hardt and Negri.+

mutual aid: a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit; a direct exchange is not necessarily asked for, rather it is about giving something back to the community at some point.

mutual experiential learning: learning from direct experience and sharing those experiences with others in an open manner. Everyone can be a teacher or learner, or both, exchanging knowledge by listening, talking, doing and making.

mutual learning: a learning model based on mutual respect and the dialogue between teacher and student, where roles are interchangeable and experiences on both sides enriching and transformative.

mutualisation: is the process by which a joint-stock company changes legal form to a mutual organisation or a cooperative, so that the majority of the stock is owned by customers.+

N

n00b: also referred to as 'newbie', 'newb', 'noob', 'n00bie' or 'nub', is a slang term for a novice or a newcomer, or somebody inexperienced in any profession or activity.+

neighbourhood experts: see 'local experts'.

neoliberal, neoliberalism: was originally based on an economic philosophy of the 1930s trying to find a middle way between classic liberalism and collectivist central planning. It resurfaced in the 1970s as 'laissez-faire' economic liberalism, and finds expression in privatisation of national interests, free trade, deregulation, fiscal austerity and the reduction of government spending. Its main tenets are that personal liberty is maximised by limiting government control in the operation of free markets to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy. The term is often used today by opponents of these policies in a pejorative or negative way to describe today's capitalist economies and their inherent unfairness to wider society.+

neoliberal consensualism: consensus decision-making underpinned by the neoliberal political economic theory which favours the maximisation of personal liberty through free trade and the market with minimal government intervention or interference. The neo-liberal approach to consensualism is often dominated by key decision makers in existing power structures and with vested interests of national governments and/or market actors.

non-aligned social broker: an individual or organisation which is politically or socially neutral in a given context and therefore capable of acting as facilitator, mediator, translator or intermediary.

non-violent communication (NVC): a communication process, developed by the American psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, based on the idea that all human beings are capable of compassion. NVC focuses on three aspects of communication: self-empathy, empathy, and honest self-expression.

O

online community: a virtual community whose members interact with each other mostly via the internet, therefore making internet access the primary and main barrier to become a member.

open brand: a concept originated by Openwear, a platform for sharing open fashion designs, to demonstrate that the brand can be open and shared too.

open data: is the idea that certain data should be freely available to everyone to use and republish as they wish, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control.+

open design/open design movement: emerging in the 1990s, open design was defined in 2010 in the seminal book *Open Design Now* by Van Abel et al. as 'design whose makers allowed its free distribution and documentation and permitted modifications and derivations of it'. Today, the open design movement embraces everything from 3D printing and digital fabrication technologies to basic 'how-to' blueprints, patterns and instructions for DIY and DIT designs. It frequently involves collaborative designs and designing within specialist and/or generalist communities, from FabLabs to Maker Fairs and vast online platforms like Etsy and Instructables.

open development, open economic development, open source economy: these are overlapping concepts underpinned by the ideas of openness, transparency and open source (see below) where hu-

man and economic development benefits from sharing our knowledge and intellectual property, not privatising and protecting it. These concepts challenge the accepted notions of private financial and intellectual capital, the exchange of labour for money and the constraints imposed by the privatisation of knowledge. They also suggest the expansion of the real life and digital commons, resources to be held and managed by everyone for everyone's benefit.

open education: is a collective term to describe institutional practices and programmatic initiatives that broaden access to the learning and training traditionally offered through formal education systems. One aspect of openness in or of 'opening up' education is the development and adoption of open educational resources.+

open hardware: hardware is the collective noun for the equipment operated by digital source code, the software. 'Open' means that the blueprints and other design details of the hardware can be accessed, copied, modified and distributed. The degree of 'openness' depends upon the exact conditions of the licence agreement.

open knowledge: is knowledge that one is free to use, reuse and redistribute without legal, social or technological restriction. Open knowledge is a set of principles and methodologies related to the production and distribution of knowledge that works in an open manner. Knowledge is interpreted broadly to include data, content and general information.+

open learning: see 'open education'.

open process: a process-oriented methodology where the outcome is unknown and not planned in advance.

open project space: is one in which living and working are combined in the same space.

open seminars: open learning events to exchange, acquire and discuss knowledge in a small group.

open source; open source development/internet/initiatives: Open source is a concept originally developed and applied to the development of computer software and the processes of being able to have access to, use and share digital source code for programming. Today the descriptor, 'open source' is being widely applied to everything from product design and hardware (the technical equipment on which software systems and applications can operate), to data, technology, politics and government. How 'open' the source is depends upon who holds the original code or data or content and the legal licences with which they enable people to copy, modify, share and distribute. Open source is therefore subject to varying degrees of 'openness' and 'share-ability'. There are many initiatives around open source and it can be seen as a loose, but pluralist, socio-political movement with many initiatives which deploy 'open source' and other internet resources to contest contemporary notions of 'development'.

Open Source Ecology (OSE): a network of farmers, engineers, architects and supporters, whose main goal is the eventual manufacturing of the Global Village Construction Set (GVCS), an open source set of blueprints for essential construction, farming and technical equipment.

open source movement: see 'open source'.

Our Commons: a re-positioning of the terms 'the commons/Commons' to remind people that we are not separate from our common resources but that they are multi-dimensional, omnipresent and that, by default, we are personally invoked in being responsible for their and our welfare.

ownership: in the context of urban design and planning there can be many different kinds of people, representing themselves or groups, communities, enterprises and/or municipalities. Some of these will have direct ownership of land and resources, others will only have an 'interest' as stakeholders (see below), but all can potentially have some ownership of projects in public spaces.

P

paradigm: a distinct concept, model or thought pattern, often universally recognised and difficult to change.

paralogy: a term espoused by the philosopher, sociologist and literary theorist Jean-Francois Lyotard to mean a 'move' that changes the rules of the game upon which the consensus was based. The strength and importance of the move might not be recognised until later.

participant end-users: people who participate in the ideation, testing, creating, and ultimately using a designed product, service, space, building or experience.

participatory: refers to a process or experience where people are individually encouraged to, and feel able to, contribute to a collective act.

Participatory Design (PD): an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders in the design process to help ensure the results meet their needs and are usable. It was first recognised as a design approach in the 1960s in Scandinavia to help with the transition to more automated work practices in factories, but has evolved over the years to bring in expertise of professionals, users, customers and more recently citizens, to share their experience and generate more efficient and

meaningful solutions. PD crosses with other participatory design approaches and methods including user-centred design, co-design and open design.

part-time employment: regular employment of less than thirty or thirty-five hours per week; reasons can be voluntary downshifting, family, or difficulties of finding full-time employment.

Peak oil: from the late nineteenth century we have been extracting oil from finite global geological reserves. Experts estimate that we have now reached 'Peak oil' during the last decade. This is the point in time when the maximum rate of extraction has been reached, after which the rate of production is expected to enter terminal decline. As global demand for oil is still rising it is predicted that we will run out of oil sometime at the end of the 21st century.

peer producers/production: people cooperate voluntarily on an equal footing, as peers, in order to reach a common goal and produce knowledge, goods and services together.

peer-to-peer knowledge sharing/project: also known as 'p2p', a term that originated from distributed computer application architectures which distribute workloads between peers; this concept inspired new structures and philosophies in many areas of human interaction looking critically at authoritarian and centralised social structures.

permaculture: is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature. It integrates the fields of design, architecture, ecology and hydrology to create regenerative systems of horticulture and agriculture modelled on natural systems with social structures. The term was coined by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in 1978.+

person-product attachment: refers to the bond which people can make with objects. This can occur for manufactured or self-made products and is the subject of investigation for the research area 'design and emotions'.

place-making: both a process and a philosophy for the planning, design and management of public spaces that emphasise a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential to create accessible public spaces considering people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.+

planned obsolescence: many products these days are still planned and constructed in such a way that they break after a certain time of usage without the possibility of repairing them. A typical example are printers that stop working after they have reached a certain number of prints. Planned obsolescence is essentially a marketing strategy for neo-liberal mass production industries. It ignores externalised costs, such as the environmental load and social costs of manufacturing in this way.

plenary: a decision-making and communication organ often used in small communities to discuss bigger changes and issues amongst each other to exchange different perspectives to try and find consensus.

politics and the political: the political philosopher Chantal Mouffe distinguishes between politics and the political. 'Politics' is seen as an 'ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions'. This ensemble seeks to order, organise and develop the means to hold together a municipality, state or other organisation so they can govern. 'The political' refers more to our condition, 'the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations', and the ongoing contest and discourse between conflicting forces and ideals.

poly-centric governance: where the actions and decision-making of governing are distributed in many locations, organisations and individuals.

popular education: a self-organised grassroots approach to education, of and from the people, where political change, critical thinking, cooperation and responsibility are the focus.

Post-Normal Science: differs radically from traditional science in that instead of simplifying, it embraces complexity by examining all the contributing factors in capturing the essence of any issue; after J. Ravetz.

poverty: while often defined in financial or economic terms, today it is generally accepted that the concept of poverty includes a relational mixture of economic, political, social and cultural factors, and, so, also embraces the idea of basic human rights, enshrined in the declarations of the United Nations. The rights to: work and adequate income; freedom of thought, expression and association; access to healthcare and education; and to maintain one's identity and participate in a community's cultural life.

practical knowing: is expressed in the knowledge of how to do something, representing the acquisition of a skill or competence. It is one of the four ways of knowing in the field of co-operative enquiry; after P. Reason.

precarious (labour/employment): insecure or unstable working conditions generate precarious employment and do not guarantee a stable income, health care, and so on.

printers: 3D printers that allow laypeople and professionals to fabricate their own digital designs and ideas in three dimensions (3D) by gradually building up layers of synthetic or bio-degradable materials.

problem definition: refers to the way we articulate and define problems or challenges. The field of design brings visual and other processes to help perceive the problem from different perspectives. How problems are defined has a strong influence on the proposed solutions, which is why co-design (designing together – see above) can give robust ways to define or redefine problems.

productive citizens: citizens who are allowed to participate in producing activities or things in order to contribute to the better health of society in general.

prototype/prototyping: originally applied to computer and information sciences, engineering and design as a means of testing or experimenting with scaled-down or life-size material circuits, hardware, models or products. Nowadays it is also applied in public and private sector service design, and designing in community, social and spatial contexts. Prototyping gives invaluable feedback on the positive and negative aspects of a concept which has been materialised as a 'one-off' in real life.

provocateur: a person who creates controversy and dissent in order to raise awareness, agitate, promote a reaction and/or stimulate discussion.

public commons: see the 'commons'.

public domain: works in the public domain are those whose intellectual property rights have expired, have been forfeited, or are inapplicable. Creators can choose to place their works in the public domain relinquishing some or all of their rights.+

R

re-design: the reconfiguration of what already exists, possibly by bringing in new ingredients and smartly combining them to create something new.

re-use: putting discarded things and materials back to use, by re-purposing or modifying them.

reality: the state of things as they actually exist, not as they seem or are imagined; everything that is, has been, or will be; also refers to worldviews and ways of perceiving reality differently.

re-cycling: is the act of taking pre- or post-consumer waste and processing these materials by physical and/or chemical degradation in order to re-constitute and re-structure them as new materials. Re-use, in contrast, takes things and materials as they already exist.

reddits/subreddits: is an entertainment, social networking service and news website where registered community members can submit content, such as text posts or direct links. Reddit entries are organised into areas of interest called 'subreddits'+

reproductive work: all the work that caring for, nurturing and sustaining human beings involves (giving birth, feeding, cooking, taking care of the elderly, and so on), which is usually unpaid and not accounted for in national economic systems and metrics.

re-relating: breaking down the old relations of a system and creating new ones.

resilient/resilience: a term applied within ecological, sociological, psychological, organisational and engineering fields referring to the ability of a system to respond to disruptions by showing an ability to resist, respond, adapt and recover back to its original state.

reskill: coined by Rob Hoskins from the Transition Town movement describing the re-acquisition of traditional skills and artisan knowledge which has been lost by individuals and communities.

Return on Giving (ROG): while Return on Investment (ROI) is an empirical way of measuring the monies or finances invested against the financial return or gain, ROG suggests a qualitative approach to giving time, expertise, skills, knowledge, money or other resources for altruistic reasons, not knowing when or if you will get something back in return or gain in some way. ROG is an orientation towards investing what you have in individuals and society to create a greater social good.

S

safe space: a term for an area or forum where everybody is welcome and able to fully express oneself, where no marginalised group is supposed to face discrimination on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, physical or mental ability.

seed sharing: seed swaps are events where gardeners meet to exchange seeds, which can be arranged online or by mail, especially when participants are spread out geographically. An increased interest in organic gardening and heritage or heirloom plant varieties makes the concept more and more popular.+

self-empower: see 'empowerment'.

self-governed: having the right or power to be autonomous, not controlled by outside forces.

self-sufficiency: a state of personal or collective autonomy, being independent of any kind of external support for survival. It also describes ways of living sustainably where only self-produced products are consumed.

semi-open model: parts of the system are 'open source', so anyone can access and modify them.

and, parts of the system are closed, proprietary and cannot be accessed or modified unless access is authorised.

semi-structured interviews: a form of interview in which the interviewer can digress and deviate from a formal set of questions set to obtain specific answers, in order to ask more open questions in response to the answers by the interviewee.

sense-making: the process by which people give meaning to experience.+

sense of ownership: a term often used in the field of sustainable development and community projects where it is crucial to give people the feeling of ownership over a project that comes from the 'outside' by truthfully involving them in the process rather than handing over ready solutions that might not be theirs.

service design: 'is the activity of planning and organising people, infrastructure, communication and material components of a service in order to improve its quality and the interaction between service provider and customers. The purpose of service design methodologies is to design back and front office of services according to the needs of customers and the competences/capabilities of service providers, so that the service is user-friendly, competitive and relevant to the customers, while being sustainable for the service provider.+

sharing projects: are projects where sharing forms the core principle and activities by the people involved.

Situationist: Situationist theory was first introduced in 1957 by the group Situationist International (SI) in Paris. They comprised avant-garde artists, intellectuals and political theorists who brought together these diverse fields into a comprehensive critique of advanced capitalism in the middle of the twentieth century. They objected to the tendency to mediate social relations through objects and saw the situation as a tool for the liberation of everyday life, a method of negating the alienation created by what is said to be our reality.+

Slow Food: an international movement founded by Carlo Petrini in 1986, promoted as an alternative to fast food, striving to preserve traditional and regional cuisine and encouraging the farming of plants, seeds and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem; first part of the broader Slow Movement, it has since expanded globally to over 100000 members in 150 countries.+

Slow Money: a movement that strives to accelerate the transition from an economy based on extraction and consumption to an economy based on preservation and restoration to enhance food security, food safety and food access, to improve nutrition and health, and to promote cultural, ecological and economic diversity.+

slow working: inspired by the ideas behind the overall slow-movement which proposes a lifestyle based less on material possessions and focusing more on life itself. When applied to work, it can mean spending less but more effective hours at work to have more time for family, friends and oneself, to be less alienated with work and to enjoy its processes and outcomes in a more balanced way.

social cohesion: the social bonds linking one member of a group to another and to the group as a whole. The cohesiveness of a group depends upon components such as social relations, task relations, perceived unity, and individual and group emotions.

social design: also known as socially useful design, socially responsible design, socially responsive design, social innovation design, or, design for social innovation. It encourages grassroots and community creativity and focuses on the satisfaction of human needs, local services, economic development and livelihoods often framed within local/national government agendas. It includes strategic design thinking, co-design and other processes aimed at participation, and it involves professional designers working with people who do not think of themselves as designers.

social fabric: the basic structure or composition of a defined area or neighbourhood and its social links, consisting of its ethnic composition, age, culture, education level, and so on. It refers to intangible social relations but can be dependent upon tangible social infrastructures.

social innovation: was recently defined by a European Commission study, in 2010, called The Theoretical, Empirical and Policy foundations for building Social Innovation in Europe (TEPSIE) as being 'new solutions' (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act. Numerous definitions of social innovation include the idea that it crosses different sectors (public, private, social, informal); is a sub-set of innovation, and distinct from business or technological innovation; has a product and process dimension; has particular stages and phases (from inception to impact); is context specific; is underpinned by values; leads to specific outcomes which are a measurable improvements on existing practices; changes social relations with regard to governance; and empowers beneficiaries by increasing their socio-political capabilities and access to resources.

social mapping platform: an online resource for collectively mapping data generated by the citizens who upload the content using easy-to-use digital tools.

social reciprocity: describes the social interaction between people and how the behaviour of one person influences and is influenced by the behaviour of the other and vice versa.

social sculpture: an extended concept of art advocated by the German artist Joseph Beuys, according to which art has the potential to transform society. Any kind of human activity having an impact on society becomes an artistic act, making all humans 'social sculptors' or artists and stressing the participatory role of every citizen in politics and art.

social sustainability: the most recent thinking, adopted by the United Nations especially through their Global Cities Compact Programme, sees social sustainability as an interaction between four domains – the ecological, economic, political and cultural – and their stable interaction today and for future generations. However, social sustainability is a complex topic invoking a diverse range of terminology and embracing ideas of social capital, equity, justice, responsibility and support.+

socialisation of design(-ing): a phrase coined by Alastair Fuad-Luke to indicate that design, today, is being practiced by authorised (trained, professional) and non-authorised designers (other professionals, professional-amateurs, amateurs and citizens) across society.

socially sustainable work practices: ways of working which recognise existing social structures and organising that strive to ensure equal rights and access to resources, to health, and to labour rights. They are socially sustainable practices if they aim to improve these rights, our quality of life, help build communities and their resilience and enable current and future generations' abilities to adapt.+

sociocracy: a system of governance based on consent-based decision-making among equal individuals; rather than using the one-person-one-vote rule. Consensus is reached by reasoning together in the group until a decision is made.

sociocratic model/sociocracy: is a system of governance using consent-based decision making among individuals and an organizational structure based on the principles of cybernetics where a trans-disciplinary approach is taken to explore regulatory systems, their structures, constraints and possibilities.+

socio-ecological transition: societal change that considers the interdependency of society and nature; social development issues are explicitly linked to changes in the natural environment.

socio-spatial practices: social practices that are specifically interlinked with the space that hosts or surrounds them.

solidarity: is unity (as of a group or class) which produces or is based on unities of interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies.+

solidarity economies: alternative economic structures or systems based on the principles of solidarity, where members who have more contribute more in order that those with less also have access to resources; the idea of value is constantly negotiated amongst its participants.

spatial agency: the idea that we can all bring change to our spatial environment by making design interventions.

stakeholders: any person, group, community or organisation that has a share or interest in a project, enterprise or specific contextual situation.

stewardship: an ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources, to shepherd and safeguard the valuables of others; originally made up of the tasks of a domestic steward; today the concept can be applied to the environment, economics, health, and so on.

subreddits: see 'reddits'.

support platform: a digital or physical platform for people to get together and exchange mutual support for any kind of project, need or development of an idea.

sustainable design: design of products, services and buildings that complies with the principles of social, economic and ecological sustainability. See also, 'Design for Sustainability (DfS)'.

sustainable development (socially, ecologically, economically): a frequently cited definition of sustainable development was created by the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) and published in a report called *Our Common Future* in 1987, 'Development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. It is perceived by some as an oxymoron but has definitely helped focus political and social debate on what kind of development might be more desirable for the near and far future.

sustainable lifestyles: ways of living that sustain both the planet and its people for current and future generations. There are many tools to test your own lifestyle, such as measuring one's ecological footprint, the amount of natural resources one consumes to maintain one's life.

sustainism: a term coined by Michael Schwarz and Joost Elffers in 2010 to embrace the way we are transitioning through collective culture by being more connected, more ecologically and socially

focused, and on being locally engaged. Sustainist design qualities are sharing, localism, connectedness and proportionality.

synergy: from the Greek word synergia meaning 'working together'. It is also an abstract concept that refers to a result that arises from interacting processes, but is perhaps better put by Aristotle: 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts!'+

T

talkoot: a Finnish word for neighbourly help, also known as 'barn-raising', where people get together for voluntary joint work efforts followed by a collective reward through hospitality and enjoying of the shared work performance.

telos: a final end goal and/or goal-directed purposefulness.

time as wealth: a concept about stopping measuring prosperity with financial wealth and instead starting to measure prosperity with time for oneself, after Frigga Haug.

time banks: are where people exchange time and their skills or capabilities, in person/hours. It is seen by some economists as an alternative currency or complementary monetary system, but rarely features in mainstream economic analysis. In times of economic recession, where people lack money or other financial means, to exchange for commodities or services, people help each other by exchanging their time. Time banks provide organisational and management structures to formalise these time exchanges. A contributor to a time bank can accumulate time credits to 'spend' with other time bank contributors but will also gain social experiences and recognition in the community or groups he/she works with.

time well-being: a term from social and economic sciences describing a kind of immaterial wealth related to time, including several dimensions: the dimension of individual time for oneself; sovereignty about one's time; the subjective quality of one's experienced time; and the integration in collectively experienced time.

top-down: controlled, directed from the top level; term often used when decisions are made on the top of a hierarchy without asking people at the bottom for their opinion.

transdisciplinary: refers to research, knowledge and ways of thinking and doing which cross and hybridise many disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach and a body of knowledge which transcends the original contributions. The transdisciplinary approach is essential when confronted with 'wicked problems', after Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, which are complex issues which cannot be easily defined, have multiple and conflicting ownership and interests, and for which there is no final solution as the solution itself can generate further issues.

transdisciplinary art: is using transdisciplinary research and methods (see above) to create artistic works which are generated by crossing and hybridising traditional disciplines or fields.

transformational change: a process of change that demands both a change of mindset and behaviour by trial-and-error to an unknown future.

Transformation Science/transformational thinkers: both these terms invoke the idea that direct insights bounded or anchored within existing conceptual systems and insights from other forms of consciousness are essential to generate new knowledge. Transformation Science, after Valerie Brown and John Harris, is an emergent concept which acknowledges that progression of scientific belief can come from other disciplines and multiple ways of knowing. Transformational thinkers challenge particular paradigmatic ways of thinking by mixing rational thinking with more imaginative, intuitive and creative ways of knowing.

transformative learning: is about learning experiences that transform our perspectives leading to a changed understanding of the self, the revision of belief systems and changes in lifestyle, after sociologist Jack Mezirow.

Transition Towns: is an international grassroots network and movement of people and communities founded by Rob Hopkins in 2006, which seeks to build resilience in response to Peak oil, climate destruction, and economic instability. It is based on the principles of 'permaculture' (see above).

transitional sites: sites in an urban location which are not assigned to a designated type of planning or use; these sites are often unused, abandoned, under dispute, or in the process of being re-assigned to an existing or new planning use.

trial-and-error-system: an unsystematic method of solving problems, characterised by experimenting repeatedly in different variations, continued until success (or defeat).

U

Ubuntu: is an idea from the Southern African region which means literally 'human-ness' and is often translated as 'humanity towards others', but is often used in a more philosophical sense to mean 'the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity!'+

ultra-local: sometimes called hyper-local, is related to the concept of community production for mutual benefits to that community and 'food miles' where restaurants and shops limit their supply area to local ingredients to reduce the carbon footprint associated with more distant transport. Ultra-local finds expression in ideas of food, product and service provenance, where the exact origin is known and where the production and consumption is localised.

unconference: is a participant-driven gathering that aims to avoid one or more aspects of conventional conferences, such as fees, top-down organisation, and pre-planned schedules of single-speaker presentations, in order to allow more space for discussion and a more democratically produced agenda created by the participants.

upcycling: the process of converting waste materials or useless products into something more valuable for both the environment and people. It is different from recycling, which is often criticised as 'downcycling' old products to something with less value.

urban agriculture: the diverse practices of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around a village, town, or city to improve food security and community resilience.

urban capital: the production and reproduction of relations within the neighbourhood that give a place its character.

urban design and urban designer: urban design is the process of designing and shaping cities, towns and villages. Whereas architecture focuses on individual buildings, urban design addresses the larger scale of groups of buildings, of streets and public spaces, whole neighbourhoods and districts, and entire cities, to make urban areas functional, attractive, and sustainable. Urban design is an interdisciplinary subject that unites all the built environment professions, including urban planning, landscape architecture, architecture, civil and municipal engineering. It is common for professionals in all these disciplines to practice urban design and be urban designers.+

urban foraging: searching for and gathering 'wild' and cultivated food such as herbs, fruit and mushrooms, in public or semi-public spaces in cities.

user-involvement: refers to ways of applying the experience of the 'user' of a product, service or experience to improve the creative process and, consequently, improve the final designs or outputs, for example, as in 'user-centred design (UCD)'.+

V

value: a relative measure or basis for action that can be personal, subjective, cultural, or economic.

vernacular culture: the practice-based ways of knowing and being.

viral replicability criteria: the term originates in the digital, online environment that specifications for a design can be very easily reproduced to make exact copies of the original. Blueprints and downloadable patterns encourage replication of real objects or products.

W

wiki: an online web application which allows collaborative modification, extension or deletion of its content and structure; typically, text is written using a simplified markup language (known as 'wiki markup') or a rich-text editor. Content is created without any defined owner or leader, and wikis have little implicit structure, allowing structure to emerge according to the needs of the users.+

work: every act that is aimed at achieving something; being active is work, and all of the things that are necessary in life.

workshop model (for learning): a fixed-time period learning environment focused on the designing and fabrication of working products where everyone co-operates to meet the common goal of launching the product into the world.



THINKING

The diverse acts and practices of discursive activities, free association, ideation, inquiring, intuiting, philosophising, reasoning, reflecting, ruminating and synthesising individually and/or collectively as a means to nourish our human, social and other capitals.

'HACKING IN THE NAME OF...': AGENTS OF ALTERNATIVES AND VIRTUOUS VIGILANTES

by Otto von Busch

Good political philosophy is not necessarily good moral philosophy. I. Murdoch¹

Throughout the three popular Matrix movies a battle is waged between good and evil, humans and machines, combining religious motives with sub-cultural resistance against digital and post-industrial society. The movie by the Wachowskis is a goldmine of theoretical and technical metaphors, but I would like to highlight a specific chain of events that may open a route towards action for the design of alternatives.

At the end of the first movie Neo, the main protagonist, learns to '**hack**' the machines' system, which is the manipulated version of our own shared world. He learns to see through the illusion to the deeper underlying code, he gains a critical perspective of the world and learns to go beyond the surface to control his environment and save his life from a hail of bullets. He emerges victorious from the battle against the machines; he is 'the one' who can hack into the corrupt code of reality. But, and this becomes the narrative of the sequential movies, as he hacks the code of the evil agent Smith he also releases him as an evil virus that gets to corrupt the overall system, even the world of the machines. With his ability to hack, his curiosity to manipulate the system, Neo opens Pandora's box. His do-it-yourself capability to hack is in turn bent to release not only his *own agency*, but also the agency of [the] *other*. It releases more dubious and viral forces that use the new glitch in the system that Neo has produced for their own malevolent ends.

Neo's ethical hack, a means to fight back against the evil machine, in turn produces new evil ends. It is only in the final movie, as Neo uses his skills for a higher end to save the many, and ultimately sacrifices himself, that the evil and viral Smith is defeated. Neo opened the system for evil ends, and he had to pay the ulti-

¹ Murdoch, I., 2001. *The Sovereignty of Good*. 2nd. ed. London: Routledge. p.79

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mate price himself to restore order and save the outcome of his original hack. His destiny has, of course, many religious connotations, but the key issue throughout this reading is the concern about agency and empowerment. As designers hack into reality and bend the rules of the system in order to open new vistas of utopian practices, what other forces are released? Is there a systemic price for local design empowerment, unseen and unnerving consequences for disruptive design activities? And perhaps most importantly: In whose name do we work, and what distinguishes a design activist or an agent of alternatives from a virtuous vigilante using **do-it-yourself agency** to act outside the system which traditionally guarantees justification and legitimacy?

The production of alternatives often manifests how the social endeavours of design are most often concerned with ideal situations where high-minded people come together to work in unity towards the common good. These do-it-yourself designers are the allies of Neo, opening new vistas for agency in systems that until now seemed fenced off. However, such ideal situations may be exceptions out in the “real world” where many forces, interests and values enact their own games of power and are invested in the status quo, even at the cost of others. But, as designers, we seldom experience the cruel reality, as we hide with our allies in design studios, classrooms or within the local communities of like-minded. It may even be so that it is the secluded space of the studio or local community that encourages or allows the visionary speculations of designers. As we roleplay in our scenarios and do our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analyses,

DESIGN AGENCY IS DRAWN TOWARDS UTOPIA

there is a tendency within the design community to avoid critical cynicism, as we are drawn to the dynamic, the possible, how the world ought to be. Design agency is drawn towards utopia, and even in its most “critical” approach, design most often plays in a safe moral and ethical space. However, as designers we may need to engage with the issue of realism, accepting that our creations live in a cruel reality of Machiavellian games.

A designer may call out, “But we already work with reality! Our objects that are out there in the world are more real than your cynicism!” Here we witness the clash of two realities, a reality of substantial objects in the world on one hand, and the real outcomes of the intangible but highly real power games of humans on the other. Most often we don’t see the reality of disagreement or power games until they put highly material obstacles in our way, or intangible obstacles, such as non-cooperation, or the consequences of sabotage or vandalism.

Political realism has a taste of cynicism in design circles, as design seems to cling to idealism, and a cynical realism may also be a position that undermines the imagination and agency. As most designers are trained to be diplomats of functional and material compromises, we usually think every problem can be solved and every oppositional issue concluded through compromise between stakeholders; we seek and take for granted there will always be a win-win situation. Yet, even if the designer makes sure the utopian proposal is both visionary and rational,

it is no guarantee that the users will choose the path of peace and prosperity, as political thinker Raymond Geuss warns, “there is nothing unreasonable about not wanting to be fully ‘rational’”.² Thus the realist perspective spells out one of design’s fundamental challenges; how to be critical and realist *at the same time* as visionary and practical.

As designers we will need to sensibly articulate how the new agency we produce may resonate with the idea of a shared “better place”. For example, how do we know it is better, and how can we assure others that our new micro-utopia is a better place for them than the current world, and even better than “the good old times”? The road to a better place, or a modest utopia, is full of struggles and sectarian fighting, and part of designing is to actually produce prototypes which we may test, discuss and evaluate. Small-scale **prototyping** is at the core of the design discipline, adding small stepping stones towards the better. But others also use our stepping stones, and once they are laid out the road is open for everyone, kind or unkind, good or evil. This makes design politics not primarily about abstract principles, but about engaging with concrete power relations instead, and the stepping stones must be unbiased trials of concrete situations, not too tinted by the idealist ethics of the designer who refuses to see or hear any evil. Each step must clearly ask: who has power, for what ends do they use it, what asymmetries does it produce, and who suffers in consequence? Likewise, the new alternative must ask: how does this action redistribute power, for what ends, what new asymmetries does it produce, and who will suffer from this new path of action?

This brings us back to Neo’s hack. He sees through the code and manages to manipulate the system to his advantage, he himself becomes a **design activist** or **an agent of an alternative way** through the system. Similarly, on a fundamental level, the design of alternatives concerns the question of agency: who has agency to do what and for what purpose? In Neo’s case the systemic enemy was clear, yet he produced an even worse foe with the glitch he created. In everyday democracy division of labour, chain of command, roles and responsibilities tackle the issue of agency. We are usually told to process our wishes through the “formal channels”. But as designers manipulate these demarcations and lines, agency is shifted around and new vistas for action are opened, but as a result roles, responsibilities and aims will be also blurred. New agency bypasses the habitual processes of legitimization.

In our everyday life we usually do question the issue of legitimacy. Except for rebellious teenagers most of us follow our everyday habits, which are usually socially inherited traditions. In most western societies the procedures of democracy plaster a varnish of legitimization over any question that may arise concerning the legitimacy of our social organization, hierarchies and formalities that preserve its order.

HOW TO BE CRITICAL AND REALIST AT THE SAME TIME AS VISIONARY AND PRACTICAL

² Geuss, R., 2008. *Philosophy and Real Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.12

However, a government that makes good decisions, and justifies them by disseminating more goods to every citizen, may still be illegitimate. Even a system that produces more wealth and distributes it evenly for all may be financed in a corrupt way, marginalizing proportions of the population or leaving them voiceless. As political philosopher Ronald Dworkin reminds us, "A legitimate government must treat all those whom it claims dominion not just with a measure of concern but with *equal concern*."³

This brings us back to the agency of the designer, how the hack displaces power and cultivates new capabilities to produce alternatives: how do we make sure this new agency is *legitimate* agency? As designers we need to ask ourselves more often, in what name do we appropriate new agency? How do we know it is for the good? How do we make sure it stays good and is fair to all?

Most often though, we go for the easy route: we place our utopian practices into the marketplace of ideas. While we proudly proclaim our suggestion is virtuous and good, we simultaneously make sure we don't push our ideas on people. They have to choose themselves and "consume" our alternative, just as if it was any other product of service – but our alternative is free! We thus try to legitimise our designated alternatives by making our users into customers who have the choice to easily opt out. We never truly believe our alternatives truly matter, that they are worth fighting for, or even turn into obligations. The marketplace of ideas saves us from asking truly tricky questions concerning the processes of legitimization. If our new agency is virtuous and legitimate, would we suggest our users have a duty to follow and obey?

In an everyday understanding of democracy, shared governance is not only a matter of following procedures, but its laws must comply with values such as equality, human dignity and liberty. These values are all social, they gain their stature by being shared social goods and eventually connect to the ideas of civic

virtues – values of human (and ecological) togetherness. Civic virtues are shared experiences, the ethical guidelines that concern human togetherness. We know they are civic virtues, as political philosopher Michael Sandel notes, "when politics goes well, we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone."⁴

Similarly, the organization of our togetherness is not primarily guided by the government but by our own public lives, the public morality Sandel sees as "the attitudes and dispositions, the 'habits of the heart', that citizens bring to public life".⁵ That is, we should not only seek the morality of leadership,

but how the ideas and practices of civic virtue are disseminated as a mode of togetherness of *all citizens*. One typical channel of this dissemination is the world of design. Perhaps some forms of togetherness can be instrumentally beneficial to the aims of our alternatives, but they should perhaps also be part of a more broad endeavour towards human flourishing – or a strategy to limit the impact of the corrupting forces disrupting trust and equality.

Yet, simultaneously, these types of virtues also acknowledge that human beings flourish in conflicting ways, as common experiences, spurring differences of opinion, contentions of values, forcing public domains that were before separate and distinct together into a shared public realm of uncertainty. But even from a realist perspective, we could highlight this as a chance to broaden human flourishing, and add diplomacy to the virtues of being social. How can we make sure the alternatives we produce may also be diplomatic testing grounds for conflicting civic ideals and interests?

A basic start for the design of alternatives could thus be to see how each real design manipulation produces new civic ethics manifested as new power relations, and how these can be diffused into an equality of welfare, resources and agency. It is however very easy to fall into the trap of making one's own particular interests seem universal. Nevertheless, one must start somewhere, and local ethics aimed towards a shared better place is a good start, but designers may also need to prevent the great evils of human existence: the risk that our experiments are hijacked by a regime of Machiavellian politics, or simply by the habitual rule of hate and greed, making our new agency into an arena of do-it-yourself vigilantism. Many small initiatives may turn into schemes that increase the power of the already powerful, or worse, counter-systems that encourage violent crackdowns, isolationism or extremism.

In the end, most of us designers are idealists. Still we must, according to our best knowledge, safeguard our alternatives, try to avoid getting our proactive glitches infested by viruses. We must make sure our new agency promotes the virtues of an equally shared civic life: shared 'habits of the heart' that produce a new good we cannot know alone.

HOW THE IDEAS AND PRACTICES OF CIVIC VIRTUE ARE DISSEMINATED AS A MODE OF TOGETHERNESS OF ALL CITIZENS

³ Dworkin, R., 2006. *Is Democracy Possible Here?*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.97

⁴ Sandel, M., 1998. *Liberalism and the limits of justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.183

⁵ Sandel, M., 2010. "We need a public life with purpose". *Citizen Ethics Network*. available at: <http://www.citizenethics.org.uk/docs/EthicsTemplateDoc.pdf>. p.7

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A COLLECTIVE MIND FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

by Valerie A. Brown & John A. Harris

Transformational change: the time and the place

The impact of human ideas on the Earth has led to the current era being called the **Anthropocene** (*anthro* being Latin for human) and the planet the **Anthroposphere**.¹ These titles recognise the strength of the influence of the human mind on the state of the planet while acknowledging humankind's continuing inter-dependence with the living and the non-living worlds. This is a time when the world is in the midst of social and environmental transformational change that could go in either direction, towards human extinction or a humane co-existence.

There is a larger question than asking what sort of world we have now. It is: What sort of world do we want for the future? This then leads to a set of further questions that determine how we, humans, might act to influence that future. We cannot control it although we will certainly help to shape it.² No single question directs the human mind, rather the capacity to reflect on the sum of the answers to personal, physical, social, ethical, aesthetic and sympathetic questions (Figure 1).

MAKING FULL USE OF OUR MINDS: THE IDEAS

7 ways of understanding

Personal experience

Physical observations

Social narratives

Ethical principles

Aesthetic patterns

Sympathetic emotions

Reflective synthesis

Figure 1. Making full use of our minds: collecting the ideas.

¹ The Anthropocene refers to what many natural scientists call the human-generated age. The Anthroposphere

With the hope of living happily in a just and sustainable world:

1. What are our personal expectations?
2. Is a sustainable planet physically possible?
3. Will that world be socially supportive of all members of a society?
4. Are there ethical principles that protect all members of a society?
5. Is it aesthetically satisfying for all the people so they fulfil their creativity?
6. Is there sympathetic understanding between people with different interests?
7. On reflection, can we collectively help shape a world that contains all of these?

To answer all of these questions on any one issue is to engage one's collective mind. It may be one mind, or it may be many minds bringing the answers to these diverse questions together. For both the individual and the group, the workings of the collective mind generate a fresh synergy for each issue, a synergy that creates fresh answers to old problems and allows all interests to work together.

To answer these questions in working together towards a just and sustainable future lies in the face of previous practice.³ The dominant mode of inquiry for the three hundred years of the scientific era has been to reduce an issue to one question at a time, to draw on physical measures ahead of other evidence, and to select an expert to help with the 'right' answer. The transformational change that led to the scientific era was called the Enlightenment,⁴ from the focus of the movement to advance knowledge through scientific methods, Science and technology increasingly masked the understandings that came from reflecting on social, ethical, aesthetic and sympathetic understandings of the world.

This line of thinking extended to the point where the thinking mind was regarded as separate from the physical brain. This supposed separation between the mind and brain has been rejected along with the emergence of the increasing interest in a collective mind that uses all the brain. The new multi-disciplinary field of neuroscience has used electronic tools to document the plasticity of the brain, with its amazing capacity to combine *multiple ways of knowing*.⁵ Thinking capacity is found to be generalised across the whole brain, with 95% of thinking taking place in the more-than-conscious zones, the zones of imagination, intuition and creativity.⁶ The **transformational thinkers** whose lives are discussed below demonstrated that it is possible to consciously use all the brain.

is the state of the earth generated during the Anthropocene. See Steffen, W., Grinevald, J., Crutzen, P. and McNeill, J., 2011. 'The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, A, 369 (1938), pp. 842-867.

² Brown, V. A., Harris, J. A. and Russell, J. Y. eds. 2010. *Tackling Wicked Problems: Through the Transdisciplinary Imagination*, London: Earthscan. Brown, V.A. and Harris, J.A., 2014. *The Human Capacity for Transformational Change: Harnessing the Collective Mind*, Routledge: London.

³ Brown, V. A., 2008. *Leonardo's Vision: A Guide for Collective Thinking and Action*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense

⁴ Editors' note: The Age of Enlightenment was a cultural movement of intellectuals and revolution in human thought beginning in late 17th century Europe emphasizing reason and individualism to reform society and challenge established ideas grounded in tradition and faith.

⁵ Doidge, N., 2007. *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science*. Melbourne, Australia: Scribe.

The quest for the nature of the relationship between individual human thinking and the thinking of their society continues. There is the tale of the king who ordered that a child be reared inside a well to see what language it would speak when it came up. This tale echoes the real life experience that any human being reared in isolation until the age of seven will never fully learn to speak or to respond to others. Interaction with others is fundamental to human existence. Where a collection of individuals engage in collective thinking, there is the potential to work in concert on the nature and direction of the **transformational change** in any particular setting.

The nature of the change: towards a collective understanding

For most of the past three centuries of the scientific era there has been an expectation that science alone could determine and advise on what happens in transformational change. As the world has discovered, nothing could be further from the truth. There is now a widespread acceptance that any major change involves both social and environmental systems in a mutual interaction with highly unpredictable feedback loops. The options for change can be predicted and the outcome prepared for, while accepting that there can be no certainty about the outcome. Ways of thinking about the world have moved from considering the planet as a source of resources for humanity⁷ to a world in which the human self-organising system works in concert with physical and biological self-organising systems.⁸ The present generation is slowly realizing that while humans as individuals and as groups can choose to change, they can never be independent of the interactions of the other two dimensions of reality, the living and non-living worlds.

MAJOR CHANGE INVOLVES BOTH SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS IN A MUTUAL INTERACTION WITH HIGHLY UNPREDICTABLE FEEDBACK LOOPS

Moving to a collective understanding of the mind has its own problems. The assumption that a mind is merely an inert product of its physical brain led to the same sort of error as assuming that mobility is located solely in the legs and sight in the eyes. In sight and hearing, as in thinking, the activity involves the whole person under the influence of their social and physical environments. Every four years the *Paralympic Games* prove that losing legs or eyes or parts of their brain does not pre-

⁶ Lackoff, G. and Johnson, M., 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.

⁷ O'Riorden, T., 1971. *Perspectives on Resource Management*. London: Pion.

⁸ Bateson, G., 1979. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. London: Wildwood House; Capra, F., 1982. *The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture*, New York: Simon & Schuster; Lewin, R., 1993. *Complexity: Life at the Edge of Chaos*, London: Orion Books; Goodwin, B., 1994. *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity*, New York: Scribner's Sons.

vent individuals from choosing their own future and meeting the challenge of getting there.⁹ Whether in sport, economics or personal relationships, the challenge is to the society they live in. All members of that society need to access their full capacity to find support for their choices wherever it is regarded as benefiting the whole.

The diversity inherent in bringing together evidence of all seven ways of understanding is the insurance that there will be a shared understanding of that whole. The hoped-for outcome is neither *consensus* nor the lowest common denominator. Nor is it free from conflict and uncertainty. It is that rich *synergy* of a collective understanding that enables a collective future. The nature of that future may be unknown to any one of the interests involved, until the collective learns from one another. Each individual in any group draws from their own experience, their knowledge of physical systems, the stories they learn from their social setting, their ethical values, their sense of the aesthetic, and their sympathy with others. Explicitly answering the full set of seven questions for oneself, by reflecting on all the practices of understanding, allows for a mutual collective understanding among a group or community (Figure 2).

MAKING FULL USE OF OUR MINDS: THE PRACTICE		
Understanding	How	Sharing
Personal	introspection	Experience
Physical	observations	Ecosystems
Social	symbols	Stories
Ethical	principles	Values
Aesthetic	fit	Patterns
Sympathetic	recognition	Dialogue
Reflective	collage	Meaning

Figure 2. Making full use of our minds: collecting the ideas in practice.

A collective mind is radically different from a mass mind. The mass minds that drove the Jonestown mass suicide in 1979 and the Nazi movement of the mid-twentieth century started with the idea that there was one definitive recipe that will achieve a predictable type of society. All other principles were treated as secondary. In a mass mind, many minds think as one and join in believing in a single solution, and so they are easily swayed in a single direction. *Collective thinking*, on the other hand, calls on both the open versatile mind of the human individual and the diversity of the minds concerned with the selected issue.

The changeover of any society from one way of thinking to another is never smooth. The conservative old guard, with its investment in how things are now,

⁹ The *Paralympics* is an international sporting event held every four years involving athletes with a wide range of physical and intellectual disabilities in the same sporting events as the standard Olympics.

clings to its belief about how the world is, even in the face of new evidence and in spite of its own direct experience. The Inquisition refused to look through Galileo's telescope, despite his pleas. Classic ways of blocking the new include denial, ridicule, distortion and the moral righteousness of those who believe that they own the truth.

Responses to the predictions about global climate change are examples of all of these. People deny that changes exist at all ridiculing anyone who thinks they exist and distorting the evidence so that it appears to prove the opposite of the research. A new way of thinking collectively, answering the full suite of questions, can be undermined by natural caution, dislike of change, selfishness, the desire for power and resources, and just plain selfishness. Nevertheless it continues to exist. Examples of collective thinking arising in language, science, economics, education and everyday life are found throughout the literature.

The follow-on from the change: searching for wise sorcerers

The question arises: How to explore the ideas and practices that best represent the emergence of a collective era? The Enlightenment tradition is to establish a timeline according to which each thinker builds on the previous one. This ladder-like advancement of science is an artefact of the rules of science, it is not the way advances in thinking actually happen. New ideas have frequently emerged after being ignored or even rejected by the dominant tradition for centuries.

WHAT ARE NEEDED ARE IDEAL PROTOTYPES FOR COLLECTIVE THINKING FOR THE TIME AND PLACE WE ARE LIVING IN NOW

Successful collective thinkers have merged from different times and places. Plato and Socrates are frequently exhumed from another era to support the Enlightenment. In a new tradition: How do we decide what is successful? Emblems of success such as winning the Nobel Prize, becoming a best-selling author, and rising to seniority in a profession are all rewards from a previous tradition. Nevertheless, iconic collective thinkers such as Albert Einstein, William Shakespeare, Abraham Lincoln and Leonardo da Vinci emerged in parallel to the mainstream in their own life and times.

What are needed are ideal prototypes for collective thinking for the time and place we are living in now, prototypes that can lead to a just and sustainable future on this planet. Outstanding collective thinkers have catalysed the change from the Enlightenment to the Anthropocene. The following thinkers have been selected, first, because their transformational ideas contributed to our present understanding of how the world works; second, because the development of their ideas drew on the full capacity of the human mind and the whole of the human brain; and third, the stories of their lives offer entry to a fresh tradition, a shift to an era of collective thinking.

The search for those who meet these criteria found three sorcerers of the mind. They are Charles Darwin¹⁰ 1809–1882, James Lovelock¹¹ 1919–, and Norbert Wiener¹² 1894–1964. While they were not connected in time, Darwin's insights into continual evolutionary change permitted Lovelock's idea of a self-organizing dynamic world. That world is now being refashioned through the fulfilment of Wiener's prediction of the universality of the mental space of the World Wide Web encompassing the whole of the Internet and its network of electronic communication. Each of these masters achieved their insights through combining multiple ways of interpreting reality and answering the full range of questions that arose in their minds.

Darwin's ideas on human evolution, Lovelock's on the planet Gaia and Wiener's on the potential of cyberspace eventually led to dramatic changes in our understanding of how the world works. However, they did not do this unchallenged. Each of these three master-thinkers was, in their own time, regarded as a *heretic*.¹³ Darwin's heresy for the time was that humans are subject to evolutionary change driven by environmental pressure, like all other living things. Lovelock's was that the planet as a whole acted as a single organism, with all its life forms contributing collectively to its self-regulation and self-organisation. Wiener's heresy was to predict that the space created by human minds themselves could provide the next setting for human evolution in addition to the living and non-living environment, and that this space would require a fresh system of ethics. Eventually these heresies overcame the opposition to become the emergent realities of the 21st century.

The tale of the sorcerer's apprentice¹⁴ helps us to realise the nature of the challenge posed in moving from the Enlightenment to the collective thinking era. Told in many versions since it was first written by Wolfgang Goethe in 1797, the story goes like this. A master sorcerer has learnt to prepare magic potions that lead to transformational change. He can turn lead into gold, a weak human into a strong one and a hovel into a castle. His foolish apprentice steals the magic mixture and tries to apply it. In inexperienced hands the transformation becomes uncontrolled and then uncontrollable. The wise master struggles to halt the wild chain reaction that threatens everything around them. They finally succeed. The superior mind is, once again, in control and the over-ambitious apprentice is punished to make sure he never does it again. All is well.

This old story has a new twist in this twenty-first century. All is not well. The master sorcerers of the technological era have lost control of their own inventions.

¹⁰ Darwin C., 1859. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle of Life*. London: John Murray. Darwin, C., 1871. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. London: John Murray. Darwin, C., 1872. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. London: John Murray.

¹¹ Lovelock, J., 1979. *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press. Lovelock, J., 2000. *Homage to Gaia: The Life of an Independent Scientist*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹² Wiener, N., 1948. *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. Massachusetts: MIT Press. Wiener, N., 1968 (1950). *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*. London: Sphere Books.

¹³ Editors' note: Heretic: a person holding an opinion at odds with what is generally accepted.

¹⁴ The Sorcerer's Apprentice (German: Der Zauberlehrling) is a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

The capacity to release the energy in fossil fuels that had been stored for millennia, coupled with their own inventiveness has brought ways for humans to escape epidemic diseases, build great cities and live anywhere on the planet. Yet the same magical recipes have led to urban violence, disruption of the Earth's atmosphere, a flood of disinformation, and a willingness to wage genocidal wars.¹⁵ In a reversal of the original story, it is the past master sorcerers' technical inventions that are running wild. The use of those technological skills is tipping the world into dangerous climate change, global food insecurity and cities too dangerous to live in.

It is up to the apprentices, the current and following generations that include us all, to find a fresh source of inspiration, rather than simply follow in their masters' footsteps. The apprentices are faced with developing ideas that help to build a better world as well as to build on and control their previous masters' inventions. A treasure hunt for those who can be helpful in making these changes produced fresh master sorcerers, their apprentices and visionaries who are looking beyond the present. The hunt found the three wise sorcerers Darwin, Lovelock and Wiener. Next come those who built on their work. Then there are the visionaries who had the ability and the courage to forecast where those changes might lead. The result is a pattern of ideas rather than a timescale or a single piece of history.

Like all treasure hunts, the search follows an erratic path. Sometimes there is a direct link between ideas. In other cases, the thinker who takes an idea further has never even heard of, or may have even rejected the thinker they were following. In addition to those who have built the ideas of the world as it is now, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,¹⁶ Gregory Bateson¹⁷ and Christopher Alexander¹⁸ are visionaries who offer changes of mind that could help to work with, rather than against, transformational change.

In the mid-1800s Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace discovered (separately) that the world is in a state of continual evolutionary change and that this includes the human mind. Contrary to conventional thinking, Darwin focused as much on collaboration as on competition as the guiding principle of evolutionary change, both physically and in the use of the mind.

In his 1900s study of the planet's chemistry, industrial chemist James Lovelock established that Darwin's continually changing planet is made up of a complex web of self-organizing systems. In calling the system *Gaia* after the Greek goddess of

¹⁵ Annual books published from 1984 on the State of the World by The Worldwatch Institute document the effects of the technological transformations on the planet.

¹⁶ See de Chardin, T., 1975 (1955) *The Phenomenon of Man*. New York: Harper & Row, in which Teilhard describes the evolution of the Noosphere as a new sphere of human thought that is worldwide.

¹⁷ Bateson, G., 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. St Albans: Paladin. Also see, Bateson, G., 1979. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, London, Wildwood House. Bateson thought that reflection on the pattern that connects is more important than concentrating on the differences that divide.

¹⁸ Alexander, C., Ishikawa, S., Silverstein, M., Jacobson, M., Fiksdahl-King, I and Angel, S., 1977. *A Pattern Language: Towns, buildings and constructions*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pattern language is for anyone wishing to design and build at any scale, and also has been influential in software engineering physical and intellectual disabilities in the same sporting events as the standard Olympics.

the earth, Lovelock connected the biophysical planet with the human social, ethical, aesthetic and sympathetic systems that determine the future of planet Earth.

Mathematician and child prodigy Norbert Wiener used advanced mathematics to observe the patterns that connect to predict the World Wide Web as early as 1940.¹⁹ He was the first to foresee the immense evolutionary potential of electronic signals as extensions of the human mind. Wiener also foresaw the ethical dilemmas²⁰ that may arise when minds evolve under the influence of other minds in addition to the biophysical selection pressures.

The three wise masters who shaped the world through human thought were each trained as scientists interested in physical observations, understandably, since that was the dominant way of thinking of their time. They were each equally at home discussing the social and ethical consequences of their work, appreciating the aesthetics of their discoveries in sympathetic collaboration with like-minded thinkers. Each had asked all seven of the questions posed at the beginning of this text, and the evidence from the collected answers led to a transformational change. They had each brought all the answers together, combining the evidence in a leap forward which transformed human thought.

COLLECTING THE EVIDENCE

Personal: note own age, education, society, values

Physical: measure, observe, describe, compare

Social: explore myths, stories, icons

Ethical: clarify different value positions

Aesthetic: find patterns of sound, shape, space

Sympathetic: recognise friendship, empathy, trust

Reflective: consider systems, collages, symbols

Figure 3. Collecting all the evidence: personal, physical, social, ethical, aesthetic, sympathetic and reflective.

¹⁹ The client and server communication language, Hypertext Transfer Protocol (http) was invented in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee and laid the foundation for the successful development of World Wide Web.

²⁰ Wiener, N., 1968 (1950). *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*. London: Sphere Books.

²¹ Transition Towns is an international grass roots network of people working for positive social change. The *Transition Handbook: from oil dependence to local resilience* (2008) and *The Transition Companion: Making your community more resilient in uncertain times* (2012) provide the guidelines for social change. Both are written by Rob Hopkins, Dartington: Green Books.

²² Healthy Cities is a World Health Organization (WHO) initiative to engage local governments in the development of better health through collaborative planning and capacity building in local communities.

Governance for health in the 21st century by Ilona Kickbusch and David Gleicher is available through WHO's regional office in Europe, see <http://www.euro.who.int/en/home>.

²³ The World Social Forum comprises civil society organizations endeavouring to counter hegemonic globalization while working towards a just democratic world of greater solidarity.

²⁴ Brown, V.A. and Harris, J.A., 2014. *The Human Capacity for Transformational Change: Harnessing the Collective Mind*, London: Routledge.

Making the change: towards a just and sustainable future

The inheritance of the master sorcerers continues. Transformation movements like *Transition Towns*²¹ and *Healthy Cities*²² at the local scale and international institutions such as the United Nations and the World Social Forum²³ at the global scale are seeking a world inspired by the rich contributions stemming from the differences that create a society. Each movement implicitly answers the full suite of seven questions in pursuing their own area of interest. Each group is committed to transformational change being open-ended, interconnected and collaborative, valuing uncertainty and diversity. This has proved difficult to achieve in a world still giving priority to technological solutions, specialisation and objective ways of thinking. However, the world can no longer afford single perspectives, fragile consensus and partial solutions either for individuals or for society.

THE KEY STRUCTURES THAT GO TO MAKE UP A COLLECTIVE SOCIETY ARE EMERGING IN PRACTICE

On the positive side, the key structures that go to make up a collective society are emerging in practice.²⁴ They include an inclusive language, re-thinking science,²⁵ a *direct democracy*, reciprocal resource management, learning without limits and a collective identity.²⁶ Once these structures are established, a society would be a different place from its previous state as a site for conflict and competition. Inclusive language will include the adoption of 'and' instead of 'but', and 'both' instead of 'or'. Alexander's pattern language already offers a vehicle for collective planning that all can share. *Transformation Science*²⁷ heralded by *Post-Normal Science*²⁸ will access evidence from all ways of understanding. Ailing democracy has a flood of defenders looking to reinstate direct democracy leading to Mindell's *deep democracy*.²⁹

With content readily supplied by efficient search engines, educational initiatives based on learner- teacher dialogue generate fresh and original ideas. Nobel Prizes have been awarded for resource management practices based on common pool resources such as oceans, finance and cities. Last, but certainly not least, is the

²⁵ Nowotny, H., Scott, P. and Gibbons, M., 2001. *Re-Thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty*, Cambridge: Blackwell and Polity Press.

²⁶ Part II of Brown, V.A. and Harris, J.A. 2014. *The Human Capacity for Transformational Change: Harnessing the Collective Mind*, London: Routledge, is entitled *Changing Society* and addresses the key structures that go to make up a collective society.

²⁷ Transformation Science: A science of change is the title, subtitle and focus of Chapter 8 in Brown, V.A. and Harris, J.A. 2014. *The Human Capacity for Transformational Change: Harnessing the Collective Mind*, London: Routledge.

²⁸ Ravetz, J., 1999. What is Post-Normal Science? *Futures*, 31 (7), pp. 647-53 and Ravetz, J., 2005. *A No-Nonsense Guide to Science*, Oxford: New Internationalist. Post-Normal Science differs radically from traditional science in that instead of simplifying, it embraces complexity by examining all the contributing factors in capturing the essence of an issue.

²⁹ Mindell, A., 2002. *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums: Practical Steps to Conflict Prevention and Resolution for the Family, Workplace and World*, Charlottesville: Hampton Roads Publishing Company. See also Palmer, P. J., 2011. *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*, San Francisco, US: Jossey-Bass.

change in identity that comes from imagining oneself, not as a competitive, neutral, independent individual, but rather as a person who is part of a collective identity, similar to the African **Ubuntu**³⁰ 'I am I because of you; you are you because of me'.

Each of the new wise thinkers has absorbed the full range of ways of experiencing the world into their thinking. Their courage and commitment carried them past the inevitable self-doubt and their peers' negativity. Their times allowed them to experience the planet as a whole. Darwin was able to circumnavigate the world, Lovelock saw the first picture of Earth from space, and Wiener foresaw the technical capacity of cyberspace that set human minds free to work with each other. These thinkers lived in a world united by unprecedented global flows of people, information, resources and ideas: fertile ground for collective thinking and strong collaboration. They forged links between their own internal human mind and the external collective mind. Their work laid the foundations for a transformational change from the specialism of the Enlightenment to an era in which everyone can think with a collective mind.

The **transformative thinkers** were able to simultaneously draw knowledge from, and to transcend, the disconnected stores of knowledge that existed in their time.³¹

Combining multiple sources of evidence was common to the thinking of all three of the original thinkers of the new era, of those followers who took their ideas further and of the visionaries who saw further again. In interpreting any transformational change, the task of the **collective thinker** is first to establish the identity

of the thinker: Who am I? Then to ask themselves: What can I learn from physical, social, ethical, aesthetic, and sympathetic understanding of change?

Only then is it time to bring the answers to all seven questions together in answering the reflective question: What is the collective understanding created from all this? Each collective thinker needs to learn from all others involved to optimise their learning. The power of collective reflection operates equally within an individual and among a group. The outcome is neither a single answer nor is it a fragile consensus. It is a strong mutual understanding, one that includes a respect for difference.

EACH COLLECTIVE THINKER NEEDS TO LEARN FROM ALL OTHERS INVOLVED TO OPTIMISE THEIR LEARNING

Conclusion

The new generation of apprentice collective thinkers requires that we all accept the responsibility for becoming wise sorcerers in our own right. Throughout the treasure hunt for collective minds that makes up our 2014 book *The Human Capacity for Transformational Change: Harnessing the Collective Mind*, the collective mind has been treated as embracing the whole through seven different ways of understanding, including a reframed ethical system. Collective learning from drawing on multiple ways of knowing has been predicted to be the next step in the evolution of the human mind.

The era of the collective mind is already underway. As the leading edge of thought, it is re-examining long-standing biological and social features of humanity and rethinking the question of what it means to be human. There can be a new freedom and dignity in the future of the collective mind. New ways of experiencing, knowing, being and becoming that can put humanity in reach of new kinds of worlds through a collective ethically-guided influence on inevitable transformational change.

³⁰ Editors note: Ubuntu: is a Nguni Bantu term roughly translating to 'human kindness'. It is an idea from the Southern African region which means literally 'human-ness', and is often translated as 'humanity towards others', but is often used in a more philosophical sense to mean "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity". Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_%28philosophy%29.

³¹ Darwin combined the field work of a naturalist with the empirical observations of a scientist, called on experts from many fields and occupations and crossed the barriers of religious, scientific and political thought. Lovelock opened up the planet's place in the universe to both scientific and spiritual examination. In doing so he challenged the internal hierarchies of the scientific and religious communities of his time. Wiener was a polymath, contributing major discoveries to the fields of mathematics, philosophy, psychology and statistics in his leap into an as yet unknown future in cyberspace.



Amber Hickey.

Amber Hickey is a writer, educator, curator, and PhD Candidate in Visual Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz. She published *A Guidebook of Alternative Nows* in 2012.

Interviewed by KM.

Interview

LENDING ACTIONS POWER THROUGH PAGES

with Amber Hickey, editor of
A Guidebook of Alternative Nows

Amber Hickey is an artist, researcher and book editor who has a special focus on **art activism** and is currently based in Santa Cruz, California. She is editor of the book *A Guidebook of Alternative Nows*,¹ an inspiring collection of essays and case studies by thirty-four different contributors. We met Amber on Skype for an interview to find out more about her work, the book, and the unusual process behind it.

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your background?

I am an artist and researcher with a background in performance. I studied contemporary performance in Glasgow, Scotland for four years. The program was very politically engaged. We were strongly committed to the political implications of our creative output. Our art was activism, or at least that was the aim for many of us. While in Glasgow, I spent a lot of time doing projects outside of the university and I started curating very early on, although I didn't know at the time that was what I was doing. After finishing my Bachelor of Arts I decided to pursue my Master's Degree in Curating in Zurich, Switzerland. I also worked at the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts² and I continued doing independent projects. For my final Masters' project, it made sense to do something I had wanted to do, for a while, the *Guidebook of Alternative Nows*.

How did you come up with the idea of the book? Why do you feel there is a need for a book such as this one?

I had been reading a lot of work that was critical of aspects of contemporary living – our economy, the way we interact with our environments and so forth. It

¹ Hickey, A., 2012. *A Guidebook of Alternative Nows*, Los Angeles: Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Press, see also www.alternativenows.net (free PDF download) and www.joap.org

² Since 2007, the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts (ICS) is an acclaimed centre for the analysis, theory, and history of culture in the arts. Further info: www.zhdk.ch

all became very repetitive to me and I was questioning the effectiveness of such criticism. Then I came across JK Gibson-Graham's *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it)*.³ They propose that by criticising capitalism (or other dominant modes and structures) we are in fact lending it more power. So I thought that rather than making a project that is simply critical, I would attempt to highlight that which is

I ATTEMPT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT WHICH IS DIFFERENT AND HOPEFUL

different and hopeful, therefore lending those actions power by lending them pages. That's the methodology behind this book. There is a lack of published material about this kind of work by the people who participate in it. Often, researchers write about these phenomena, rather than the thinkers and makers themselves writing about their work in their own words. Of course there are exceptions.

Regarding the format of a book, I'll readily admit that I'm not the biggest fan of exhibitions. There were many reasons why I felt like it was more appropriate to present this project in the form of a book. I wanted people to have something they could take home and have a direct relationship to. Something that they would continue coming back to over the years.

The book aims to shed light on different iterations of more socially, economically, and ecologically 'just nows'. It was not my editorial aim to define these nows according to their fields. Instead, it was more about alternative nows in a broad sense, which is open to many areas. I wanted the book to be inviting to diverse publics and therefore did not want it to be too dense with theoretical chapters. However, I wanted there to be enough strong writing to support the ideas contained within the book.

Rather than divide the chapters into strictly defined categories, I decided on the placement of the chapters by imagining interesting ways to order them if they were read in succession—if they were read as a story. Of course it's fine to read them in any order, but I chose the sequence of chapters because of the pictures they create when they are sitting next to each other. Each chapter complements the chapters it is sandwiched between in surprising ways.

How did you choose and curate the contributors? How did you approach them? Was it difficult to get people involved in the project?

Many of the people who contributed to the book are friends or friends of friends. And I'd say about half of them were suggested by other contributors. So, even though I didn't invite every person who others suggested, in a way the book was co-curated. I also contacted people whose work I knew from before. I was pleasantly surprised that most replied positively and contributed!

³ Gibson-Graham, J. K., (1996) *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers. J. K. Gibson-Graham is the pen name of Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham, both feminist economic geographers. In this book, J. K. Gibson-Graham 'explores the possibility of more enlivening modes of economic thought and action, outside and beyond the theory and practice of capitalist reproduction'. (from the back cover of the book)



Launch in Copenhagen at PB43 with talks by Brett Bloom (Temporary Services), Eva Merz (New Social Art School), and Rori Knutdson (School of Critical Engagement), 22 September 2012.

When and how did you launch the book and how was it received by the public?

The book was published in June 2012. There were a few different launches. One in July at the Last Bookstore in Los Angeles, one in August at Josefswiese Park in Zurich, one in September at PB43 in Copenhagen, and one in November at Forest Room 5 in Denver. I had sent out emails to the contributors inviting them to organise local launches, and that's one of the reasons why we could do so many.

I've heard mostly positive feedback about the book. People really seemed to connect with the aesthetics of the book and that drew them into the content. They liked that there were two alternative versions of the cover and the playfulness of the stickers and badges. *Solidarity economies* and *mutual aid* were very prominent topics throughout the book and that was often perceived as a highlight content-wise.

I wanted this to be a project that my family could connect with too. I wanted it to be a very grounded project that many people could get something from, rather than mainly people from one demographic sector or field. When it came out my dad read the entire thing. We had some great conversations about the concepts and projects within the book—he particularly enjoyed Billy Marks' chapter, 'Cipher: The Economics of Freestyle'.⁴

⁴ Hickey, A. ed. 2012. *A Guidebook of Alternative Nows*. Los Angeles, USA: The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press, p.131.

There was one negative review that I found. It was by a woman at an art journal, who I'd been in touch with briefly. She'd requested a review copy of the book and I had somehow missed her email and didn't get back to her for awhile. Anyway, it wasn't all bad, but her main criticism was that the book focused on alternatives only accessible to the privileged. It's an interesting comment because I see solidarity economics for instance as completely necessary whether one is privileged or not, but more-so for those in precarious situations. I can understand how she saw that in some of the contributions, but certainly not the majority of them. Regardless, it's always helpful to get some constructive criticism and I appreciate her point of view.

We saw you financed your first print-run with Kickstarter – how did that come about?

I liked the idea of the funding being a collaboration too. It helped a lot to already have all the contributors on board because they shared the campaign with their friends and colleagues. So there was a large network of support already in place. I believe that's one reason we managed to collect \$6000 in such a short amount of time. I think it's good that our funding process compliments the content of the book.

From your experience, what advice would you give when it comes to producing a book?

It's always more expensive than you think it will be, and that can create stress if you're not prepared. For example, the shipping was very expensive. Each copy was also quite pricey because it was important to print them in colour and to produce the stickers. The book also became much longer than expected because people wrote more, and I didn't want to limit them. In the end, we printed 300 books which are now almost sold out. So in terms of advice, I think that would depend on your goals. You should always budget more than you expect to spend.

In the case of *A Guidebook of Alternative News*, we have a project account where all the money from book sales is deposited. When all books are sold, the money will be split amongst the 39 parties who were involved in the book.

You collaborated with the Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Press (JOAAP) when it came to publishing the book – why and how did you choose them as publishers?

How was your experience of working with them?

I had known about the JOAAP before, some friends of mine had written for them and I liked their publications. I was already about half-way into the project when, luckily, the editors, Mark and Christina, happened to be in Zurich, where I lived at the time. I met Mark at the Cabaret Voltaire. I explained the project to him and showed him what we had so far, a draft of the design, and so forth. Mark and Christina were very open, they didn't control anything. They were casual conversation partners who helped with things such as getting an International Standard Book

⁵ Scripps College is a Women's college in Claremont, USA. Further info: www.scrippscollege.edu

Number (ISBN), giving feedback on the cover and things like that. And of course they contributed a chapter as well. When the book was done, they sent the news out to their list. It was great to work with a publisher that I could trust. It made the process much easier and more supportive.

The other day, I checked the book project's website alternativenews.net and noticed you have also been giving guest lectures on the book in universities in the United States – how did that come about and would you mind telling us more?

Oh yes, that is a very good question! Somehow, the book made it onto several reading lists of universities, I guess because many of the contributors also teach and perhaps recommended it to their colleagues. I was very pleasantly surprised about this and pleased that the book would reach that context. I gave guest lectures at different universities, such as Scripps College Claremont⁵ where I was invited to speak for a class called *United: Women's Work and Collective Action*. In these talks, I always try to share the process behind the book and emphasise why **collaboration** is an important mode of working. I realised very quickly that you cannot assume that people are already up to date on the topics within the book; for some people it was an entirely unfamiliar idea that there could be an alternative to capitalism. So speaking in educational contexts rather than art contexts presented new and interesting challenges. Then again, there was a woman in the class I lectured for at the California Institute of Integral Studies⁶ who was already set on integrating solidarity economics into the curriculum at Waldorf schools.⁷ One thing I tried with students during a talk at University of California Santa Cruz was to engage them in the topic by first doing an exercise asking what alternative news they know of, have seen, or have participated in.

FOR SOME PEOPLE IT WAS AN ENTIRELY UNFAMILIAR IDEA THAT THERE COULD BE AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM

What are you working on right now? Are you planning to continue with activities connected to the book?

Currently, I am working towards a PhD in Visual Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz. The structure is quite different from what I am used to. We need to go through two years of core curriculum before being able to focus more on our own research projects. I had the experience of having a lot of freedom in my first two degrees, so maybe this will be a good exercise.

I am considering producing a second edition of the book. If that happens, I would expand the introduction and maybe work with a distributor to reach out to more

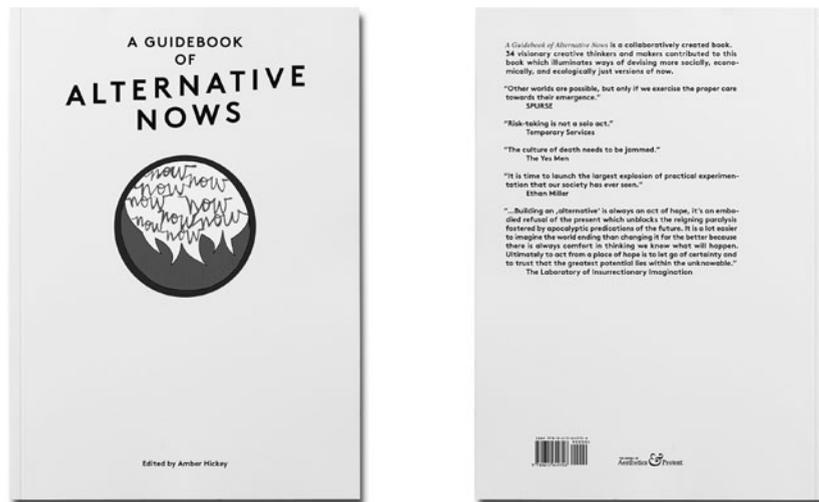
⁶ CIIS is a 'creative, curious, mindful, and socially aware' educational institution in San Francisco. Further info: www.ciis.edu

⁷ 'Waldorf (Steiner) education is a humanistic approach to pedagogy based on the educational philosophy of the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy'. The educational philosophy's overarching goal is to develop free, morally responsible, and integrated individuals equipped with a high degree of social competence. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldorf_education

people with the next print run. There were bookstores that we could not work with this time because they could not agree to the profit sharing model. If we print a second edition, everyone will already have been paid so we can focus on sharing the book with more people and be more flexible with how it's sold. I am also working on an online archive which will map alternative nows globally. I'm also involved in a new group called the UCSC Global Nuclear Awareness Coalition,⁸ which will publish papers and host local events relating to the politics of nuclear weapons and energy. There are many things in the works, but unfortunately people also need to sleep, so it's impossible to do everything you'd like to do at the same time! (laughs)

Definitely true! Thank you so much for your time and availability for this interview. All the best for your studies and projects!

My pleasure, thank you.



Guidebook of Alternative Now's, front- and backcover.



Launch in Los Angeles at The Last Bookstore with talks by Fallen Fruit (David Burns, Matias Viegner, and Austin Young), the Llano del Rio Collective, Watts House Project, The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, Billy Mark, and the Artist Bailout, 27 July 2012.

⁸ The Global Nuclear Awareness Coalition (GNAC) was formed by a group of scholars at UCSC to better understand and communicate issues related to nuclear power, energy sovereignty, and indigenous knowledge. It plans to share information about research with the greater Santa Cruz community regarding the future of nuclear technologies.



The two teams of Democratic Europe Now and of Northeastern Transeuropa Caravans on their way to Poland. © European Alternatives.

Daphne Büllesbach is one of the directors of European Alternatives and co-founder of the Berlin branch of the organisation. She plays an active role in the yearly *Transeuropa Festival of European Alternatives* and is particularly interested in developing an organisation that connects politics to grassroots ideas and initiatives. Previously, she worked in social science research and the evaluation of government programs. After her studies in Social and Political Science in London, Cambridge and Paris, she worked in international humanitarian development organisations in Belgium, Kenya, Morocco and Argentina.

Luisa Maria Schweizer, born in 1984, is an anthropologist and activist based in Berlin. She studied Cultural Anthropology and Modern German Literature and attended a Masters programme at Humboldt University in the field of Anthropology / Europeanisation. She was member of the research project *Other Europes / Europe's Others: Social Imagination in transnational movements and urban public spheres* of Prof. Dr. Regina Römhild.

Today she works as a social campaigner in the field of political education and is chairwoman of European Alternatives Berlin.

Interviewed by KM.

Interview

EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES

with Daphne Büllesbach & Luisa Maria Schweizer
European Alternatives Berlin

European Alternatives (EA) is a transnational organisation and network whose mission is to promote 'democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state'.¹ On a dark February evening, we met up with Daphne Büllesbach, Citizenship and Democracy Director at EA, and Luisa Maria Schweizer, City Coordinator of the local Berlin chapter of EA. Daphne has a background in political science and European Studies, Luisa studied anthropologist. Both co-founded the Berlin group and were happy to tell us more about their current activities, motivations, missions and goals with EA.

How did you guys get involved with European Alternatives?

DB: I studied with one of the founders. Back then, it didn't exist yet but I knew Lorenzo Marsili, one of the co-founders. By chance, I was actually in Kenya at that time, when I received a newsletter where EA was mentioned. I stumbled upon my study colleague's name thinking, hey, I know this guy! I checked the website and saw the open call for participation for the foundation of the Transeuropa network. This happened back in summer 2010. That's how I got involved with it. It's been around three years now, I was elected Co-Chair of the Cooperative (the grouping of all city coordinators) and I sit on the trans-national board of EA. And for the last 6 weeks, I have had a full-time position with them!

LMS: I also got involved via the university. I was part of a research project called *Other Europes*² and it dealt with imagining new spaces with urban actors and such. During my research on the agency of non-governmental organisations within the EU, I came across European Alternatives. I contacted them for an interview and first I got involved with them as a researcher, conducting interviews, participating in their meetings to do participatory observation and writing about all of it. During all of this time, I had difficulties to draw a line between doing my research and getting involved. After the project, I just continued attending their meetings and

¹ More info: www.euroalter.com and also <http://citizenspact.eu>

² More info: www.euroethno.hu-berlin.de/de/archiv/studienprojekte/other_europes/ueber

stayed involved ever since. I am on the board of the Berlin association and also a founding member, but I have never had a paid position.

When did you become a formal association and why did you decide to organise yourselves formally?

IF YOU WANT TO TAKE BIGGER STEPS WITH A GROUP, YOU NEED A STRUCTURE WITHIN WHICH TO MOVE

DB: We formed the association in summer 2012. It was a process of one and a half years, it took ages! We took this step out of pragmatic reasons. If you want to take bigger steps with a group, you need a structure within which to move.

LMS: To apply for funds, you usually need to have a formal structure around it. They won't give money to Hanni Müller.³ (laughs)

How is European Alternatives structured in general, being a larger international network with many local groups across Europe?

DB: The basic idea is the Transeuropa network,⁴ which was initiated in 2010. People were either asked directly to join or joined because they got to know about it by chance, as I did. At some point, we had representatives of EA in eighteen cities all over Europe with local groups around them. Some of them institutionalised themselves, such as the groups in Barcelona, Amsterdam and Berlin. There is EA Ltd., the mother organisation based in London where it was founded in 2007 (with the idea of running the London Festival of Europe – the predecessor of the subsequent Transeuropa Festival), followed by the formalisation of the groups in Paris, Rome, and Cluj-Napoca. Those are the four original cities in which the Transeuropa Festival⁵ took place twice before becoming bigger and more known.

When did the first Transeuropea Festival take place?

DB: The very first one took place in London in 2008. Then, in 2010 and 2011, it was organised in the four cities mentioned above. The festival in 2012 was the first very big festival with around twelve participating cities in which we also took part.

And that was the first time the international outreach was enlarged...

LMS: Exactly.

DB: It is one of the founding principles of the two co-founders Niccolo Milanese and Lorenzo Marsili. The two were living in England then and were worried about the Europe-sceptical tendencies that were developing at that time. They had the

³ German synonym for the 'everyday man', such as John Smith and Joe Bloggs.

⁴ The Transeuropa Network includes local groups of activists and members working together on the emergence of a new European politics, culture and society. More info: www.euroalter.com/who-we-are/our-network/local-groups

⁵ Transeuropa Festival: 'Transeuropa Festival is a unique transnational festival of culture, arts and politics, taking place in 13 cities all over Europe. Through a series of linked practices, events and discourses – from panel discussions to performances, video screenings and forums – it produces a shared and collaborative space, to promote an alternative idea of Europe.' Source: <http://transeuropafestival.eu/about>



Theatre and performance art during the Transeuropa Festival in Lublin.

© European Alternatives.

exact opposite opinion and wanted to create something to oppose these developments. By weaving-in artistic elements and formats, they wanted to reach out to a large number of people. They were very successful with their concept in London. When the support from the British Council and the German Goethe Institute was confirmed, they knew: "OK, let's do it". That's how European Alternatives came into being and it's been growing ever since.

What happened during this first festival?

DB: Good question, I wasn't there yet! (laughs) It was probably not that different to what is happening these days. There were classical debates about topics that we're discussing today. For example, the question of how England positions itself towards the EU. I studied in London myself and I have to say that it's quite rare to find people who openly declare themselves as Europe-friendly.

It's interesting that EA found its starting point in London, while becoming so important in other European countries. What's the background of its founders?

LMS: Lorenzo is Italian and Niccolo British, from Wales with Italian ancestors. They both were really young when they founded EA. Lorenzo is only turning thirty this year, and Niccolo 29, so they were around 22, 23 back then.

How do people know about European Alternatives, how do you attract new members? Do you have a certain strategy of getting people involved?

LMS: There are always some people interested in our activities and we usually invite them to our meetings. At some point, we were drowning in work and wanted to get more people to join the team, so we organised an info night where we invited people via different mailing lists and social networks. Around 25 people showed up, which was a good number of people. For us, it is always a good way of structuring

our own work, of presenting ongoing projects and such. Sometimes, people from our networks also come up to us and say: "Hey, I've got a friend moving to Berlin looking for meaningful projects to join, could he come by?"

DB: It has always worked quite well with our group in Berlin, I don't think it's like that in all of the other cities. Berlin works quite well in comparison to other groups that struggle to find enough volunteers because it's a city people often move to to find new projects and inspiration.

That would be my next question: how do you keep people on board?

DB: *Engagement strategies*, the big old question! Well, *clicktivism*⁶ for example would be pretty much the opposite of what we do – we don't want to simply activate people, we also want to interact on an interpersonal level to *empower* them. I believe we've managed quite well to establish these kinds of contacts. Of course, this requires a lot of engagement and time.

Our main strategy is to offer interesting projects where people can get involved, such as the festival. It's a recurring event which always gets people excited. Of course, it will be difficult to keep people's interest up until the next festival in 2015 with a break in 2014, but it has worked quite well over the past few years.

Members can also suggest something and participate with their own ideas during meetings amongst our various local groups. So far, these ideas have been traveling and were communicated quite well amongst our network and the employees of EA – don't you think, Luisa?

LMS: Of course, one tends to have the ideal that all people are as enthusiastic as oneself and are as happy to participate and contribute in the same engaged way as one is. This ideal is naïve. It does not work out in most cases. People are always subject to changes in their life circumstances, such as having a high workload in their studies or workplace, getting pregnant, losing interest and such.

I believe the trick is handing over ownership to people by giving them the possibility to become part of the project. If you bear responsibility, you become irreplaceable.

This is really crucial. We already had people come by and you could immediately tell they had no genuine interest, but an engagement motivated by polishing their CVs. This is not the idea.

I agree about the sense of ownership being crucial to any kind of work. European Alternatives is basically offering a platform to turn project ideas real.

DB: I think this is our formula for success. It gives us the possibility to get people's commitment. The two of us got engaged with EA in a similar way – we wanted to start a project and needed to found an association in order to do so. Last year, we

THE TRICK IS HANDING OVER OWNERSHIP TO PEOPLE BY GIVING THEM THE POSSIBILITY TO BECOME PART OF THE PROJECT

⁶ Clicktivism describes internet activism, often criticised as lacking actual engagement with real-world issues.

filed an independent project application for which it was really useful to have EA in the back. Applying for grants as an individual is almost impossible. It works in both directions: we need the organisation, and the organisation needs the ideas. Of course, there can be dry seasons without anyone wanting to commit.

LMS: It's something we're trying to sell all the time – the possibility to turn your ideas into reality, being supported by a basis of knowledge, hunger for activism, enthusiasm to change something... Being able to pitch your idea and to find people by articulating your thoughts and develop them further, using the Europe-wide network is a rare opportunity! Sure, it quickly becomes boring if this opportunity is not taken.

The projects you're currently working on, are they all being realised network-wide or do they depend on local groups?

DB: Both. For example, the project *Making a living*⁷ was initiated by a guy in London. By spreading the word in the whole network, other groups joined the project as well. This was basically a *peer-to-peer project* because they didn't need the organisation. The project only happened through the support of the network. Therefore, the concept that ideas spring from the network is really important to us. We put a lot of energy not to lose this potential by keeping people motivated to be part of it.

It's also motivating to see things happening in the individual local groups if it's well communicated.

LMS: Yes, definitely! It's much easier to contact a local group in Bulgaria, for example, if I know what they're up to. We all share a common basis, therefore it's easy to cooperate over the distance.

It's almost like a family spread all over Europe...

DB: It sounds quite simple, but if you think about it there are not many organisations that invest such amounts of time and resources into their networks. When I was working for another organisation, we always struggled to find partners in other countries to collaborate on transnational projects. This is never a problem with EA. Don't get me wrong – we're not a network to file successful grant applications, but the people in the network are a real treasure with potential for continuous growth. I am curious myself to know how it will all continue, especially with upcoming generational changes. Myself and all the others still belong to the first generation, but what happens when all the people who built up the whole thing leave?

How do you communicate within the network? Are there regular physical meetings?

LMS: Mainly, we communicate via email and Skype. The members are informed through newsletters and such, through which also non-members are informed about events and projects. When I started with EA, we met around 8 times per year somewhere in one of the participating cities to work together over a weekend. I find these physical meetings very important because you actually get to see people

and have a direct and more engaging contact. You work a lot more effectively face-to-face than over distances.

How many people are employed with EA and how do you manage financially?

DB: We are around eight to ten people, not all of them are working full-time. How do we manage financially? In short: through successful grant applications! Niccolo and Lorenzo are real champions with this, otherwise we would not be where we are today. Of course, the project is great as well. So far, most money came from the European Union Commission, open calls to which we respond. But we also get quite a bit of private funding from foundations, such as the Open Society Foundation⁸ for example, or the European Cultural Foundation.⁹ All the employees are included in the challenge of finding new money sources. My salary is only secured until October. It has always been a bit like that though. Somehow, it has always worked out so far. Of course, it's all a bit insecure because of the dependency on grant givers, not producing our own profits.

So most of the time, people are volunteering on the side of a paid job, which of course is not the ideal scenario, making people's commitment subject to life changes as you have said before...

DB: Yes, that's true.



Consultation on Roma rights for the *Power People Participation Project* in 2011.

© European Alternatives.

⁷ More info: www.euroalter.com/projects/making-a-living

⁸ www.opensocietyfoundations.org

⁹ www.culturalfoundation.eu

With your mission, you try to be open to all – do you still have some sort of target group or specific people you are trying to reach out to?

LMS: We don't have any target group. Yet, we always reach a certain group of people: academics, people between around twenty and thirty-five years old. We are aware of that, but it's not our goal. We try to deal with this fact. One challenge for example is language – when there is a presentation, it should be in German, otherwise local people would not be able or attracted to join. On the other hand, it immediately becomes exclusive for those who don't speak German. It's difficult to deal with such things.

DB: We try to be inclusive and participative at all times. For example, when we speak about Roma rights, we have to include those people who are directly affected by such problems and therefore speak *with* them, not just about them. We organised round tables in order to create the Citizens' Manifesto with the idea in mind that participating has to have very low barriers, otherwise minorities would not be interested. It has worked really well; in Bulgaria and Romania, we had citizen tables with locals actually participating.

When it comes to target groups, a lot of grant givers always complain that we are a multi-issue organisation. They ask us to concentrate on one topic to make everything simpler. We always insisted on being a multi-issue organisation though because our overarching mission of 'equality, democracy and culture beyond the nation state' cannot be reduced to one topic. All the topics we're dealing with are interconnected. It's also about creating a post-national construct. We need to think about what this could actually look like. There are lots of people writing and thinking about this as for example Robert Menasse, or the Young European Federalists (JEF). Our mission is relatively radical and wide with no specific target group and we address many issues.

OUR OVERARCHING MISSION OF
'EQUALITY, DEMOCRACY AND CULTURE
BEYOND THE NATION STATE'
CANNOT BE REDUCED TO ONE TOPIC

It allows you to react quickly on current and ongoing topics.

DB: Exactly!

LMS: Yes, I agree with all of that. Still, I sometimes find it difficult. I understand the claim of EA to only be able to achieve our mission as a multi-issue organisation. At the same time, it becomes difficult to be an expert in all of these areas. It would work better if there was an overarching organisation with lots of small ones underneath, all being experts in their respective fields. I sometimes feel like I'd like to express holistic views on everything, but I also know there are certain areas that are just not mine.

DB: This is exactly the founding thought of our organisation and our founder Niccolo; exactly because of this, we cannot turn into a single-issue organisation. The idea is that every citizen should be able to express an opinion – being an expert or not. People should always have the possibility to express themselves and feel empowered to do so. EA aims to empower people to express their opinions on political

issues without having studied political science. None of us feels like an expert on all of these issues – but maybe that's exactly what we need to free ourselves from. We can sit at a round table and talk about Roma issues without being well-versed in the topic simply by expressing our opinions. It's all about participating, not about being an expert in order to keep barriers low for participation.

PEOPLE SHOULD ALWAYS
HAVE THE POSSIBILITY TO
EXPRESS THEMSELVES
AND FEEL EMPOWERED
TO DO SO

It's a nice thought— many people hold themselves back from participating by thinking to be unable to grasp what politics are all about.

I'd be interested to know more about the methods you used to involve people in the making of the Citizen Manifesto, it seems to have worked out really well to get people participating?

DB: It was the simple method of the World Café.¹⁰ We organised around 300 round tables over 3 years about a specific topic. In the first phase, opinions and ideas were exchanged which were then developed into concrete political proposals by experts in a second phase. In Berlin, we had a session on 'welfare', where experts from the basic income movement brought in their expertise. In my opinion, this method has worked quite well. Of course, we could have reached out to more people, but we're happy we got thousands of people involved and now have a book in our hands to be shared with others.

Plus, you plan to increase its impacts through the *Transeuropa Caravans*,¹¹ a project you're currently working on...

DB: The basic thought about the project is to turn its initial concept around. Instead of people coming to where we are, we literally drive to where they are. We're currently working on the details, then I can tell you more... (laughs).

Are you planning to use specific participatory formats?

DB: The bottom line of our participatory success is the network, after all – people who were once engaged with us can now locally coordinate and organise amongst their networks or people and initiatives. It would be impossible to coordinate all of it from elsewhere.

With formats, you probably mean such things as 'fishbowls' for discussions etc., but that's not the plan for this trip. We don't want to drive to market squares and open up a stand to discuss the manifesto. It could work a few times maybe, but we're more interested in using cultural interventions within our work. It's always

¹⁰ The World Café is a structured conversational process in which groups of people discuss a topic at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and getting introduced to the previous discussion at their new table by a "table host" Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Caf%C3%A9_%28conversational_process%29

¹¹ The *Transeuropa Caravans* project consisted of six caravan teams taking off simultaneously through different parts of Europe to visit small local initiatives to amplify their voices. Visit: <http://citizenspact.eu>

been important to us to involve performers and artists. We're currently in touch with Kim, who's quite an expert with such things.

Last year, we organised a beautiful performance called *AIR Time*¹² which took place simultaneously in different cities around Europe. It was a very exciting format. Of course, it has its limits but it has the potential to be developed further. In 'new-German', you might call it a '*flash mob*', a one-off thing that can be reproduced.

Simultaneity is an important momentum for us at EA; to do things trans-nationally and possibly simultaneously. The *Transeuropa Festival* happens simultaneously, the *Transeuropa Caravan* project happens simultaneously – it was a conscious decision *not* to drive through Europe over a period of three months, but instead to have six teams start simultaneously in different cities. It shows the many layers of the project and re-enforces the idea of collaboration.

I'd be interested to hear more about EA using cultural formats to communicate political content, rather than writing academic articles by making things visible on the street.

LMS: I think culture makes things much easier to approach, you see something concrete and a much wider range of sensory perceptions are activated; I can hear, see, participate, feel. I believe this is something very important. Artists are often naturally concerned with the given political conditions. Collaborating with them, we double our audience – we reach out to both the politically and the culturally interested.

DB: We're also hoping for artists to take over this role, being intellectual people others listen to. It's not an explicit demand from myself, but I'd like to see more artists doing this!

You managed to get artists of quite high international profile such as Tania Bruguera¹³ on board – how did you do it?

DB: I believe Emanuele just wrote her an email and she immediately said yes?!

LMS: The artists we got involved are concerned with very similar topics like us, so it was quite easy to convince them. It also depends on how much you expect such people to do for you. They can support our project, for example with a protectorate as consultants on the board of the organisation.

DB: Tania Bruguera has been amazing! I didn't know her from before, but she is putting in much more time than we asked for, meeting our local group in Paris and such. It is very motivating to see motivated people joining us.

¹² *Air Time* was a one-off public performance during the *Transeuropa Festival* 2013 taking place simultaneously in different cities around Europe.

¹³ Tania Bruguera is a Cuban installation and performance artist engaged in socio-political activist art practice. More info: www.taniabruquera.com

I really find this kind of collaboration exciting! I wonder how 'official politics' perceive what you do?

LMS: I feel like we get a lot of positive support in Germany. If you say you're young and engaged for Europe, most political foundations and old-established politicians love you already, even if they don't exactly know what we do. They have this image of an old Europe as a space for peace, without borders and war... so far, we haven't really gotten any negative feedback, no?

DB: We have quite strong contacts with people in the European Parliament, who are very helpful as a bridge to what you call 'official politics'. It is true that we have less contact with conservative politicians, but they are usually less interested in what we do.

Is there anything that went totally wrong during your time with EA? What did you learn from it?

DB: There was this one very embarrassing thing with a movie screening during the Transeuropa Festival three years ago. We were in touch with a Roma organisation

YOU HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL IN THE PORTRAYAL OF A MINORITY AS AN OUTSIDER

who wanted to show a film on Roma rights. The portrayal of the Roma was stereotypical and superficial. I hadn't watched the movie before, which was a big mistake. We had arranged everything in a café, but when we first previewed it internally we decided it was impossible to show. One of our video teams had

created the movie; of course, they didn't mean it that way, but I think you have to be very careful in the portrayal of a minority as an outsider.

You mentioned the term empowerment before, what's your understanding of it?

DB: I'd refer to what I said before: that you don't need to be an expert in something to be able to have an opinion.

LMS: Beyond that, I believe it's about helping activists help themselves, about showing the possibility to do something without having to be guided throughout the process. Giving as less as possible to give people the feeling of ownership.

DB: An underlying idea of the Caravan project is its claim "Connecting local alternative voices". We want to give people who are already active a European perspective for their local struggle, with us being the vehicle showing existing possibilities of participation. Realising that we all struggle with the same issues all around Europe. This is also what I'd call empowerment.

One last question: what's next, what's the vision of EA?

DB: We're always facing the problem of being a multi-issue organisation and therefore always have to fight for our credibility on the issues we're dealing with. Our vision is to give more people a voice through more members and activists. We'd be happy to become a mouthpiece for people in Europe, because we can represent different ideas and core values such as diversity, equality, democracy, solidarity, etc.

These values need to be fought for such as civil rights, they always needed to be defended, it is important to us to do this at least Europe-wide but also beyond. And it is important to us that the perpetual crisis discourse doesn't dis-empower people but politicises them in a way that they collaborate and actually change something about this status quo. If we can reach this with EA we are getting far.

Thanks for the great interview!



Asking 'Who does Europe belong to?' during the Transeuropa Caravans tour in 2014.

© European Alternatives.



Tiina-Kaisa Laakso-Liukkonen © Chris Vidal Tenomaa.

Tiina-Kaisa Laakso-Liukkonen, MSc. (Tech) Industrial Engineering and Management, has over 25 years experience with development work and projects in the private and public sectors. Project and change management, business planning, feasibility studies, as well as financial analysing and impact studies, have always been very strong and essential part of Tiina-Kaisa's work and responsibilities. In 2010-2013 she worked in the *World Design Capital Helsinki 2012* project as an administrative director and continues now as a project manager in the *Design Driven City Project*. She has been a member of the management team in the strategic and administrative issues in many expertise organiaations.

Interviewed by AFL.



Interview

DESIGN DRIVEN CITY

with Tiina-Kaisa Laakso-Liukkonen
Project Director, Design Driven City, Helsinki

Design Driven City (DDC)¹ is a two-year initiative with an aim to bring design and the public sector closer. The project's purpose is to develop both cities and designers. DDC has two main goals: strengthen the use of design in city development through its own design experts, City Designers, and to increase the public sector's awareness of the significance of design.

How do you talk about, frame or understand the word 'design' in your project?

I don't have any design background. My background is production engineering and chemistry, but I have been doing consultancies and acquisitions in many areas, and project management in different businesses.

In our project I usually use a word which is not theoretically correct, because we are talking about an 'enlarged design approach' which is, I know, not an expression people are normally using. We do appreciate the traditional design approach, and we value that it gives a form to subjects and puts the user into the centre of designing. In DDC we talk about **design thinking** and consider design as a tool added to other abilities. We consider design similar to developing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) abilities.

'User-driven city' or 'citizen-driven city' could equally be the name of the project, because we put the users and citizens at the centre of the project. People are not so familiar with design, so they always ask us: What's the difference between design thinking compared to lean-thinking, process-thinking or customer-centric thinking? What is the design thinking really adding to that? The simple answer is that we always think of the user.

How do you see the origins of DDC and how do they relate to the purpose?

In 2009, when the metropolitan cities (Helsinki, Espoo, Kauniainen, Lahti and Vantaa) decided with the design organisations and ministries that they would apply to host the World Design Capital (WDC) in 2012, they wondered if it could increase

¹ Design Driven City, www.toimivakaupunki.fi/en

the understanding of design in the public sector. Although the WDC 2012 was a three-year project it was originally thought that the initiatives generated would continue until 2017. Through WDC 2012 they saw that the organisations involved had many networks and collaborations but that this project had been different in terms of how design was perceived. They wanted to continue the work that was created, the connections and the 'trust of doing together' that were established. It was also seen that in the public sector, the cities, the civil servants and people in city organisations at different levels had started to understand that there is something, especially in **service design**, which is useful, and they wanted to know more, enlarge their interest and expand their knowledge. So, the Design Driven City project was initiated.

It sounds to me it is also like a cultural understanding that you are trying to develop, a change of culture?

Yes, yes.

What do you see as the main purpose for DDC?

If there's only one target, it is decision-makers but also developers and people who are involved at different levels in the cities and municipalities. After this two-year project (ofDDC) what we would really like people to remember is that design methods and design thinking are worth taking into account. It's really about raising this awareness.

There are ten statements/principles about a design-driven city on your website.² How did you create these?

It is a combination of different discussions throughout the year 2013. When we started to do the strategy for these two years, we met with different civil servants, citizen representatives, the various design organisations and design companies to explain what we are going to do. We asked for many opinions involving over

100 people and, of course, our Board. Riikka Salokannel, from the city of Lahti said, "DDC is like a two-year prototyping project with the product called 'city'". What we are doing is really trying to find a way to include design as a natural and essential part of the city organisation's life. We are starting with some methods and

approaches, but we are prototyping all the time, changing and testing and doing differently. We see that everybody is learning alongside and with each other.

Who are the people at the moment with know-how and expertise in design and other areas?

FIND A WAY TO INCLUDE
DESIGN AS A NATURAL AND
ESSENTIAL PART OF THE
CITY ORGANISATION'S LIFE

² Ten principles for DDC, www.toimivakaupunki.fi/en/ten-statements



Design Driven City Project © Kalle Kaitala.

There are different kinds of experts including decision-makers and influencers, people that others follow and listen. The mayors and deputy mayors are very important. They are people willing to listen and follow what we are doing. In a way they are also experts because they take our message to the level of design decision-making. So, in the hierarchy of the public sector and city organisations there are many different kinds of experts. I do see that the so-called Design Agents³ group, which we formed, is the most important messenger. This group of 500 people, of which fifty to one hundred are active, are becoming the experts in this field and opinion leaders. For example, Pekka Sauri, the deputy mayor of the city of Helsinki and Hannu Penttilä who is responsible on the technical side. There is an attitude to see and follow what is happening. They are curious and willing to see what it is about. Because of the hierarchy in cities you always have formal and informal groups around some project or theme. The informal environment is very important. Now DDC has to work out how to feed this positive feeling of getting together, continue in the right direction and function, in the end, how to continue without us.

You seem to be saying that some of the cultural change happens in the informal environment. Is that what you are seeing?

That's what I'm seeing already. We started four months ago and we are learning now and asking: How can we speed that up?

³ DDC's Design Agents group, www.toimivakaupunki.fi/en/design-agents

How do the projects involve *stakeholders in problem definition*? We can see design as a problem/solution activity, but if you don't define the problem correctly you don't get the right solutions. How are the projects set up, how do you involve stakeholders and how are problems defined and owned?

When we started the main principle was, because we only have a two-year timeframe and our resources are somewhat limited, that we wouldn't start our own projects or finance them. We join on-going projects⁴ where the *ownership* is very strong. Projects currently include school dinners, the Kaisa library, youth homelessness, tidy construction and building sites, and a festival park. We have some criteria. These projects must have resources, the owner must be extremely committed, and the prime-time of the project must match our timetable, 2014-2015. There are hundreds of development and planning projects going on in the partner cities, but it was difficult to find the right projects for DDC. Now we have ten projects we are working on. In a really big project like the homelessness one, A Home That Fits, it took two months to really find and define the problem with the project group. We are trying to use this knowledge, about how to find the problems, to help the cities and the design companies to work together. How to tackle this is really an issue.

How are the three 'City Designers' you appointed working with the projects?

They have different roles in these projects. They are experts and, also, helping hands managing the design processes and working with other experts. On smaller projects we can work throughout the project. As you (Alastair) have been doing the city of Lahti's open co-design strategy, we are also open for participation. When these project teams/owners co-operate with us, they are willing to tell everyone

who is keen on what they are doing and people can join the projects.

How do you, or your project owners, include the citizens through your networks and platform?

Each organisation's knowledge of using design as a development tool is specific. They give examples in their own organisations and in their administrative areas which are very different. So, for example, the city of Helsinki has 40,000 people in its organisation so citizens are involved in very different ways.

How do the project owners include the citizens, the activists, the professional amateurs...?

We have such different projects. We plan together with the project group how people, citizens and their customers are taken in to these projects.

WE PLAN TOGETHER WITH THE PROJECT GROUP HOW PEOPLE, CITIZENS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS ARE TAKEN INTO THESE PROJECTS

WE ARE PROTOTYPING DIFFERENT WAYS DESIGN CAN BE APPLIED TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Are you learning about and developing new tools to involve stakeholders, and is this part of the educational process that goes on to raise awareness about design?

Yes, we do have different targets and aims during these two years. Using different approaches and methods in city organisations to take citizens into these projects is one of our main objectives. It is natural, not an exception, and a normal part of the planning.

Who do you see, at the moment, are the early adopters of this way of design and who are the recalcitrants, the ones that are resisting, and why?

It is really funny. I cannot categorise that. We have noticed that the organisations that have been using and doing design work are actually passing on their knowledge to the organisations that don't. We personally contact organisations that are less willing to adopt this approach, we meet them and tell them about what we are doing.

That's interesting that you have an internal lobbying role within the cities and that you facilitate raising awareness.

Often in these technical and old-fashioned organisations they have not been using any design-connected methods. Our strategy is to tell them, "This is what we are doing, this is how we are doing it", leading to further discussions. We can offer this half-a-day consultancy.

How experimental do you think DDC can be?

I think that we are quite experimental already. When you think that in formal public sector organisations we are allowed to work as we are working now, it is quite exceptional. Even though we are required to get results and measure the changes, it is accepted that we are prototyping different ways design can be applied to the public sector.

Do you think that word, 'prototyping', gives a little bit of licence?

WDC 2012 was small-scale and we continue on a small-scale to try and do differently, in this sense it is prototyping.

How do you see the new knowledge and know-how you generate being disseminated?

Our wish, and hope, is that the availability and use of the knowledge would happen within the two year framework of DDC. Something we learnt from the WDC 2012 project is that people have to learn along the way, through the implementation of their projects. Learning along with the projects is one of our aims. We are planning to do a formal summary of our work, but it is the learning on the projects which is important.

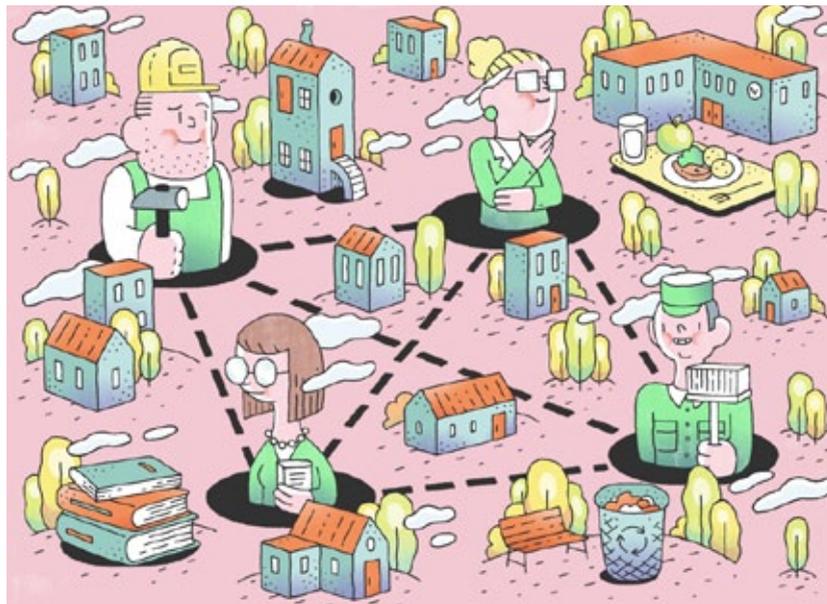
⁴ DDC's projects, www.toimivakaupunki.fi/en/projects

How will the success and impacts of DDC be measured?

That is something we've been working on with our City Designers. The design process is most important, but you have to have something concrete which you can then use, knowledge you have and generate. Therefore we are trying to describe the design processes we are doing in these projects. I do see that this half-a-day consultancy and the Design Agent group are maybe even more important to get the volume and the end result of the higher level awareness. At the beginning we didn't think about the importance of these two levels of functions, but during spring 2014 we noticed these are the ones people are interested in even outside Finland.

I think Helsinki was the first city to take in designers, as opposed to planners. Is DDC a pioneer for other cities in and outside Finland?

We are not aware of other cities doing something similar, but last October we went to Denmark to visit Christian Bason, Director of Mindlab⁵ at the time who has been working with the Danish government for the last ten years. He was very interested in knowing how our project is going on and to co-operate with us at the Nordic level, which indicates that not so many cities have been doing this. In a recent visit from a British ministry to Finland they also wanted to hear how the municipalities



Design Driven City. © Mikko Saarinen.

⁵ Mindlab, www.mind-lab.dk/en

are doing in relation to DDC. We know that the Finnish word 'kaupunkimuotoilija' (*urban designer*) was not heard much before DDC existed.

Do you have a sense of what the real agency of this project could be, in a best scenario?

The best scenario and most important influence would be that we encourage the total public sector (municipalities, cities and government) in Finland to get closer to each other, because it cannot continue to work as it does, it is too heavy.

So this project could have a positive impact if it creates more effective arrangements within the total public sector?

Yes. What I personally feel is that we need a new combination of voluntary work, the private sector and the public sector to work together. To get this new machine working, you would agree with me that this design approach can show how this sort of change can be done.

Yes, I think so. Design at one level is very discursive. Co-design processes are gaining a lot of traction in society at the moment because there are physical tools for getting people to experiment, to understand how they can re-form things, or re-organise things. It is very tactile. Design embraces uncertainty, ambiguity, the willingness to prototype and learning by doing. It provides a good interface for these organisations that are struggling to deal with contemporary issues in an effective way and perhaps it is a neutral environment in way. They don't own design.

If we get something to work effectively it doesn't mean we have to withhold the savings. We can spend the money saved somewhere else.

You have highlighted a perception perhaps, that this design approach is just a way to achieve cost-cutting and 'design for social innovation' in the UK is sometimes seen in this way. That is not conducive to collaboration.

Picking up on the theme of agency, we are working closely with universities and educational institutions. Future designers maybe need to understand that the public sector could be a place where designers could work. Of course, the abilities that they would need to work in this sort of environment are a little different from the private sector. This could be another result for DDC.

FUTURE DESIGNERS MAYBE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE PUBLIC SECTOR COULD BE A PLACE WHERE DESIGNERS COULD WORK

Thank you very much Tiina-Kaisa for your time and thoughts.



Tools for the Design Revolution was initiated by the Institute of Design Research Vienna (IDRV) in 2010 by focussing on the debate of sustainable design, with research projects, workshops and discursive formats that finally accumulated in an exhibition project which was shown in autumn 2012 at the Designforum in Vienna. The IDRV is a non-profit association, making an independent academic contribution to the establishment of design science. Since its foundation in 2008 by Harald Gruendl, this extra-university institute has worked on interdisciplinary strategies of knowledge production and mediation and focuses on research in the areas of sustainable design and design history.

Harald Gruendl, born 1967, studied industrial design at the University for Applied Arts Vienna and co-founded the studio EOOS in 1995. In 2008 he founded the IDRV.

Marco Kellhammer, born 1988, studied industrial design and works with a focus on ethics and ecology in design. He works as a research assistant at the IDRV on the topic of sustainable development.

Christina Nägele, born 1976, studied cultural studies and aesthetic practice, working at the intersection of visual art, architecture and design in the areas of curatorial practice, cultural transmission and communication.

Case Study

TOOLS FOR THE DESIGN REVOLUTION

by Marco Kellhammer, Harald Gruendl & Christina Nägele,
Institute of Design Research Vienna

Purpose/aim of the project: To set up an exhibition and a book which make people think and act on their own. Our aim was to try out every tool ourselves, show what we have experienced and translate these findings in a visual, *haptic* and low-threshold way for a wide audience.

Names of people involved: Harald Gruendl, Ulrike Haele, Marco Kellhammer, and Christina Nägele in collaboration with Grafisches Büro,¹ BreadedEscalope,² Dankl-hampel, designaustria,³ Spirit Design,⁴ Animal Design Studio,⁵ Veronika Tzekova and others.

Key stakeholders: Designers, but also non-designers, autodidacts, researchers, specialists, students and experts.

Geographic location: Not bound to a certain location. The chosen examples and the book can be seen as blueprints for projects all over the world.

Supported by: Funded by The Technology Agency of the City of Vienna (ZIT), The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, departure and The Arts Division and the Culture Division of the Federal Chancellery of Austria.

Start date/Finish date: 2010 - ongoing.

Website or other online resource: www.idrv.org

¹ Grafisches Büro is an Austrian graphic design office. www.grafisches-buero.at

² BreadedEscalope is an Austrian design firm 'generating socially sustainable objects'. www.breadedescalope.com

³ <http://www.designaustria.at>

⁴ Spirit Design is a strategic design company based in Vienna. www.spiritdesign.com

⁵ Based in Graz. Animal Design Studio works on design projects that 'make sense'. www.animaldesign.at

BEGINNING

What triggered the project?

The questions: How to intervene in what is going on globally, how to be able to make sustainable design, how to do it yourself, and how to act yourself? How to empower yourself, designers and consumers with tools, so as not to be stuck in the circle of better and bigger?

HOW TO EMPOWER YOURSELF, DESIGNERS AND CONSUMERS WITH TOOLS, TO NOT BE STUCK IN THE CIRCLE OF BETTER AND BIGGER?

What was your motivation?

To bring together the research and knowledge generated and found by the institute during the last two years, and to make it available to a broader public. To develop, collect and try new and existing tools for sustainable design that are easy to use, free,

everywhere to find, simple, elaborate, fun, serious, philosophical, **interdisciplinary**, collaborative – and revolutionary.

Are there similar projects? Did these stimulate you and are you linked to them in any way?

Alternative ways of doing research, communicating and displaying knowledge has been a key interest of the IDR.V. We found stimulating models in the field of artistic research, as well as strategies of visualisation coming from the fine arts, or iconic books like Marshall McLuhan's *The Medium is the Message*,⁶ which nowadays might be called a picture book, but actually has become a scientific source.

There are two projects that inspired us the most, on a visual basis and with regard to contents. The first is Global Tools.⁷ Their idea of **empowerment** of each and every individual to act for themselves, on their own initiative is also very fundamental to our project, as well as free access to the tools. The second inspiring source is the *Whole Earth Catalog*.⁸ It was first published in 1968 by Stewart Brand and reissued at irregular intervals until 1998. Like our toolboxes, the *Whole Earth Catalog* has assembled a variety of useful tools that can help the individual and the established community alike to make the world better for themselves and for others. But we also call to not only look up preselected things. We would be delighted if people spent their time being curious, asking their own questions, looking things up, testing, and then sharing their knowledge.

⁶ McLuhan, M., 1967. *The Medium is the Message*. London: Penguin Books.

⁷ A loose, short-term consortium of Italian designers and architects including Ettore Sottsass Jr. and Andrea Branzi among others, formed in 1973 with the goal of promoting individual creativity while experimenting with the use of natural materials and traditional techniques in collective processes.

⁸ Brand, S., 1968. *Whole Earth Catalog*. Various versions of the catalogue are available here, <http://www.wholeearth.com/index.php>



Designforum Wien 2012. © Wolfgang Thaler.

What are/were the key organisational aspects and organisational structures?

Harald Gruendl, Ulrike Haele, and Martina Mara in 2011 conceptualised the idea of an exhibition project and acquired funding in cooperation with designaustria. Christina Nägele curated the exhibition together with Harald Gruendl. Marco Kellhammer started as an intern and stayed with the IDR.V. After the exhibition toured, the latter three started to conceptualise the book and wrote it together with the returned Ulrike Haele, as a team. **Collaboration**, teamwork and shared authorship became principle ideas of the IDR.V. Although not always easy in practice, we try to keep our roles flexible and work as a team.

ACTING & DOING

What are/were the key activities?

The exhibition; the development of model projects by designers in collaboration with the design industry; educational events such as workshops; discursive events inducing discussions and lectures; the book.

What are/were the key approach & methods?

To research strategies and methods towards a **socially and ecologically sustainable development** by using and developing free accessible tools or making them accessible. Documenting the hands-on research by using camera, creating catchy images which try to visualise complex causalities like disassembling a capsule-coffee-maker and show it next to a Bialetti Moka Express or comparing a Kalashnikov with a printer and its cartridge container as two examples of durability, resilience and easy to repair strategies. We set up the exhibition in wooden boxes, as to show the displayed items as tools. The original objects, our samples and books or creativity tools were

there to be touched, to be read and played with. This approach also was the starting point for the book: we conceptualised it as a manual, to keep it **low-threshold**.

How did you get people participating?

For the initial model projects we directly invited designers and artists and brought them together with partners from the industry to develop model projects on the topics of living, food and mobility which then were presented in the exhibition. We invited experts to our discussion format *Circle 0000x (r=y)*,⁹ we collaborated with people while doing a hands-on research and we tried to bring people to discuss about issues through small interventions. In our workshops with school classes, students but also professionals, we not only mediated our knowledge but we also gave the participants the possibility to share their knowledge and learn from each other.

What is/was essential for practical matters?

A hammer, a screwdriver, a kitchen scale, an ammeter, paper and pencil and a pocket calculator were essential tools to get to know about material use. We also used some numbers to calculate the environmental footprint of objects. In our research, we try to focus on the use of basic tools, our skills of talking to people, listening and visualising.

What are/were the key communication channels and methods?

Word of mouth, disseminators involved in the project like pupils, students, designaustria and the Vienna Design Week; printed invitation cards, posters, media contributions and social media.

What are/were the outcomes with reference to the target audience?

Finally by publishing the book we provide a compendium or handbook of sustainable design strategies and a collection of tools for an informed design process.

What are/were the impacts – target audience and wider?

One important impact of the exhibition was that it was invited to other institutions in Austria, to the designforum in Vorarlberg¹⁰ and to the Designmonat Graz.¹¹ For every location and context we adapted the exhibition to bring in regional topics and to link with agents from the region, in order to broaden the network.

The IDRv has since been internationally invited to lectures, to workshops by universities, cultural institutions, but also by economic players – all related to the topic.

⁹ Circle is an event series successfully launched in 2010 by the IDRv. The goal is to position – theoretically and discursively – the, unfortunately, still underdeveloped discourse on the development conditions, modes of action and interdisciplinary connections of design in Austria. The name of the series, Circle 0000x (r=y), refers to the circular design of the discussion, while the numbering indicates the intent to continue. More at www.idrv.org/circle

¹⁰ www.idrv.org/news/tools-for-the-design-revolution-designforum-vorarlberg

¹¹ www.designmonat.at

¹² www.niggli.ch/en

Finally the IDRv was approached by niggli Verlag¹² to make the book with the same name. We hope now that the book reaches an even broader audience because it is more enduring than the exhibition format.

What are/were the dates of special or key-events?

One initial moment was the invitation of Martina Mara and Harald Gruendl to the Lens Conference on *Sustainability in Design: NOW! Challenges and Opportunities for Design Research, Education and Practice in the XXI Century*¹³ in September 2010 in Bangalore, India. This was the key event to focus on **sustainable design**. A two-day workshop in June 2012 at the MAK Vienna,¹⁴ Museum of Applied Arts, was the starting point to test a few of our tools together with the participants. Finally the opening of the exhibition *Tools for the Design Revolution* in autumn of 2012 was a special event, which then was followed by invitations to exhibit in other institutions as well as on the International Interiors Show (IMM) 2013 in Cologne and on the 2013 fair in Milano. While exhibiting our research, it was important to exchange our knowledge and test our tools in workshops at a University in Chengdu, the University in Hildesheim, a Zumtobel workshop in Frankfurt, etc. There were also a series of discursive events on questions of sustainable design in the *Circle 0000x (r=y)* series and in the MAK Design Laboratory¹⁵ in 2014.

REFLECTING & SUSTAINING

How is/was the project sustained?

The ongoing work, like workshops and lessons on open education platforms sustain the project. All the content is published under a **Creative Commons** license and we would like people to share and participate in the Design Revolution.

What kinds of 'capital' did you use to sustain the project?

Since the project is rather low-budget, we were dependent on a lot of support from other people – friends, like-minded people or supporters. So there was a lot of human and social capital involved. But although it is low-budget, the public funding of the project was absolutely necessary to get our project done.

¹³ The *Sustainability in Design: Now!* Conference is a platform for sharing the latest knowledge and experiences in product, service and system design, to promote sustainable systems thinking in design education, research and practice communities. The conference approach is to look at various stakeholders in this arena – designers, design educators and design researchers – as a unique learning community. The objective is the creation of a new ethos within such a community, enabling all possible synergies and fruitful processes of knowledge and know-how osmosis and cross-fertilisation. Further info: www.lensconference.polimi.it

¹⁴ www.mak.at/en/mak_now

¹⁵ Design has a duty to improve our lives. In this day and age it is faced with the challenge of reconciling individuals' pursuit of prosperity with long-term social interests. This includes sustainable development, social cohesion, and lifelong learning. Digitalisation is opening up new possibilities, which should be used for positive change. The MAK DESIGN LAB is founded on this modified role for design. Further info: www.mak.at/en/makdesignlab

Is it self-sustaining now, or will it be in the future?

We hope that the ideas and tools spread, that people ask for our knowledge and share their knowledge – this is already starting to work.

Are you happy with the project?

Yes!

Would you change anything?

Although we are happy with our work, we would do a lot of things differently if we would have another chance – because we learnt a lot and we think that we could push things further. Plus, it always depends on the context, on what you are doing.

Is the project scalable?

The project can be scaled, for example we can do workshops or just some kind of intervention by showing a selected toolbox with its items instead of the whole exhibition. We would like to get people to be a part of the design revolution and share the knowledge. As mentioned above, all items are published by Creative Commons: Attribution-NonCommercial-Sharealike 3.0 Unported License.¹⁶

What are your future plans?

The next step is to start Tools for the Design Revolution as an open education project on iTunes U¹⁷ and other channels. We would like to make people participate in the project, generate model projects and share their knowledge.

OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

What were tangible outputs of the project? What was ‘produced’? How many people were involved?

We showed the exhibition three times, published a book in German and English language and are currently realising an open education course. There were many people involved, I would say more than fifty people who directly supported us, shared their knowledge with us and had a smaller or bigger impact on the project.

What capacity did you build? How did you change people's lives?

It's a big goal and it is very hard to say if we changed people's lives, but we very much hope that we at least changed the attitude of some people, and that we gave some people the tools to change their lives.

¹⁶ Which means you are free to share the material in any medium or format and adapt it, under the conditions of using the same license for non-commercial purposes and giving appropriate credit.

¹⁷ iTunes U is a platform created by Apple that makes it possible to provide and manage free and open educational material for students within a college or university as well as the broader Internet within the Apple iTunes Store.

LESSONS LEARNED

What can be given as advice for the readers?

Ask questions, go out, speak to people, look things up and share your knowledge!

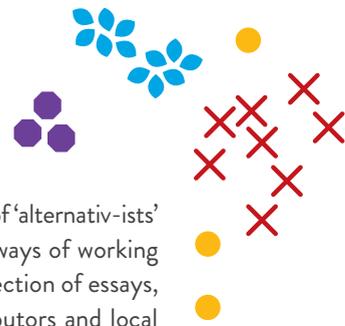


Designmonat Graz 2013 © Stephan Friesinger.

Fernando Lusitano - Reboot and remix your bodily/kinaesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, logic-mathematical, linguistic, musical, naturalistic and spatial intelligences (with thanks to Howard Gardner).

The Pages
94-480
are not
included in
the preview.

For the full book please visit
www.agentsofalternatives.com



Agents of Alternatives explores the visions, actions, tools and impacts of ‘alternativ-ists’ who are applying creative practices to forge plausible, alternative ways of working and living. It presents an integrated framework for navigating a collection of essays, interviews and case studies from well-known international contributors and local activists. These originate from diverse fields, including design, the arts, architecture, education, politics, economics, urban planning and city administration, social enterprises, non-governmental organisations, and experts on the Commons. They show how to engage with the locale, communities and distributed diasporas. Through their voices and actions they enable professionals, amateurs and citizens to understand the rich possibilities of creating and designing together in open, participatory and imaginative ways.

This book is an essential reference for *anyone* who wishes to become part of positive societal change. We hope it inspires teachers, students, activists, alternative life-stylers, and citizens who wish to *re-design our realities*.

Featuring the following projects and organisations in interviews and case studies:

Aalto Lab Mexico, A Guidebook of Alternative Nows, Anselma, A year of living Open Source, Bring Your Own Biennale, Community Lover’s Guide to the Universe, Design Driven City, European Alternatives, Global Village Construction Set, Institute of Design Research Vienna, Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie, Kuutio, Make{able}, Neighbourhood Labs, Fashion & Code, Open Green Map, OpenWear, Pixelache Festival, Repair Café, Satokartta, Tactical Technology Collective, The Beach Amsterdam, The Public School, Thinkfarm, Trade School, workstation ideenwerkstatt e.V., and ZEGG Centre for Experimental Cultural and Social Design.

With essays by: Cindy Kohtala, David Bollier, Frigga Haug, Michel Bauwens, Martin Parker, Otto von Busch, University of the Neighbourhoods, Valerie A. Brown & John A. Harris and the editors.

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www.agentsofalternatives.com

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