

New European Bauhaus

edited by



PATROCINIO
Comune di
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WHERE LEARNING HAPPENS

Education as an urban policy

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EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.

Three conversations about education and the city

In the course of our activities at Avanzi we observe phenomena, bring together experiences, and analyse policies that draw on the relationship between education and the city. The school drop-out rate is generally higher in the suburbs than in city centres. It varies in intensity between different cities, within the same metropolitan area, in the Central North and in the South. On the other hand, neighbourhoods perform the function of "educating community" effectively, because they have schools, operators, associations, groups, families and young people, all able to work in a network. **The fight against social exclusion is achieved by acting on people's abilities, paying particular attention to difficult neighbourhoods.**

However, the territory is not only the context where phenomena occur, the space favourable to the birth of certain practices, the target for area-based initiatives. Places count, but something more radical is at stake: **the education-city connection defines a specific policy field, with new actors and new stakes, altering consolidated interaction patterns and favouring unusual connections between problems and solutions.**

New actors are redefining their actions around this link, aware that innovation and sustainability are promoted through social learning: community hubs promote and practise non-formal learning pathways; there are schools that seek a field of experimentation for new educational practices in the city; third sector operators go beyond the comfort zone of providing services under an accreditation system; some universities practise an advanced version of the third mission; foundations see it as a field to enable the agency of new operators; businesses try to become actors in public policies; local authorities aim to experiment with integrated actions.

In our view, **what is at stake is to cultivate the "capacity to aspire" in people by organising learning contexts in which the body of the city is the teaching body:** one learns in the city, but one learns above all through the city, with the eyes of the city and having the city in sight. We learn when someone (or something) prompts us, enters into contact with our interests: the city is a stimulus.

It is also about **constructing new learning spaces**, in which to

encourage the production of usable knowledge and its testing, it's about enabling each other, helping people to form and test their skills through experience. It is to encourage the creation of a public voice within processes of urban regeneration and social inclusion, combining education and advocacy. **It is about developing knowledge that can lead to action.**

In this way, innovation can happen. We know: innovation is not simply what happens through change, but it is "the increase of forms of social and political rationality that is ultimately such in the eyes of interested actors, [...] it is only effective if it is learning" (C. Donolo, F. Fichera, *Le vie dell'innovazione*, Feltrinelli, 1998, p. 23).

The New European Bauhaus is the Commission's initiative aimed at giving space to social imagination in order to build a sustainable and inclusive future and promote a new idea of city living.

It aims to make the Green Deal a tangible and positive challenge, encouraging the exchange of knowledge between different disciplines and fields of action, between art and welfare, between science and education, between culture and technology.

In order to respond to the challenge launched by the New European Bauhaus and to contribute to the public debate on the crucial policy challenges that this initiative poses, Avanzi, together with the Municipality of Milan and Eurocities, has tried to focus on the education-city nexus, **the city as a learning community that cultivates people's skills and sets up spaces to support them.**

We organised three conversations on this subject in April and May 2021:¹ **In the first one (*Sustaining the capacity to aspire*), our focus was on people, presenting initiatives geared towards supporting their capabilities.** The conversation was guided by several questions: How do we build learning opportunities beyond school? Can the city be an enabling device for learning? How do we learn by relating to urban space?

¹The three conversations took place on 29 April, 6 May and 20 May 2021 respectively. They were consistently well attended and the recordings are available on the Avanzi facebook page. (<https://www.facebook.com/AvanziMilano>). Speakers are mentioned in the Credits. Alessandro Rancati (policy advisor of the Joint Research Center for the New European Bauhaus) contributed to all three conversations. Mario Bischof (City of Leipzig) and Anna Lisa Boni (Secretary General of Eurocities) also participated in the closing conversation. We would like to thank them all.

In the second one (*Educating in and with the city: schools and community hubs*), we sought the viewpoint that starts from urban spaces. We discussed projects where buildings which have been refurbished for social and cultural purposes produce public knowledge; community hubs offer educational programmes; neighbourhood networks act as educating communities and give rise to widespread learning projects. On the other hand, there are schools that aspire to become community centres.

In the third conversation ("*Where learning happens*": *education as an urban policy*), we tried to bring the two previous perspectives together. Based on Italian and European experiences that support creating a public voice within urban regeneration and social inclusion processes, combining education and advocacy, we discussed how an education policy as an urban policy can promote learning communities through comprehension and empowerment of people.

For those who want to experiment, the Bauhaus is a reference point.

We see it as an extraordinary opportunity to give substance to the idea of education as an urban policy. Living, producing, exchanging, moving can be generative practices of learning.

The city, even more so in the *new climate regime*, is not only the place where we set up our life plans, which we inhabit (more or less easily), but it has its own agency, it "inhabits" us. The reference to Bauhaus indicates an educational model that is still relevant today. It tells us that outdoor education is not enough if indoor education remains unchanged; that "doing school outside school" is a one-sided operation, because it is necessary to "do away with" didactic models that do not envisage learning in the course of experience, because education formed outside or in the absence of the practical dimension is useless; that we need to encourage a "reflective conversation" between our own aspirations and the space that will welcome them, making them interact with the other aspects of the world, to verify their consonance or measure their dissonance, thus opening up to more fruitful exchanges; that training as the acquisition of skills and methods serves those who provide it, but is misleading for those who receive it; that **it is time to place ourselves**

on the boundary between education and advocacy, to transform the desire to learn into the decision to participate and to undertake.

The new Bauhaus represents a call for interdisciplinarity, for the promotion of projects that are at the crossroads of several different disciplines. We like to interpret it, again more radically, as a project of crossing disciplines. In order to be fruitful, it must invite us to practice trespassing, to construct fields of research and intervention that disregard disciplines, betray them almost.

To be effective, it must support hybrid practices and encourage the emergence of a movement for the de-institutionalisation of urban space. It is, in our view, a practice of observation and action; an invitation to explore the city, to be taken by surprise; a promise and a readiness for new educational practices. **We understand it as a challenge to be taken up, one that is about the construction of learning communities in and with the city.**

Sometimes in life, we can have the luck to meet great masters, who are great masters because they teach without appearing to do so. Paolo Fareri was one of these great masters.

We owe the discovery of this quotation to him and it is an essential reference for working on the education-city nexus.

*«The best learning happens by surprise; it is very different from the normal process of deliberate education. Observing young children learning, it is still possible to guess what learning might be. Surprising things happen in cities, even though people, places and events are often predictable. The routine of life requires a certain regularity and imposes it through selective attention to what sustains our efforts. But often, when we have 'nothing better to do', when we are waiting, in transit, on holiday, out and about - or even occasionally, when we are busy with our tasks - cities surprise us. A particular scene - a place, the people in it, what they are doing - suddenly comes into focus. We see it as if for the first time» (Stephen Carr, Kevin Lynch, "Where Learning Happens", *Daedalus*, Vol. 97, No. 4, Autumn 1968).*

SUSTAINING THE “CAPACITY TO ASPIRE”: EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS FOR COLLECTIVE LEARNING

01.

The New European Bauhaus movement asks us to imagine innovative solutions to face the challenges of the present and the future, designing new ways of living – and new spaces to live in – that are beautiful, inclusive and sustainable, and that are able to connect different disciplines and types of knowledge.

To the call for a "New Bauhaus", Avanzi responds by identifying education as a possible engine of change and, in particular, as an **urban policy**.

→ **How to do this?** By designing new "educational experiments" in other contexts, bringing education back into the field of experimentation with reality and collective dialogue, eliminating the dichotomy between theory and practice, the dualism between minds and physical bodies that must once again inhabit space.

This thought arises, particularly during the **Covid-19 pandemic**, when the need for schools to break down barriers, physical and otherwise, is even more evident.

In this scenario, we imagine that the role of education becomes more widespread: the school must make contact with the city, and the city must set itself up as a new educational subject and, in doing so, focus its attention on individuals, encouraging them to develop their "**capacity to aspire**".

This is the nature of the projects presented during the meeting, selected as suggestions for the process of **co-creation** of the New Bauhaus. They are testimonies from cultural centres, associations and public administrations which have tried to rethink an educational approach from various viewpoints. Here people – children and adolescents, but also others – are truly at the centre of the situation. These are either experiments that have just been set up or are already underway, where the absence of a fixed role allows for transgression of customs and habits and the subversion of power hierarchies, towards processes in which "educated and educators" collaborate in the construction of a **transformative experience**, giving rise to processes of growth and collective capacitation or, as they say, empowerment.

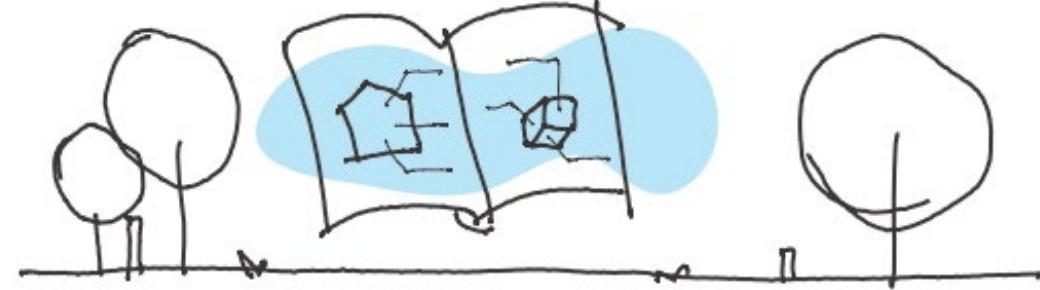
«NOT SCHOOLS WITH DESKS BUT NEIGHBOURHOODS, NOT TEACHERS BUT COMMUNITIES»

BASE – a hybrid cultural centre in Milan – approached the theme of education through the analysis of the contemporary: new social, environmental and educational challenges, which require alternative models of learning and new tools for future vision. Thus *Learning Machine* was created, an experimental project in the field of non-formal learning, strongly focused on a relational dimension and a **holistic model**. The participants come from different backgrounds and work in groups, crossing a plurality of views and perspectives, to question the present and the future and focus on personal vocations and talents through artistic practices.

The subversion here is in putting **creativity** back at the centre as a pivotal tool for managing complexity and uncertainty and working as a team in a society based on competition and individual success. In the absence of scales of merit and evaluation, Learning Machine focuses on everyone's thoughts, with the idea that change is built through **plurality**, of looks and voices, not only of those who are exceptional but also of those who are "normal".

"For us, these people are Outstanding, a term that sums up the talent of people who are outside a certain type of system" (Marina Mussapi, BASE).

Unfortunately the boys and girls on the *Se.Po.Pass* – Sentieri, Ponti e Passerelle (Paths, Bridges and Walkways) project run by the Quartieri Spagnoli Association in Naples are literally "outstanding", as they are either already NEETs or in danger of becoming **NEETs**. They are often from social and family contexts with a higher risk of delinquency. The proposal is a radical alternative to school: an environment where learning is fun, where students are active participants, able to take charge of the direction of the learning process, like educators usually do. This questions a form of conservative knowledge – from which these students are excluded – and favours a practice in which participation and not paternalism is central.



Se.Po.Pass bases its design **on empathy**, the recognition of different voices and experiences: NEETs and young people are simply a universe of different people, with an infinite variety of experiences, conditions and needs that must be listened to and valued in their singularity and complexity.

The last two projects, coming from the public administration, were focused **on listening**: *Wish MI* by the Municipality of Milan and *Neighbourhood Schools* promoted by the Urban Innovation Foundation and the Municipality of Bologna.

The first case aims to put the well-being of minors back at the centre of political agendas, and it does so by listening, asking those directly concerned (children, adolescents and families) to express their **wishes and aspirations**, thus shifting the power to decide onto those who are normally excluded.

Neighbourhood Schools, on the other hand, stems from the identification of citizens' needs and **requirements**, which emerged from the Neighbourhood Workshops.

It supports projects with a strong territorial focus, based on proposals from the community and which return to the community. These projects address **educational poverty**, but also fashion, music, theatre and crafts. They are developed through an alliance between citizens, the third sector and institutions – which alternate as teachers and students – and aim to build connections and encourage the development of skills and social energies in fragile neighbourhoods.

ASPIRATIONS TAKE SHAPE THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF THE POSSIBLE

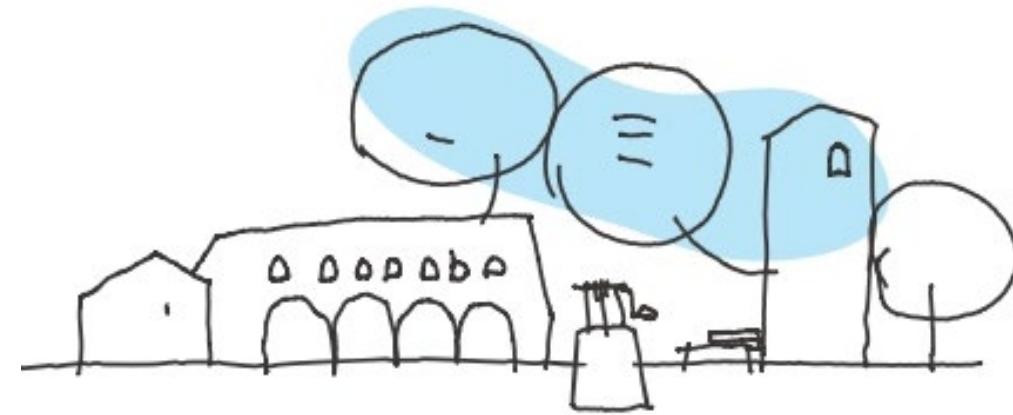
"Sustaining the capacity to aspire" is the title we have given to the meeting and to this article, borrowing an expression from the anthropologist **Arjun Appadurai**, to indicate that the future of children and young people is built by nurturing the possibility of dreaming, imagining and cultivating aspirations.

In doing so, as the above-mentioned practices remind us, it is important to recognise students as **active participants** in learning processes, capable of expressing their desires and wishes and of modifying the educational processes in which they take part. The idea of an "active" student and no longer just a "passive user" is at the basis of the very etymology of the term "educate", which comes from the Latin *educēre* and means "to draw out, to extract": students should not be "filled" but have potentials and aspirations to be cultivated, recognised and brought out.

This same idea underlies the pedagogical theories of the teacher, writer and activist **bell hooks** who, echoing the ideas of **Paulo Freire**, recalls: *«Those who teach must truly value the importance of everyone's presence. There must be a continuing recognition of how each person influences the dynamics of the classroom, and contributes to the learning process. These contributions are resources. Used constructively, they enhance the capacity of each classroom to create an open learning community.»*²

bell hooks calls for learning that stimulates the generative potential of plurality and difference, even more so for education that adapts and evolves according to the singularities it encompasses.

What if these learning communities went beyond the confines of the school? What if education became a tool through which to rethink the future of cities?



BRINGING EDUCATION BACK TO THE STREETS AND SHARING THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE WITH THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

We therefore imagine — and we do so above all by taking our cue from the projects described — **educational practices** that promote a drive for change in cities: a collective change — human and urban — that gives rise to learning practices and, even more, practices of **regeneration, rebirth and care** for neighbourhoods, cities and the communities that live there. ■

² bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Taylor & Francis 1994



LEARNING MACHINE, BASE, Milan

The Context

In a climate of great uncertainty and rapid change, the importance of learning as a means of relating to each other, inspiring each other and creating new visions for the future is growing. The Covid-19 emergency has highlighted the need to rethink our worldview beginning with the question

of how we learn.

Art and culture can be engines of innovation and inclusion, and offer tools to build imaginative futures useful for those who live in a condition of disorientation and questioning of their life plans. **In Italy, the predominant school system is characterised by strong inertia and is hierarchical and transmissive, with standardised**

learning times and environments, systems based on certification and hyper-specialised professionalism.

There are unexplored areas of demand that the traditional world of education does not fully satisfy.

In this context, hybrid cultural venues such as BASE provide space for experimentation, connect communities, and act as testing grounds for field-based, multidisciplinary, non-formal learning.

Creative hubs and cultural centres demonstrate their willingness to play a fundamental social role in promoting models of education with continuous and open processes that value the collective aspect and encourage the exchange of different forms of knowledge.

Such experiences foster the acquisition of key skills and competences to navigate complexity and promote participation in civic and social life.

Aims of the project

The aim of Learning Machine is to create new experimental learning models for those who have been, for various reasons, expelled from the educational and working system, thereby helping them to carry out a re-training process that stimulates new visions and knowledge.

The project seeks to configure a "new school" that is inclusive and experimental, able to combat educational poverty and offer new skills.

"From schooling to learning": not the transfer of information and hard skills, but training in listening, in creating new visions, combining knowledge and humanity and emphasising the relational dimension of learning.

As opposed to *machine learning*, the proposed model is aimed at developing **soft skills, methodologies and tools that help participants to focus on their deepest vocations and to face some contemporary challenges through the exploration of artistic and creative languages.**

Target

The course is aimed at the "outstanding": anyone who is going through a phase of disorientation and/or transition, either personal or professional (e.g. school drop-outs, adolescents at risk of dropping out, post-maternity, 30-year-olds with low motivation who have been put in "cul-de-sacs" or back waters in the labour market, etc.) **and who wants to acquire the ability to build their own scenarios of future development, dedicating a window of their time**

to experimentation through an unconventional training experience. A learning pathway for those who are looking for a gap period that is not an empty period, a "condition" that can occur at different times in life, regardless of age and pre-existing skills. Thanks to **its strong transgenerational character**, the project also becomes an opportunity for people of different ages to meet, allowing a further transfer of tools and skills.

Main features

The model is organised around cycles and design challenges that have as their object the **creation of a collective work**, a participatory concept, festivals, activities, events, videos, performances, exhibitions, etc. Each module is open to 25-30 participants, and is defined by periods of practical and physical work, by meetings with creative professionals from the BASE community, and by periods of elaboration/interpretation. Because of the project's distinct **interdisciplinary and experimental nature**, it is possible to build disruptive models in an informal context where learning hierarchies, times and places are subverted. **The focus is on the how rather than the what**: peer-to-peer modalities with a strongly playful character are encouraged, in the

absence of judgements or certifications, where the collective dimension is central even with relation to the emergence of individual talents.

The project relies on the effectiveness of

- practices that **rethink inside/outside relationships**, frontal teaching/peer learning, standardisation/personalisation;
- **experiential and collaborative approaches**;
- processes that promote **self-reflection, peer-tutoring and feedback sharing** rather than formalised assessment;
- a **reconfiguration of the spatial dimension** through new flexible, diverse, open and non-hierarchical settings;
- a **more extensive and less rigid temporal organisation**, which makes it possible to add other activities organised within the places of reference.

State of progress

In May 2021, a **free ten-day pilot edition** of the programme was carried out to experiment with various training methodologies in order to test a prototype which can be fully integrated into BASE's cultural programme. Eight participants, "pioneers" and

co-designers of the new school, were guided by a theatre director and an expert in identity narratives so as to create a collective itinerary stimulated by creative artists and professionals, with workshops involving tightrope walking, nocturnal photography, graphic design and exploration of the senses.

The project is one of the key assets on which BASE intends to focus its energies in the coming years. The

aim of the piloting is to **test a model that can be scalable and replicable** and that can find its place on the market while continuing to guarantee accessibility (due to the offer of scholarships covering all and/or part of the enrolment costs) and economic sustainability.





Learning Machine and the New European Bauhaus

In 1919 the pioneers of the Bauhaus responded to the challenges of industrial modernity by founding a radical educational institution: the context that gave rise to that experience was one of profound crisis of knowledge, at a time when all existing principles were being questioned. Today we are faced with environmental, social, political and other challenges, which necessarily require alternative models of learning.

Learning Machine, in tune with the NEB, highlights the importance of a collective effort to envisage and build a sustainable and inclusive future. It is in fact only through the "reformation of education" (promotion of interdisciplinarity, lifelong learning, critical thinking, propensity for change) that it is possible to build new tools for future vision and solutions to the challenges of our contemporary world.





NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOLS, Municipality of Bologna

The Neighbourhood Schools (Scuole di Quartiere) is a project organised by the Municipality of Bologna within the framework of the "National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities".

The form and content of the **Neighbourhood Schools were built on the basis of the elements, requirements and proposals that**

emerged during the Neighbourhood Workshops. These were spaces for discussion and dialogue between citizens, which were activated in all the neighbourhoods in Bologna in 2017 and coordinated by Fondazione Innovazione Urbana with the Municipality. The areas of action were pinpointed by means of demographic and socio-economic data and

indicators, some of which have been collected and returned by using the Fragility Maps (Mappe della Fragilità); tools created at metropolitan level to navigate the new "peripheries", the fragilities and opportunities of the territory, and to direct political and administrative choices in those areas.

The Neighbourhood Schools **encourage the construction and strengthening of educative and supportive communities, weaving relationships of proximity.** The objective, pursued through different actions and approaches, is to break down physical and socio-cultural walls, bringing together different generations and cultures and regenerating places through "building together" to enhance talents and generate professional opportunities. **Community welfare and social innovation** are the key words in this project. The aim is to meet social, economic and cultural challenges through many small but important actions that make the **community the protagonist of a real change, thus combating isolation, discomfort and educational and relational poverty.** The territory thus becomes a place of informal learning and sharing of good practices.

They are not schools therefore, in

the strict sense of the word, but **participatory and educational paths, open and varied,** which take place in institutional spaces (such as theatres, museums, libraries), but also in streets, squares and parks, in the deep conviction that culture can really create communities of solidarity, where no one is excluded.

There are no desks, but neighbourhoods and their characteristics, together with the people who live there. There are no pupils but communities, no teachers but a network of organisations, bodies and associations characterised by an innovative and experimental approach and united by a common goal: to implement **projects and activities that aim to be generators and enablers of processes of change, starting from the specific nature of each area and interweaving with the stories and people who live there.**

Workshops in fashion, music, theatre, dance, handicrafts, new technologies and street furniture are just some of the activities planned by the Neighbourhood Schools; the focus of the activities — deeply rooted in the areas of the city and designed to respond to the specific needs of the territory — is on the youngest residents, but the initiatives put in place are also intended to be a

cross-sectional attempt to challenge educational poverty and social fragility and are therefore aimed at **broad and diversified audiences**. Examples include participatory "theatre without walls" programmes spread throughout the territory, activities to enhance museum heritage, craft workshops, courses in writing and reading aloud, outreach services for vulnerable people and the creation of a fashion line in which the young participants are involved in the entire production process. The aim of these individual and community-based activities is to **promote social**

inclusion and cohesion through culture and creativity, regenerating territories through the commitment of all the residents. Thanks to the promotion of this kind of initiative, which was then consolidated through twenty specific projects in Bologna, it has been possible to experiment with new educational approaches, while supporting the communities of young people with concrete projects based on the principles of inclusion and equal opportunity, also giving support to those whose work is to take care of people and places.





PATHS, BRIDGES AND WALKWAYS, Quartieri Spagnoli Association, Naples

A major structural problem

One of Italy's structural problems is the ineffective education system.

The number of young people who do not study and do not work and/or who are at high risk of exclusion is a major problem for which the European Commission has urged Italy in recent years to take appropriate action.

The persistence and growth of this phenomenon will lead to the growth in the numbers of young adults who will have very little opportunity to live a healthy life, bring up children and adapt to the labour market, and who will remain outside the continuing training processes that will be increasingly essential for everyone.

The young people who experience NEET are a very diverse group, requiring different approaches and provisions. In some cases they will be reintegrated into the normal school system by means of regenerating the school curriculum with and in schools. Of the more than two million young people estimated to be NEET (between 30 and 38% of their peers in the southern regions) there is, especially in the "social outskirts" of large cities, at least one third for whom it can be said that the remedial measures put in place by institutions and the private social sector are neither feasible nor effective. These are **people who have accumulated a wealth of demotivation, disaffection and dislike of schools, which almost always results in exclusionary behaviour.** They are already suffering, or are at high risk of suffering, due to *basic across-the-board incompetence*: unmotivated and with little self-esteem, they have built up a stock of inadequacies which, without appropriate intervention - neither simple or fast - feeds a vicious circle of exclusion. For girls, who often try to escape the situation with early motherhood, the risk of embarking on careers that are as difficult as they are exclusionary is high.

The need for an alternative approach

For years, even in Italy, second-chance school projects have been implemented that often still straddle the line between schooling recovery devices and substantially alternative, external approaches.

Paths, Bridges and Walkways for the right to growth and study (Se. Po.Pass) selected by Social Enterprise With Children (Impresa Sociale Con i Bambini), in the framework of the call for proposals "A step forward" ("Un passo avanti") was proposed by a nationwide partnership led by **the Quartieri Spagnoli Association and other partners** in Naples, Messina, Reggio Calabria, Milan and Trento. It is considered to be a brave proposal, one which is essentially outside the school.

The programme provides a new **two-year bridging course as an alternative to the secondary school one, which the Ministry of Education and the Regions will evaluate and may possibly adopt.** It is parallel to the existing courses, which are ineffective for this target group. In the very fragile areas of Naples, Reggio Calabria and Messina, after 4 months of executive planning and on-the-job training (of the trainers) with an initial group of students, 75

NEETs (25 per city) will be selected. They will be offered the chance to attend a two-year course, not aimed at returning to school but at encouraging the individual to sort themselves out. **An opportunity to regain their self-confidence, overcome stigmatisation, develop relational and social skills, the capacity to aspire, basic transversal competences,** with ease and pleasure in growth and learning, in constructing themselves by going into the outside world, overcoming existential patterns and exclusion traps.

By nurturing basic literacy in workshops on the body, food, sea, land, the students will be exploring play, rules, design, balance, challenge, dealing with failure, well-being and making things. The ecological dimensions of the content to be covered are therefore quite evident. The activities will start with practical workshops, lots of educational visits and Erasmus-type internships in Milan and Trento.

It is therefore a question of activating the students individually or in groups, and then sharing with teachers and tutors the in-depth study and documentation in the physical and digital portfolios that each student will build along the way.

Basic skills will be developed thematically around the concepts of measurement, narration and

explanation. With the use of digital tools in each activity, the following items will be produced: **autobiographical and individual portfolios**, including voice recordings, both on paper and digital format. **Visits and internships** in Naples, Milan and Trento will be very central to the course, as will the work experience gained in the **six-month internships in the affiliated workshops**, carried out in the second year. This is to maximise the opportunities for inspiration and wonder, using the **educational effects of travel** to the full.

The importance of serious involvement by institutions

Perhaps Se.Po.Pass is too ambitious a project. In order to design an alternative path to the two-year course and to realise innovations that are neither too unrealistic nor too vague, **collaboration with the institutions** willing to get involved is essential. In Messina, Reggio Calabria and Naples the partners are already at work and the first difficulties have arisen. The Miur (Ministry of Education), the Regions, the Municipalities and the schools have joined the formal partnership but do not provide strong cooperation. For some schools, NEETs can sometimes be a resource (at least as names to be kept on the list) to justify the demand



for a certain number of classes and teachers. Years of experience have shown that it is **essential to pinpoint a group of girls and boys with a specific profile:** neither those in extremely difficult conditions nor, on the other hand, those who, with a suitable effort on the part of the schools, can be brought back into the system. For this profiling of

the application it is essential that social services are strongly rooted in alliance with fully collaborative institutions. The project is driven by a conviction: different groups of people who experience deep discomfort and are exposed to chronic conditions of exclusion, **can only be the protagonists of effective pathways using an approach conceived within**



a differentiated and selective universalism, a type of welfare that can deal with differences.

The Italian school system is viewed by the ministerial leadership as a whole and every differentiation is interpreted as an opening to the risk of discrimination. A real subsidiarity with the third sector has not yet been achieved.

For the target identified by the project, the many devices (PON, Regional Courses, etc.), designed to improve the scholastic offer or to qualify the vocational training, are still completely ineffective. Se.Po.Pass is a test that began with a lot of enthusiasm and after years of experience and in-depth study, in the attempt to counteract the reproduction and expansion of the traps of creeping exclusion, currently happening in almost every social periphery of our cities.

Se.Po.Pass and the outlook of the New European Bauhaus

Se.Po.Pass, in line with the NEB guidelines, has a multidimensional approach. It invests a lot of resources in updating methods and training contents, focusing on Body, Earth, Sea and Food as essential elements to orientate the basic training of the young people who will have to develop a well- balanced

attitude, even more important than a study qualification.

The project does not attempt to start experimenting from scratch, but intends to organise practices and a body of experiences and reflections that have been carried out for years in different cities in the field of second-chance schools.

In short, the project wants to encourage institutions and the third sector to cooperate in the best possible way by putting into practice the work that has been done over the years, while giving a new status to the theoretical and practical model it intends to work on. The Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, also with the support of the EU, must participate in the ongoing and ex post evaluation of these practices and take an unprecedented step in thinking about a reform of the system that is not just an adjustment of the paths already established.



WISH MI, City of Milan

Wish MI is a project coordinated by the Municipality of Milan (Department of Social Policies and Department of Education and Instruction).³ It is co-funded by the European Union through the *Urban Innovative Actions*

(UIA) call for proposals, which provides resources to European urban areas in order to test innovative solutions to the challenges facing our cities today. The project has an ambitious objective: **to promote the multifaceted wellbeing**

³ The Municipality coordinates the project through the Social Policies Department (Rights, Inclusion and Projects Area and Territoriality Area), the Education Department (School and Educational Services Area, Children's Services Area and Youth, University and Higher Education Area) and the Mayor's Office with the International Relations Area.

of all the 230,000 girls and boys (0-18) living in the City of Milan, regardless of their economic, social, ethnic (etc.) status.

In order to achieve this objective, we intend to **create an integrated system of policies, programmes, services and opportunities that will strengthen and sustain the city's ability to read the needs, desires and resources of the territory and to devise appropriate responses**. This system is based on the collaboration of all City Council Departments, community service providers and, last but not least, the *entire city community*. In terms of strategies, it is **based on listening to the wishes and needs** of children and their families, and on using a **bottom-up co-design approach** as a way of enhancing their resources, skills and talents.

The official partners of the project include Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, Politecnico di Milano — Department of Design, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano — Research Centre on Intercultural Relations and Mario Apollonio Centre

for Culture and Theatre Initiative (CIT), ActionAid International Italia ONLUS, and ABCittà Società Cooperativa Sociale ONLUS.

The city's specific objectives and priority challenges

Wish MI intends to build a city with a strong and cohesive social fabric in which children and their families are placed at the centre of the construction of tomorrow's Milan and *no one is left behind*. To achieve this goal, the project has the following main objectives:

- **Rethink, integrate and share city strategies and policies aimed at promoting the well-being of children.**⁴ The project aims to support the development of stronger and more resilient communities throughout Milan, where all children and their families are empowered to fulfil their potential. This requires a significant change in the Municipality's traditional *modus operandi* and, in particular, **means overcoming the so-called 'silo approach' in favour of a more efficient, integrated and receptive approach**

⁴ The key element of children's well-being is assessed using the following seven standards: 1. Good quality social relationships; 2. Access to health services; 3. Access to learning and training 4. The opportunity to engage in physical activity; 5. The opportunity to express talents and creativity; 6. The opportunity and ability to self-determine/for empowerment; 7. The opportunity to grow up in a sustainable city with good quality common spaces.



to the real needs of the girls, boys and young people who live in Milan. In addition, the project aims to create new institutional and social mechanisms capable of ensuring that policies and interventions to promote children's and young people's well-being are **constantly monitored, discussed and redirected** towards integrated objectives shared by the relevant public and private actors.

- **Increase the number of children and adolescents who have access to the welfare opportunities** available through an integrated system of services that can respond to different needs effectively;

- **Promote the recomposition and integration of available resources and opportunities** through collaborative connective platforms that overcome the current fragmentation in the allocation of skills and resources;

- **Improve the ability to listen to the wishes and needs of children, young people and their families and to enhance their resources, skills and talents**, in order to promote their well-being and act in the collective and long-term interests of the community. This objective is pursued through processes of co-design from below, understood as a methodology capable of producing participation, relations,

solidarity and social capital and of promoting the repositioning of actors in a new system.

Against the backdrop of the above objectives, a set of specific city challenges were identified that the project intends to address in the coming years. These include:

- *The promotion of participation and access to quality educational services and access to health services for the 0-6 age group*, in particular, for the most fragile groups (e.g. socially isolated families);

- *The promotion of participation in extra-curricular activities for the 6-14 age group*, in particular, for those in vulnerable situations (e.g. living in poverty, with a migration background and single-parent households);

- *The promotion of participation in social life and social mobility for the 14-18 age group*, in order to counteract the - still relevant - link between the family background - in particular, the parents' level of schooling - and the educational background of the children.

- *The promotion of integrated strategies to combat the phenomenon of school segregation*, which is increasing, especially in some of the city's suburbs, and which affects the 0-18 population indiscriminately;

- *The promotion of the role of the education and school system in supporting social mobility for the entire 0-18 age group, in particular for those in vulnerable situations;*
- *The promotion of inclusive and quality pedagogical-educational programming in educational services and schools at all levels, with particular regard to children and adolescents with certified cognitive-relational disabilities, special educational needs (SEN) and/or multi-level problems.*

These **challenges are looked at through an intersectional lens**. This reverses the traditional view of social phenomena as separate and distinct and, therefore, rather than simply lumping them together, reconceptualises and analyses them as interdependent and mutually constructed, i.e. arising from multiple and only apparently separate systems of power. Such a view seems particularly suited to grasping the multifaceted basis of social inequality and systemic injustice and acting on it.

The four macro-actions of the project

Wish MI aims to achieve the vision and goals presented above through the following main macro-actions:

- *The definition of an integrated set*

of 0-18 policies and strategies, shared with all City Departments, institutional actors, stakeholders and the city community, including children and adolescents;

- *The co-design of the visual identity of the new 0-18 system*, which will present the project with a clear visual identity in the eyes of both the stakeholders and the City;

- *The recomposition and aggregation of welfare opportunities for children and adolescents in a collaborative and connective digital platform* within the system of portals of the City of Milan. This will enable people not only to identify quality wellness services and opportunities, but also to access and co-produce them.

The platform will be supported by a system of individual and collective digital vouchers that: (a) will make it possible for more children and adolescents to have access to available opportunities; (b) will allow children, adolescents, their families and community actors to directly co-design new responses and services that best reflect their needs and desires, thus participating in the shared construction of the new 0-18 system;

- *The creation of seven Community Hubs*, which will be the physical counterparts of the digital platform in

seven Milanese neighbourhoods, i.e., they will promote the recomposition of different opportunities at the local level

and the experimentation of innovative services designed for children and their families.



Wish MI and the New European Bauhaus

At the core of the Wish Mi project there is the idea that the promotion of the children's welfare must also involve supporting their **capacity to aspire**. This perception finds a natural point of anchorage in the practical aim of expanding **the concept of welfare policies** – in two key directions: so that they are not limited to social and educational services in the narrow sense and do not fall exclusively on government institutions. The project therefore suggests considering **education as an urban policy** – and not as a sector policy. This means making a concerted effort to "*trespass*"⁵ and go beyond the walls of educational services and schools towards the formulation of new perspectives regarding the relationship between education and the city, and education and citizen well-being in particular. In other words, it is necessary to set in motion a combined effort between public and private institutions, integrating those who work in the social, educational, scholastic, cultural,

sporting and environmental fields, together with the children and their families, in order to make education a laboratory of citizenship and a strategic asset for the well-being of communities.⁶

From our point of view, this means coming back firmly with a new vision and a new citizen narrative, that can contrast not only an individualistic notion of desire, in accordance with a narrow logic of competition and performance, but also the more traditional approach of institutions that *reduce* individuals and communities to *objects* of care, of concern, of specialist assistance.

The Wish Mi project aims to guide 0-18 city policies and strategies towards a future that focuses on a new concept of **well-being**. This is based on the recognition of children and adolescents as **protagonists** and the importance of **desire as an indispensable tool of agency**, as highlighted by the so-called "pedagogy of desire", which draws inspiration from the practical and theoretical work of Paulo Freire, a leading figure in pedagogical theory, not only in Latin America but also worldwide.

This dual awareness means abandoning a reductionist and dichotomous (or at least hierarchical) vision that tends to give priority to "needs" over "desires", for an **organic and multidimensional welfare perspective** (as well as intersectional, i.e. open to recognizing the "intersection" of different aspects of social identity – gender, ethnicity, social class, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, etc. – and specific social positions, experiences, etc.). – and the specific social positions, experiences of power and the resulting inequality).⁷

In schools for example, this implies an autonomy from the tendency to "medicalise the behaviour of the school population, creating polarisations into able/disabled, healthy/sick, deviant/integrated, safe/risky, right/wrong. This means not always focusing on the "problem" [...], but rather finding personal resources and opportunities in the context that create quality of life, well-being, new learning and so on."⁸

The organic and multidimensional perspective invoked here also has potentially decisive implications in terms of strategic choices for the management of the current social crisis caused by the global pandemic. The proliferation and exacerbation of situations of hardship does not make the task of sustaining the capacity to aspire any less important. On the contrary, the current situation has made the "**crisis of desire**" **even more palpable**.

This is a crisis that is less widespread than many others, but which perhaps lies at the root of things and explains why our society struggles to deal with all the others, from the economic to the political and the demographic. **The crisis of desire is in fact the crisis of the volitions for the future, of the freedom to commit oneself, of the decision to act.**⁹

⁷ For example, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, immigrant status, ability and class combine to produce a specific "social position" that is not the same as the simple sum of its parts. In other words, the intersectional approach rejects the traditional view of social phenomena as separate and distinct and, rather than simply adding them together, reconceives and analyses them as interdependent and mutually constructed, i.e. arising from multiple and, above all, only apparently separate systems of power. Therefore, such a view seems particularly useful to understand and act (on) the multidimensional basis of social inequality and systemic injustice.

⁸ Aa. Vv. (2021) *Scuola Sconfinata*, p. 141.

⁹ Costa, G. (2011). *Rieducarci al desiderio in Aggiornamenti Sociali*. <https://www.aggiornamentisociali.it/articoli/rieducarci-al-desiderio/>

⁵ Aa. Vv. (2021) *Scuola Sconfinata. Per una rivoluzione educativa*, Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, Milano.

⁶ Ivi, p. 8.

EDUCATING WITH AND IN THE CITY: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY HUBS

02.

The city can be seen as an educating device, for promoting a new vision of educational practice.

These spaces are thus seen as protagonists of educational policies, encouraging the development of *learning communities* and establishing virtuous circles of production and exchange of knowledge between those involved.

It is in these spaces, which anticipate an approach based on mutual learning, that the experiences presented during the second digital meeting are to be found: public policies, network projects and community hubs that suggest a new way of perceiving the **city as a teaching body**, as an enabler of skills, capacities and aspirations that can turn the urban ecosystem into a learning laboratory.

EDUCATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THE DECOLONISATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Anna Moro, City Planning researcher for the DASTU Department of the Polytechnic of Milan, presented the local network of actors that animate **Dergano** and have set up a system of actions, activities and practices that outline the profile of an “educational neighbourhood”.

A neighbourhood that, through simple and often informal guidelines and practices arising in public spaces, mobilises local actors and builds a tight system of relationships around a community that designs together and shares knowledge.

Dergano is, in fact, characterised by the presence of a considerable number of actors, in particular cultural and social promotion associations, which have begun to inhabit the spaces as **community hubs**.

Within this framework, the network has set up a series of lightweight initiatives linked to the theme of outdoor education: this is a network that can focus on the aspect of shared knowledge, co-designing and inventing new ways of living and **learning together**.

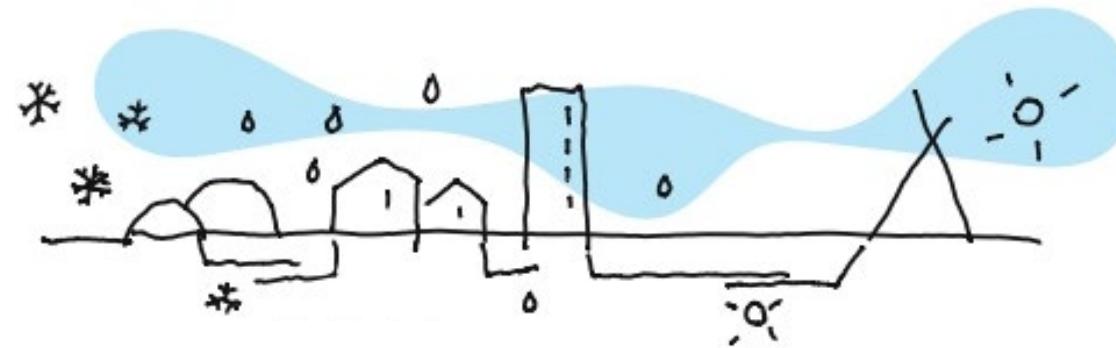


On the opposite side of the city, in Chiaravalle, Madre Project guides the urban rediscovery through a high school for bakers that not only provides trainees with technical skills, but also aims to "make bread and look at places as a means to become cultural designers and activators of places and in some way build future citizens." The aim of the project is to do business by looking at the territories, their potential and their unique features, with a focus on building a strong community that can take care of the place where it is based.

"Making bread to transform places, to build communities, to design landscapes" (Andrea Perini, MadreProject)

Building communities and transforming places is also the objective being pursued by #OvestLab, which has set up a community hub in Modena that focuses on the themes of art, culture, education and working together.

Through a series of activities, such as exploratory walks and workshops that teach people how to "make things with their hands", #OvestLab builds what **Federica Rocchi**, one of the promoters of the project, has defined as an "affective and effective community", that "decolonises knowledge" by extending the practices of teaching and learning to



different professions (craftsmen, tradesmen, dancers, actors, tailors, etc.).

"We dare to repair artefacts, feelings, people" (Federica Rocchi, #OvestLab)

Finally, the last experience presented by **Susanna Molteni** of the Milan City Council is of a public nature, and aims to rethink schools as community hubs and interpret education as an urban policy.

In contrast to an idea of schools that, instead of reducing social inequalities, often broaden them, and where *self-sufficiency* can sometimes become *isolation*, the Municipality's intention is to use the system of **Community Educational Pacts** to activate civil society organisations to collaborate with schools in the development of new initiatives, projects and educational programmes that encourage **social inclusion and cohesion**. ■



A NEIGHBOURHOOD WITH A NETWORK, Dergano, Milan

The educational and cultural initiatives described here, carried out in Dergano and the surrounding areas, are **characterised by the fact that they are initiated by different groups** – associations, professionals and residents (from the same neighbourhood) – **who work closely together, in an informal and tightly-knit network** that is fuelled by common

projects and objectives and is based on relationships and reciprocal knowledge.

Dergano, in the heart of Milan's Municipality 9, is located north of the outer ring road (bus route 90-91), in an intermediate urban sector, rich in contrasts, in which parts of the historic fabric that are lively and active due to the presence of local commerce are

to be found alongside other elements, such as blocks of more recent and ordinary buildings and vast productive and artisanal areas, some active, others disused, polluted or underused, where the odd new attractive building such as the university (Campus Bovisa-La Masa and Candiani, Politecnico di Milano) stands out.

Economically the neighbourhood presents a number of weak points (income and employment levels of the inhabitants), also linked to the presence of significant numbers of young and elderly people as well as to the high cultural mix – it has one of the highest percentages of immigrants in the city. This aspect, together with a certain isolation historically linked to the morphology of the neighbourhood, is one of the main features of the identity of the area which is made up of small shops and neighbourhood relations that give it the "almost village" atmosphere. Aspects that until recently benefited the property market both for buying and renting and facilitated the arrival of young families, introducing new demands and probably more contemporary resources into the neighbourhood.

In this case, **the young self-promoted groups from the world of culture and social enterprise stand out.** They have

good networking skills and promote actions that sometimes supplement existing services with a new offer, sometimes answering urgent local needs that are not met by the existing offer. During the pandemic they, as well as a larger informal group of inhabitants, **developed projects linked to the theme of education**, in as far as a neighbourhood can. Some of these projects have been developed to a high level.

Prompted by the urgency of the pandemic – which, as everyone remembers, was (and perhaps still is) causing widespread psychological suffering, particularly among children and adolescents – during the period when relations and contacts were impossible, when schools were temporarily closed and replaced by remote learning, the neighbourhood, still in a virtual format (at a distance), began to share concerns and the need to do something about it.

The response strategically seeks to seize the singularity of the moment to **leverage a deeper revision of the idea, role and place that children and young people can occupy in a community, and how the community can be involved in the growth** and harmonious development of individuals and the context to which they belong.



A number of different support groups quickly sprung up and dealt with urgent and specific needs: from the exchange of basic necessities to the recovery and distribution of personal computers. This included small acts of care and attention, such as donating plants or toys to be recycled, compensating for the lack of human contact with objects. Along the same lines, a more profound reflection takes shape, first and foremost to construct an opportunity for interaction that

is possible at a distance; a joyful, constructive, educational experience that introduces a new format. The project, which encompasses various teaching exercises and tests in presence, outside and potentially inside the school, based on the value of the direct experience of children and young people, is collectively referred to as "Everyone outside for school" ("Tutti fuori per la scuola"). The official organiser is the association Via Dolce Via which represents a very

large pool of inhabitants and groups in the neighbourhood, already known because it organises an annual event of exchange and mutual knowledge in a local street that is closed to traffic for a day. **In *Everyone outside for school*, local associations and professionals from the world of culture and education organise a series of workshops for children on the main subjects to be found at school in a playful and proactive way. Here concrete experiences are used to teach concepts and ideas.** For example geography becomes an "orienteeering" experience (by Egle Varisto), in geometry an exercise on the "golden section" involves physically tracing it in space (di Archpelag). Interestingly all the activities not only take place in accordance with the current rules of distancing, but also **turn the rule into an opportunity to invent new activities.** The event and the subsequent formal and informal seminars plant a seed in the network, which is now wider and stronger, **a seed that germinates in different forms and situations, promoting reflection on the role and quality of play areas** and open spaces in general, the subject of a design workshop with students from the Milan Polytechnic. It also leads to ongoing, regular initiatives such as the project promoted by the

Caffè Mamusca bookshop "Out with the books" ("Fuori i libri"), which offers group readings in the gardens, parks and squares of Dergano and beyond.

The Dergano network and the New European Bauhaus

The idea behind the actions carried out (and in progress) around widespread and open education on a neighbourhood scale in Dergano is rooted in a deeper and shared concept circulating in the Dergano "community". It is the echo of a particular sensitivity and attention to the issue that refers to an idea of a city where services are widespread and numerous, where the very idea of traditional service is probably in question, but where the school as an institution and space continues to count and the two aspects try to interact and resonate. In fact, this approach combines the knowledge and initiatives of competent and trained individuals linked to the world of education and local services, with a marked propensity for innovation in terms of social entrepreneurship linked to local activism.

An activism which has produced both temporary actions and more lasting cultural proposals, and which, by making its own skills available, has also been able to do business and

regenerate places. A good number of these active subjects are in fact managers or owners of spaces and facilities of a mixed public-private nature. It is here that the perspective of the New European Bauhaus finds a practical and interesting application. The spaces – buildings and their respective gardens and courtyards – regenerated and made available by the local realities are fluid, flexible, well-kept spaces that change and regenerate over time. They are the result of, and at the same time encourage, the emergence of new ways of living together and of social enterprise. The New European Bauhaus is also recalled by the very strong sense of community in Dergano which provides one of the possible ways to institute some aspects of the European Green Deal by approaching the individual and his daily practices. More specifically, it is probably the capacity for learning and innovation inherent in the wide-ranging and "variable geometry" of the Dergano network that represents the most outstanding element. During the pandemic, and particularly during the harshest phases of lockdown and social distancing, some inhabitants and some of these realities became active and invented new forms of interaction and support for the most fragile people.

In some cases, such as the introduction of "hanging baskets" from balconies in the area for the anonymous donation of basic necessities, they borrowed tools and forms of organisation from practices that already existed (the Neapolitan breadbasket), taking advantage of their particular relevance in response to new and surprising demands that arose because of the pandemic (the impossibility of going shopping or leaving the house), related to themes and issues that these realities already practised in a different way (bartering, exchange, various small circular economy initiatives). In some ways, these initiatives were then able to extend, move out of the house and temporarily occupy larger common spaces. Returning to the description of the urban fabric, if the presence of unexploited spatial resources, whether caused by industrial decommissioning, residual spaces, pathways or inaccessible and inhospitable areas of public space, can be said to be significant, it is precisely the contribution of the most community minded in Dergano that has animated the recent "educating" dimension. This could be the key to sustainable innovation of the forms and processes of urban regeneration in the whole area and could enhance the combination of functionality and beauty.





MADRE PROJECT, Terzo Paesaggio, Milan

Madre Project, the School of Bread and Places, is a cultural and educational project for the growth of the individual and the development of all humanity. It was developed following the global financial and ecological crisis, which exploded during the pandemic emergency, and proposes a new vision of the world, the economy, life, progress and social equity. **It is a training space**

that looks at systemic awareness, aimed at growing and forming a group of practices that looks at places outside the paradigm of domination, rethinking cohabitation between humans and non-humans, starting afresh from the Earth.

The project starts from the basics: making bread. The mythical gesture,

the archetype of building a community, in order to talk about the city, about a new model of living together, among a variety of species, more life-oriented.

To do this, Madre Project proposes a new form of generative enterprise, an alternative to the predominant extractive economic vision. **It is a vital form of entrepreneurship that**

produces positive impacts for places: qualified work, regeneration of the environment, product innovation. It considers economic capital as an ally of life, the environment and communities.

As Marjorie Kelly observes, permanent change is needed in the basic architecture of economic power. **Madre Project trains aspiring**



entrepreneurs to innovate the way they do business, because business model is opened up to the local community. The proprietary architecture of the companies thus imagined includes the communities within, as a guarantee for the environment, the social stability of the territory and the quality of the product. All stakeholders are "involved", and there are no financial market-driven investors who respond to the sole logic of profit maximisation. Interests are real and geared to the wellbeing of places.

Many experiences in the global arena are demonstrating that the generative economy is a viable alternative to the extractive model: these include energy communities, communal forests, community land trusts, but also social enterprises and benefit corporations, which have been able to redefine their ownership infrastructures in favour of places.

At the same time, a new wave of urban agricultural bakers is spreading through Italy, ennobling bread as an agricultural product linked to the land. A path that the wine sector successfully followed in the 2000s.

Madre Project aims to combine these two trends **to create the new bread**

shop as a local micro cultural centre, a hybrid space for the regeneration of places.

In this way the baker becomes one with the urban planner, an agent of change: unity between artisan production and territorial regeneration.

Madre Project's teaching approach is multidisciplinary, focused on practices and experience, inspired by self-education. The group of participants lives and works together, teaching less experienced students and experimenting in well-equipped teaching workshops, with the aim of freeing people's creative energies and developing creative autonomy through the running of a temporary bread workshop.

This is the New European Bauhaus of bread!





#OVESTLAB, Amigdala, Modena

#OvestLab is an old garage that has been converted in recent years into a **space that connects with the neighbourhood, where art, craftsmanship, urban regeneration and citizen participation are interwoven.** The idea is that craft production, artistic practices and care of spaces can interact to start virtuous circles capable of **increasing the quality of life in the**



area, involving the local community in processes of change.

It is based in the heart of the **Villaggio Artigiano (Crafts Village) in West Modena**, an area created after World War II on the strength of brave political intuition. It gave many unemployed skilled workers the chance to become

entrepreneurs and has been a model for other craft villages in Italy for decades. The workshop-houses, symbols of the inseparable link between work and life, reflected the resourcefulness of the inhabitants and the community link of the village, set up as a real production chain. After 60 years, the Villaggio Artigiano shows many signs of decay: abandonment and degradation of the production areas, lack of public space and lack of private investment. **#OvestLab**, managed by the associations Amigdala and Archivio Architetto Cesare Leonardi in agreement with the Consorzio Attività Produttive Aree e Servizi della Provincia di Modena, operates in this area as a catalyst for the community – residents and non-residents – around the possibility of reactivating shared imagery for the future development of the district and the whole city. In an area strongly marked by the massive presence of private property, which has characterised this part of the city in both its urban fabric and sociology, **#OvestLab operates by activating projects that enhance common space, collective intelligence and participatory reflection on issues of local development.** The links between #OvestLab's actions and educational practices are varied

and stratified, and are divided below into two macro-categories for the sake of simplicity, but they are, of course, strongly interlinked.

Heritage of knowledge

- ***Fionda - collective magazine of the Craftsmen's Village of Modena Ovest***: a magazine conceived, created and financed by a group of citizens, a participatory editorial staff made up of about thirty people who contribute different points of view, skills and knowledge. *Fionda* was created with the idea of raising awareness around the history and development of the western area of Modena, emphasising its historical and social role in the urban fabric. But *Fionda's* objective is also to relaunch new ideas for this part of the city, in a visionary and open form, but also with awareness and documentation.
- ***AFOr - Archive of oral sources (Archivio di fonti orali)*** is a digital archive of oral memory collected from the houses, workshops and streets of the Villaggio Artigiano by a multidisciplinary team of historians, oral source experts, architects, linguists and computer scientists. *AFOr* is an experimental open source public history project, shared with a network of

partners such as the Historical Institute of Modena, Unimore, AISO (Italian Oral History Association).

- **Scuola Archivio Leonard** is an independent school created to transmit the working method developed by Cesare Leonard (architect, urban planner, designer, artist) and his "cross-functional" approach characterised by the ability to apply a single theory to multiple disciplines. The School is for young students, designers and researchers who want to develop their own design abilities through a multidisciplinary path in the fields of architecture, design, crafts, landscape and urban transformation.

- **The professions and the city** is an annual summer event that includes a series of meetings in which "ordinary" people are invited to the #OvestLab courtyard to talk about their professions with experts on the subject who are working on various projects in the city. Carpenters, botanists, bike designers, model-makers, journalists, photojournalists and many other professions have been discussed in this event over the course of its three years, which also included a special edition designed for children.

- **Residencies and site-specific artistic production in workshops and artisan shops:** Amigdala has been promoting

experimental artistic projects in the neighbourhood for several years now, bringing artists from Italy and all over the world into contact with the neighbourhood's artisan spaces, creating site-specific works, joint workshops, hybrid forms of crossing disciplines and synergies between different masters.

- **Educational itineraries with primary schools:** In collaboration with the Municipality of Modena, within the catalogue of "school-town itineraries", Amigdala organises workshops for primary school children, which include exploring the artisan village, an in-depth study of local history and, normally, a visit to a workshop and a meeting with "master craftsmen" from different generations.

Shared territory

- **Temporary reuse of disused spaces:** From private property to common good. Amigdala's work at the Villaggio Artigiano is based on the transformation of former workshops – starting with #OvestLab itself – flats, and courtyards, mostly disused, which have become a clear sign of abandonment and decay in the landscape, into spaces that can be used again. The site-specific artistic intervention transforms these spaces



from problems of private origin into opportunities of shared value through the establishment of relationships with the various players in the area and the generative capacity of these relationships in the creation of a network. The transformations are mostly temporary, but they involve owners and the community in a process of creating new value in the individual property as well as the territory. All this through processes with a strong educational and training value, with a view to assuming responsibility for a place and making people aware of their own impact on the landscape.

- **Widespread cultural centre:** #OvestLab is a place that acts as a catalyst

for actions and practices scattered throughout the neighbourhood, promoting the construction of a network of spaces that are linked by their educational and training vocation. From MOP, a space for artistic residencies and workshops created in a disused flat, to the Officina di Comunità, a place in which to participate in the art of recovering disused objects; from the primary school to the park; from the Fratellanza athletics field to the former railway line: after four years of work in the area, #OvestLab is now the linchpin of a truly *widespread cultural centre* in which citizens share their knowledge and learn, innovate and repair, invent and tell stories.



SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS, City of Milan

The Municipality of Milan has an institutional mandate to fully implement the right to education and promote educational achievement, as well as to prevent school drop-outs. The Open Schools (Scuole Aperte) approach promoted by the Municipality of Milan goes in this direction, with interventions and funds dedicated to extracurricular activities, so that

schools can be the driving force behind good practices of inclusion and social cohesion.

The Municipality has also implemented a series of initiatives (in terms of innovation of learning environments and innovation of methods) to make schools more attractive, especially those in the suburbs, and to prevent

the so-called phenomenon of school segregation. It has also enriched its supplementary services by encouraging numerous experiments promoted by various projects, in partnership with the private social sector, aimed at combatting educational poverty.

However, the pandemic has highlighted the need for comprehensive interventions in favour of minors and young people and has strongly emphasised a number of needs in school and educational environments that emerged from dialogue with school principals and other public and private actors involved at city level. On the one hand, as part of a transformative process, there is a need to reinforce the school's educational mission by recomposing the distinction between didactics and education and avoiding compartmentalisation. On the other hand, there is the need to reconnect the school, as an educating device, to its local area of reference so that education, rather than a sectoral policy, can become an urban policy.

After several years of good practice and pilot projects, the Municipality of Milan is laying the foundations for joint planning of educational and social policies, involving other important sectors such as culture, sport and

municipalities, through the adoption of a Strategic Plan of interventions and programmes designed to promote the well-being of the city's minors. It is in this context and in order to respond to the specific needs mentioned above that the Municipality intends to promote the activation of two distinct but related schemes.

The first is the "**School Hub**", which will trial the transformation of some target schools into highly educational hubs where the school community will work with multidisciplinary teams, to co-design a psycho-socio-educational service. This includes additional strengthening of support activities to be carried out during school hours (e.g. educational support; pedagogical-didactical supervision; accompaniment to/from services) and extracurricular activities.

These will cover educative, cultural, recreational and sporting activities, which will be carried out in the afternoons during the school year and during the summer, in cooperation with the resources available in the area. This scheme, which is currently in the process of being finalised, is mainly aimed at upper secondary schools, where the risk of absenteeism and early school leaving is highest. Here attendance times are usually shorter

than at primary school and this opens up to the risk of potentially deviant, antisocial or isolationist out-of-school gatherings, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Hubs structured in this way are intended to be open to the neighbourhoods in which they are located, giving educational institutions the chance to "breathe" with their local area.

The second is the "**Territorial Educational Pacts**" scheme, for which the Council has recently approved guidelines and which are intended

as an instrument to create and/or strengthen educating communities. The educating communities are made up of all those actors (families, scholastic and educational institutions, parishes, sports associations, community networks, local shops, public and private entities, etc.) who, for various reasons, have roles and responsibilities in the education and care of minors living in a given territory. The Territorial Educational Pacts aim to make the "educating communities" effective and sustainable over time, enabling them to become

local educational centres, aimed at encouraging organic, integrated and multifaceted responses to the educational needs of minors, developing their involvement and active participation together with their families, and the services, projects and practices already in place.

What distinguishes these pacts from other types of agreement or other collaborations is the focus on an educational alliance with a view to co-responsibility between the various signatories, who are called upon to

share mutual values and commitments as well as common working tools.

Territorial educational pacts thus become enabling devices for a learning process in the communities themselves, which encourages and legitimises the meeting of different skills, knowledge and roles by creating new shared languages.

A central role in the implementation of the pacts is played by schools and educational services, seen as a shared asset and as places and actors in the community.



EDUCATION AS AN URBAN POLICY: THE COMMON THREAD BETWEEN EDUCATION AND CITY MAKING

03.

This third chapter, which both combines and expands on the themes discussed in the previous conversations, links the **potential** of schools as open community hubs with an approach that supports the capacity to aspire in an urban context.

The experiences presented in this meeting show how **re-imagining** the city, both structurally and socially, starting from educational contexts, is fundamental to sustaining and expanding the capabilities¹⁰ of the **whole community**, and not only of the young.

GOING BEYOND BUILDINGS, GOING BEYOND SCHOOLS

Returning for a moment to the theme launched by the **New European Bauhaus**, namely *going beyond buildings*, this latest conversation represents the point of convergence for imagining an education system that truly goes "*beyond schools*". The testimonies presented show, in different but similar ways, how the school as an institution represents a **key point** of meeting and exchange with the community, and is at the centre of sustainable urban connections. To make this possible, it is necessary to imagine a school that goes beyond its walls and, responding to local needs, moves towards the city, inviting the community to participate.

«We want to bring the campus out in the neighbourhood, but also the neighbourhood into the campus.» (Agnieszka Zajac, The Old Dockyards, Ghent)

An example, presented by this statement, comes from the city of **Ghent** which, through a major redevelopment project of De Ouden Dokken

¹⁰ *Capabilities* refers to the *Capabilities Approach*, theorised in 1980 by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. It is an approach that shifts the focus of action from the "freedom" of individuals to achieve a certain goal (individual responsibility) to the possibility of individuals to achieve it (structural influence). Possibility and accessibility are fundamental elements to understand inequalities and to start virtuous processes of change. "*The core focus of the capability approach is on what individuals are able to do*".

(the abandoned dockland area of the city), has initiated a process of slow urban co-design, characterised by a periodic adjustment of interventions according to new needs that have gradually emerged. The project centres around an innovative school campus, which is open to the community with a range of educational and cultural activities for all and whose main structure is built entirely of transparent glass. Glass was chosen for the structure so that the building could welcome the external gaze and at the same time show the educational activities happening inside. This project thus aims to **enable an educating community** to engage in dialogue around the themes of city making, taking part in the re-appropriation and re-signification of "neglected spaces", acting effectively in and on the city.

«We need to do things in the city, we need to practice and enjoy the city after a very tough year. We are seeing how we are rediscovering our social space.» (Miguel Jaenicke, MARES, Madrid)

In Madrid, the **MARES** initiative attempts to build a different idea of the city based on the collaboration and feedback from residents; the assumption is that in order to "make the city" we must rediscover the places and people who live there by building **local alliances**.



MARES is an innovative pilot project for urban transformation which, by mapping the city's initiatives, enables a network of social and solidarity-based economy, as well as the creation of local employment and the promotion of another model of city based on the concept of learning communities.

Practice Oriented Learning Communities (CAPs) rely on the knowledge and experience of their members to propose suitable solutions to community needs and interests and to spread knowledge about social reality. The main thing is that there are no expert educators, but rather people who are capable in different fields, alongside different types of intervention. What unites learning communities is the concept of producing something that transcends the community itself, an **educative wealth**. Education is thus built in and by the community through practice, whether social, economic or environmental, and also contributes to the processes of city making.

«The citizens make the city and are the owners of the city.» (Annibale D'Elia, The School for Neighbourhoods, Milan)

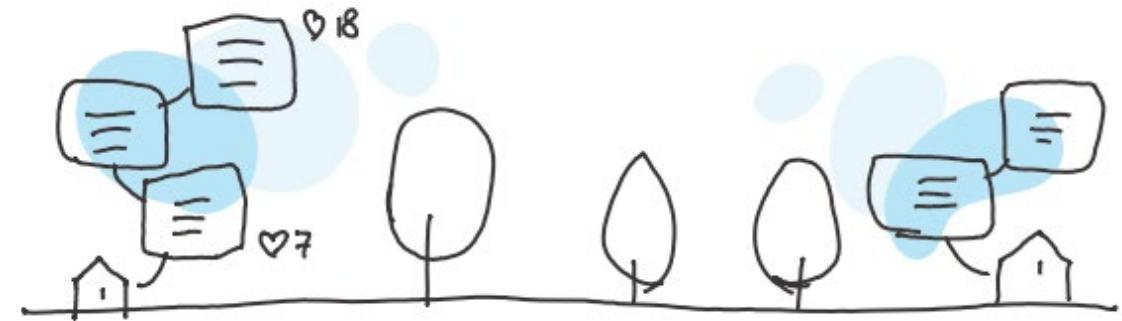
In Milan, **The School for Neighbourhoods** aims to bring to life projects and services, conceived and implemented by citizens to improve the life of neighbourhoods and change suburbs, by harnessing the energy, creativity and initiative of the inhabitants. This project helps people who want to do something useful, new and sustainable for the city, to take the first step by giving them support to turn their ideas into projects. The aim is to teach ordinary people to design, not as a skill in itself, but as a *tool for making things happen*.

So it is not only about training in various topics, but also about building a **network of social and cultural capital** that expands citizens' possibilities and supports their capacity to aspire.

CITY MAKING FOR EDUCATIONAL LIVING

The testimonies reported illustrate **creative solutions** to meet the challenge of *education beyond schools*, responding to the challenges of urban inequalities, showing experiences with a European scope but with points of contact connected by a common thread: the creation of widespread, non-formal, open and inclusive educational spaces with porous boundaries, through tools such as *slow urbanism* and *white spaces*.¹¹ In this vein, we may recall the approaches of the *dwelling perspective*, theorised by anthropologist Tim Ingold, according to which architectural practices should start from the everyday experience of spaces and the ways in which people choose to inhabit and behave in them. Starting from this idea, it is possible to imagine spaces that are truly **enabling and transformative**.

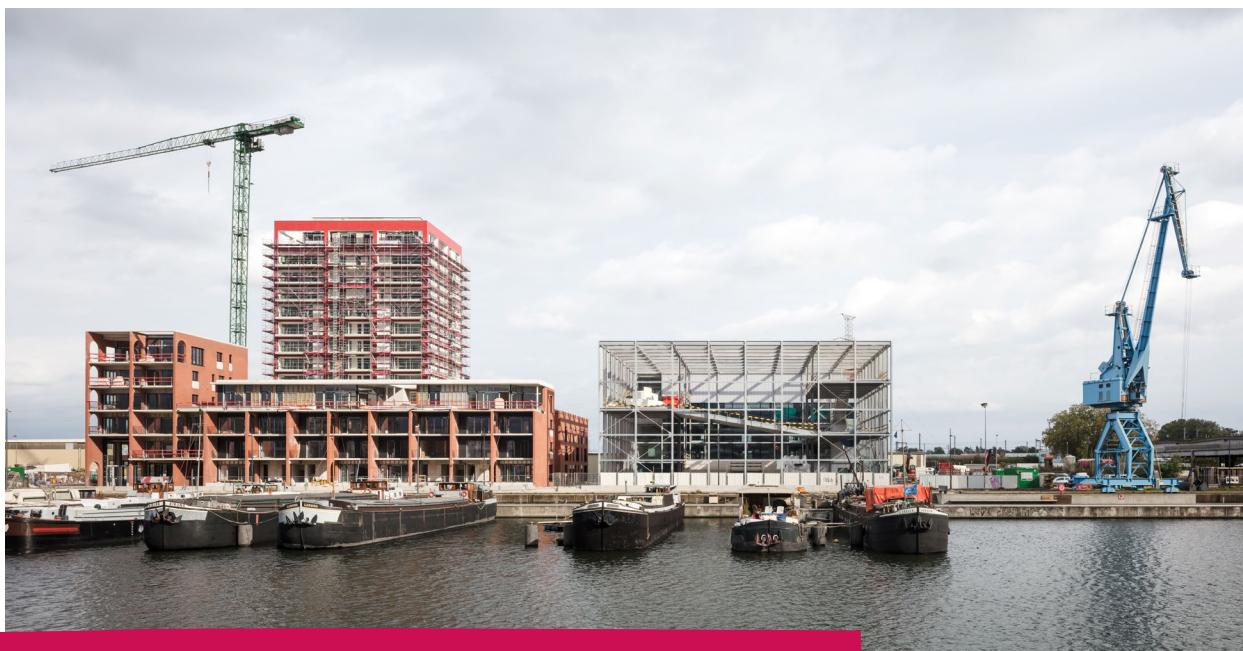
«The forms of the landscape – like the identities and capacities of its human inhabitants – are not imposed upon a material substrate but rather emerge as condensations or crystallizations of activity within a relational field. As people, in the course of their everyday lives, make their way by foot around a familiar terrain, so its paths, textures and contours, variable through the seasons, are incorporated into their own embodied capacities of movement, awareness and response (...) these pedestrian movements thread a tangled network of personalized



trails through the landscape itself (...) in a process that is continuous and never-ending»
(Tim Ingold, *Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through the Feet*)

The last objective is therefore to create and activate learning communities in and with the city, co-constructing and re-imagining; increasingly educating and enabling spaces that take their cue from the movements, uses and needs of the inhabitants themselves. A city founded on and drawing from the experience of its inhabitants, past, present and future, which is inspired by **diversity** and is therefore **able to** encourage both its citizens' **aspirations** and their possibilities for action. ■

¹¹ In this context reference is made to the process of creating multi-functional and modular spaces, which can respond to multiple demands according to local and collective needs.



THE OLD DOCKYARDS, City of Ghent

The history of Ghent is inextricably linked to water. Ghent arose at the confluence of the Lys with the Scheldt. Water brought prosperity. In the 13th century Ghent was the 2nd largest city in north-western Europe. Smaller than Paris, bigger than London. During the industrial revolution in the 19th century, Ghent grew into an important textile city with a flourishing port, a leading

university, a burgeoning cultural scene, but also a city of social and ecological misery as well as poor living quality: the working class slums known as "*beluiken*". Above all, a city of labour and entrepreneurship. City air gives freedom, but sometimes it reeks. In the late 2nd half of the 20th century, Ghent experienced a turning point. The filthy, silted-up, impoverished industrial

city transformed into a modern, lively, multicultural and attractive city, while respecting its history. However, the work is not yet finished. After all, the city never stands still. There are still issues that need to be addressed.

Since the 1980s, the 19th-century working-class neighbourhoods are being systematically renovated — partly thanks to Flemish, Belgian and European subsidies — whereby urban and social renewal go hand in hand. Gentrification must be avoided, though this is not always easy, and sometimes happens with varying degrees of success. **Our urban renewal is gradually evolving towards a holistic and integrated approach.** Today it is equally about social cohesion, climate transition, a green economy on a human scale, digitization, citizen involvement, strengthening cultural practice, developing talents, construction quality, affordability, and a local government that prefers co-production in all of this. Expressed in today's words, we are talking about transition, innovation, sustainability, connectivity and with the New European Bauhaus initiative in mind, the term "beauty" now also belongs on this list. Urban renewal should not only be functional, it also merits the label "beauty". Every citizen is entitled to this,

especially in Ghent, which aspires to the title "European Capital of Culture 2030".

When the port left the old inner city, and even came to be located entirely outside the city, culminating in the merger with its Zeeland competitor (the Netherlands) in 2018, a pivotal site of approximately 40 hectares was created. **This comprised dilapidated industrial sites, unused docks, rusted port cranes, cramped residential areas, excessively heavy traffic, but also harboured many possibilities.** This site, the "Oude Dokken", is strategically located between the city centre, an important transport hub for public transport and the new port, but above all the area offers space for the growing population and the associated need for additional and affordable housing. After all, in a highly densified city like Ghent, every free square metre is welcome and must be put to use carefully and intelligently.

The Old Dockyards development project

Development on the Oude Dokken has been in full swing since 2004 and this former industrial area is being expanded into a new fully-fledged city district. **The focus is on transforming the abandoned industrial site into a contemporary residential area**

with a waterfront. A clear strategy was developed for the entire area, with a great deal of attention paid to housing, but also economic activities, mobility and public greenery. **The urban development master plan focuses on water as a binding agent** between the western and eastern banks. Open and built-up zones alternate on either sides of the water, which ensures a strong sense of spatial cohesion.

In order to realise development, after a highly detailed analysis by the City of Ghent and the Autonomous Municipal Ghent Development Authority (Sogent), a spatial implementation plan (SIP 135) was drawn up and approved in 2011. Here the different zones and destinations were clearly defined with a view to further development.

Although waterfront developments have been realised in many European port cities (e.g. Hamburg) or are in the pipeline (e.g. Gdansk), the question arises as to what makes the Oude Dokken qualify as a New European Bauhaus project. In one sentence: it is a future-fit urban development, and this means, among other things:

- This development contributes to the policy objectives of the city government, but does not completely coincide with them. For example: the district, as one of the largest and most

sustainable urban development projects in Ghent, is intended help realise the ambition of “Ghent climate neutral by 2050”. Various green neighbourhood parks will be provided in the district and paved surfaces will be kept to a minimum. The site also incorporates several innovative solutions for a liveable and climate-neutral city. For example, the Melopee city building and the surrounding housing project are connected to the power supply system, in which a third of the heat and power comes from a biogas derived from kitchen waste and waste water from the area. The other two thirds are supplied by residual heat from a neighbouring factory. The newly-built district also functions as a virtual power plant with, among other things, solar panels, an innovative neighbourhood battery system and charging points for electric vehicles.

- Management and development are characterised by slow urbanism. The process is slow, with agility being a key planning and policy advantage. Not all parts of the SIP for the site have yet been finalised. New insights and needs can still be taken into account to some extent and in good time. After all, who could have gauged and planned for the advent and impact of Covid-19 at the onset? Few.

- The initial top-down approach is rightly shifting towards co-creation and broad involvement. Instruments such as the temporary usage by creative minds of vacant areas on the site are successfully implemented. Numerous non-profit organisations and creative minds find a temporary home in old factories, warehouses or vacant sites. Future residents are actively involved wherever possible. For example, the newly-built district will also include a centrally located collective vegetable garden where residents can grow their own food.

- The scope of the development is comprised of the current and future residents and users. In the Melopee school, children from the neighbourhood can learn, play and grow. But it is also open to local residents. The relationship with the neighbouring districts is garnering more and more attention. The arrival of Hogeschool Artevelde on the site,

among other things, serves this purpose; giving the “neighbourhood” an educational role to play in its courses. Old receptacles are used for, among other things, graffiti artists, and the organisation of public and outdoor exhibitions.

- Respect for the past, including the restoration and return of a number of historic old cranes, restoration of the old quay walls, use of small-scale maritime elements for play (chains, bollards, anchors, ..) in short - the preservation of the old industrial sites combined with modern architecture.

- Residential space is used as efficiently as possible and offers a range of house prices for all target groups and residents of Ghent: budget rental homes, budget privately-owned homes, social housing, co-housing, ...

As was the case with previous Ghent urban renewal projects, the development of the Oude Dokken is a learning opportunity; an exploration with the aim of realising the ideas of the Green Deal and the principles of NEB in the field.





MARES MADRID AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES, Madrid

Metropolitan areas face many environmental, social and economic challenges (related to employment, demographic change, social inequalities, pollution, etc.) but they are also engines of new ideas and solutions, places where change occurs on a larger scale at speed. **The city of Madrid faces many of the following challenges:** in the economic

area, since 2008, the impact of the crisis has led to major transformations; many jobs have been lost, and unemployment and poverty have become more widespread. Inequalities have increased, as have the differences between the north and south of the city. On the other hand, **there is a growing need to change the city's development model in order to meet**

growing environmental challenges: the environment and people's health are hampered by a model that generates pollution, energy dependence and voracious, unsustainable consumption. In addition, the long travelling distances and public transport delays, precarious employment, the demographic structure or the lack of public support make it **difficult for families to take care of their elderly, look after their children or run a household.** The MARES (Mobility, Food, Recycling, Energy and Sustenance) project aims to respond to these difficulties by drawing on the capacity of citizens to generate alternatives and solutions.

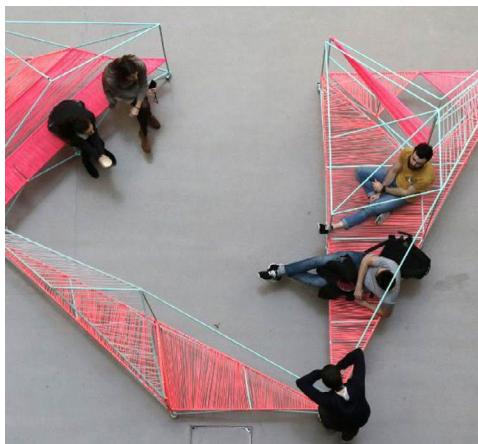
MARES is an experimental project, promoted by the community initiative Urban Innovative Actions, for the development of the social and solidarity economy, the creation of local and quality employment and the promotion of a different model of city and the concept of urban and economic resilience, which can be defined as the capacity that people have to adapt to unforeseen situations. In the city of Madrid, this capacity refers to the many experiences that citizens have created to cope with the crisis: **including self-employment initiatives, recovery of abandoned spaces and the creation of economic or mutual**

support networks.

The project focuses on five different sectors, located in four districts of the city of Madrid: **mobility** in Vallecas, **food** in Villaverde, **recycling** in Vicálvaro and **energy** in Centro. The fifth sector, which cuts across all districts, is the **care** sector which, like the social and solidarity economy, focuses on the maintenance and sustainability of community life. In each of the four districts there is a dedicated project space called MAR (housed in previously disused spaces) which acts as a public "knowledge laboratory" and cooperative and will house new production and learning initiatives with the aim of fostering the growth and development of learning communities.

Learning Communities

Among the results of the MARES project is the definition of the concept of Learning Communities (*Comunidades de Aprendizaje*, or CAP), understood as cooperative and generative communities, oriented towards the development of know-how, in which people can learn from each other, produce and share knowledge and create innovative social synergies. CAPs are communities of people interested in a common theme and joint practice. **The underlying**



assumption is that knowledge is produced from interaction and participation between members of a community, who are characterised by their situated knowledge. Within CAPs, one starts with the experience and knowledge of the group and then finds support in external actors who can bring additional knowledge and skills (including specialists and technicians provided by the project itself), thus overcoming the classic training and education mechanisms based on the expert-beneficiary combination. CAPs share tacit knowledge and organise the resultant learning, with the aim of improving community processes and depositing their shared knowledge in products such as guides, videos,

manuals and archives. They are a device that can feed into the development of any kind of community project which involves participation, co-design and co-production in different policy fields. They can be developed along the whole policy cycle, from co-design and co-creation to co-management of community resources and spaces.

The key elements of the CAP

1. The learning sector

The learning sector is the foundation of the CAP. All learning communities are created because there is a common interest in a particular topic: the sector may be related to a topic; related to know-how; may be very

basic (generalist) or very specialised (technical); may be related to a common problem to be solved.

2. The community

A learning community is distinguished from other types of communities by the way it defines itself (a community based on common knowledge and practices). A learning community has the following elements:

- A mutual commitment.
- A common goal, the result of a collective bargaining process.
- A shared repertoire: routines, words, tools, ways.

Moreover, for a CAP to be effective and successful there is a need for regular and prolonged interactions over time; multiplying interactions that feed off each other, generating new ideas; balance between the similar and the different and between individuals and the group; voluntary participation and multiple leadership.

3. Practices

When we talk about practices, we mean "a set of ideas, tools, information, styles, languages, stories and documents shared among community members". This practice would include both explicit and tacit knowledge. It can be concrete objects, tools, manuals, but also ways of doing things as well as organising and

communicating. It is a form of mini-subculture that unites the group.

4. The products

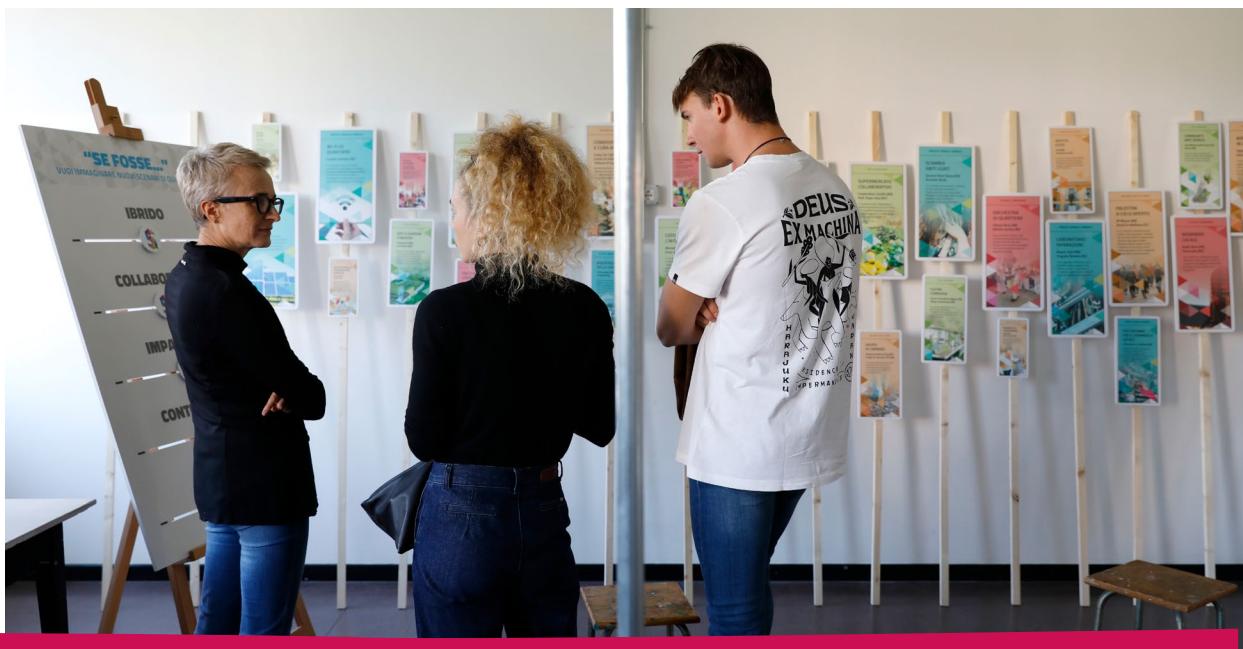
Depending on the objectives set out in the work plan, the results will be produced in the form of products (identified and defined by the learning community itself with the guidance of the facilitation team) that allow the transfer and circulation of knowledge and information. In this way, good practices and successful processes can be replicated and the development and evolution of established CAPs can be followed.

5. Evaluation and monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation is essential for the development of the CAP and is carried out every two months.

6. Benefits and paybacks for the community

MARES intervenes in the territory, developing and producing answers to the problems of the community itself; it also promotes empowerment processes for its members (who take part in the learning communities) and consolidates relationships of cohesion, dialogue and collective engagement in the community.



THE SCHOOL FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS, City of Milan

The School for Neighbourhoods (La Scuola dei Quartieri) is a project organised by the Municipality of Milan **which aims to create projects and services, designed and implemented by citizens, to improve the life of neighbourhoods**, boosting people's energy, creativity and resourcefulness. It is aimed at those who want to implement a project, a service or a

useful activity for their neighbourhood. **The School for Neighbourhoods transmits knowledge and practical tools to transform ideas, needs and desires into concrete, lasting and sustainable projects.** The areas of intervention can be very diverse: care activities, well-being, services for people or neighbourhoods, commercial and craft activities with a social impact,

mutual aid projects, social gathering spaces, artistic and cultural promotion activities, activities related to the circular economy and environmental protection, sports activities, training and education activities, etc. A useful initiative for the neighbourhood can develop into a job, a business, a life project: for this reason, as well as training courses, **the School provides** an economic contribution (a "project grant" of up to 25,000 euros to finance the first year of activity) and **personal coaching services** to support the development of the project.

Promoted by the Department of Employment and Productive Activities of the Municipality of Milan, the School for Neighbourhoods is co-financed by the European Union – European Social Fund, as part of the National Operational Programme for Metropolitan Cities (PON Metro) 2014-2020.

Why set up such a school? Because in a city like Milan, which has powerful development dynamics, the growth of social and spatial gaps is a phenomenon that requires a response from public policies. The school was born out of a number of convictions: i) people are not a problem to be dealt with, but contribute to the solution

of problems; ii) people, if stimulated and supported in their capabilities, are fundamental intermediaries in strengthening social ties and generating cohesion; iii) knowledge is the most important social asset and knowing how to plan is the skill of the future

The **School for Neighbourhoods** is inspired by the tradition of **Milan's Civic Schools**, which were established over 100 years ago to provide citizens with the knowledge and skills they need to **work, be self-sufficient and participate in the social life** of their community. Throughout the phases of transition, Milan has invested in the training and education of its citizens. The School for Neighbourhoods is therefore **a free civic school of social innovation and enterprise, open to all citizens and extended throughout the city**: it has no classrooms, but takes place wherever people live and work (in social spaces, public places, offices, backrooms, etc.).

Launched at the beginning of 2019, the School has so far comprised three stages, covering four target areas in the city: the Lorenteggio and Giambellino neighbourhoods; Lodi-Corvetto, Rogoredo, Porto di Mare and Santa Giulia; Selinunte, San Siro, Gallarate; Bovisa, Dergano and Niguarda.



The School for Neighbourhoods works in two phases.

1. To take part, candidates must submit their idea to a call for proposals from the Municipality, which invites them to present project ideas with specific characteristics: useful, i.e. able to generate a positive impact for the local community or for a specific type of beneficiary; innovative, i.e. capable of responding directly or indirectly to social needs not yet fully met in the framework of reference or of using new approaches, organisational methods or management models; **economically sustainable**, i.e. capable of lasting over

time and of being self-sustaining (not only through public funding). The call is aimed at individuals and not at already structured organisations: the condition is that at least two people must submit an idea. Those ideas that pass the first assessment phase can access a **ten-week advanced training course** to move from theory to practice. This course will improve the participants' knowledge and skills with particular reference to the feasibility of the proposed activities in relation to the context and the reference market, the definition of a management and



business model, the identification of the most appropriate form of incorporation in a legal entity, the identification of possible collaborations with third parties, the preparation of the necessary documentation for the application for the grant and the search for funding opportunities.

2. The ideas that have successfully become projects as a result of the training course are subject to a second round of evaluation for the awarding of a "project grant" (up to a maximum of 25,000 euros), to support the first year of activity, and personalised **coaching services**. These customised services are aimed at supporting the operational start-up of the project itself, identifying clients, customers and activating collaborations, defining and implementing communication and marketing strategies, exploring the potential of digital tools and technologies, monitoring the activity and improving the capacity for economic and financial planning and management. They will also facilitate access to credit, facilitate access to other types of financial resources through meetings with potential financiers, define any corrective measures and changes to the project idea, provide assistance in measuring the social impact generated

and provide assistance in the reporting phase of the expenses incurred. In order to receive the project grant, groups must first be established in a Third Sector Body (association, cooperative, social enterprise, etc.) or other non-profit association (amateur sports associations, cultural and recreational associations).

The School for **Neighbourhoods** is **currently in its third** edition.

2,300 citizens took part in the open meetings in their neighbourhoods (**70** presentations, exploratory walks, open conferences, festivals).

187 ideas were submitted to the 3 open calls, **69** of which were selected to access the advanced training sessions, involving a total of **210** participants (and a total of **100 hours** of interdisciplinary training provided during each cycle).

Finally, the project led to the foundation of more than **40 new non-profit organisations**.



EDUCATION AS AN URBAN POLICY

These closing notes take up the main remarks that emerged around the idea of education as an urban policy in the three conversations on which this publication has been based. **They suggest that education is a crucial device for dealing positively with the relationship between people and spaces in the environmental transition.** They articulate avenues of research and prospects for intervention that we trust are relevant in the framework of the New European Bauhaus.

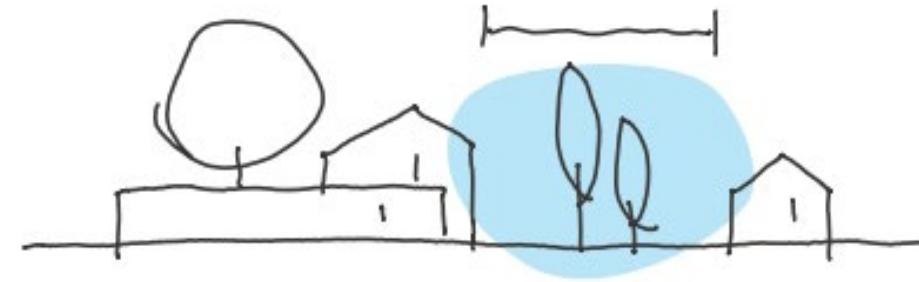
Three suppositions

The first is that implementing the Green Deal implies paying attention to the mechanisms of formation, transmission and reproduction of public knowledge with reference to the dimensions of inclusion, sustainability and quality (of products and processes). The second hypothesis is a condition for achieving the first: an education that can match the transition needs to be rethought not only in its contents or the tools it uses, but also in its basic features.

The reference to the Bauhaus educational model and to the experiences that have been inspired by it (such as the Black Mountain College) is useful for clarifying these features: a productive relationship between teachers and learners (which is an exchange and not only one-way from the former to the latter); a practical approach (what is learnt is not applied to the world of life, but is learnt in and through practices); educational experience in dialogue with the environment in which it takes place (the "context" is not a background to learning practices, but is a fundamental part of them).

The key elements of an education policy are therefore at play: the definition of the problem, the identification of the subjects (protagonists and beneficiaries), their interactions, the resources and conditions of use, the issues at stake.

What nature should the education policy we are trying to define have? Can it be usefully treated as a sector-based policy, or does it perhaps need to be conceived as a form of integrated action on a local basis? Its field of action is in fact reformed, required to assume a more complex system of correspondence between opportunities, problems, resources and actors.



The third hypothesis is that such a renewed education policy should be understood as an urban policy, that is, belonging to that type of policy "capable of comprehending (in the dual sense of understanding and keeping within itself) the different dimensions of territorial problems and above all the interdependencies between these dimensions" (Fareri 2009, p. 122). Removed from its sectoral definition and renamed as urban, we can spare our policy distinctions that do not help to progress towards its operationalisation. The first is the one between formal and non-formal education: in an integrated view, experimental learning pathways do not oppose formal education, so becoming victims of the informality niche, but contrast the reasons of both, which only serve to legitimise their respective domains.

The second is that of outdoor education as opposed to education practised inside the school building: these experiences, relying on the undoubted strength of their own arguments, run the risk of becoming reduced to the "educating city" and confirming indoor education as the standard of learning.¹²

Reframing

The cases we have presented in our conversations avoid these contrasts, they are not proposals to reform the education system. They choose another field of intervention, which is that of people and their relationship with space: in order to support a fair transition, promoting

¹² «The problem [of the classroom] is not the absence of experience, but its faulty and flawed nature regarding its relation to further experience» (Dewey 2014, p. 13).

sustainability, inclusion and care, they are aware that they have to work on learning and increasing skills for change. *Learning Machine* and *#OvestLab* experiment with other artistic languages, such as the performing arts and theatre, which open up unusual opportunities when they engage with the everyday lives of people and communities.

They bring other forms of knowledge into play, such as craftsmanship, which brings out and develops skills unknown in school education, subverting the normal mechanisms for constructing learning paths and transmitting knowledge. They are aimed at those who have experienced a consensual divorce from the school, which is seen as a "mundane machine"¹³ that rejects unpredictability and anomaly.

They try to detect "outstanding" people, anyone who is undergoing a phase of disorientation and/or transition, both personal and professional (as *Learning Machine* does); NEETs, for whom they provide "second chance" opportunities (as in *Se.Po.Pass*), useful to the recipients but also to the school itself, as a chance to requalify.

By looking at education from the city's standpoint, the value of differences can be understood: just as for cities the recognition of hyper-diversity is what enhances their potential for innovation. In the same way learning pathways benefit from anomalies, allowing themselves to be crossed and shaped by them. In essence, education as an urban policy reformulates the approach that governs the traditional school, which we could define — taking up Antonio Tosi's definition — as "administrative theory of needs" (Tosi 1984), the approach according to which we direct the sick to hospitals, children to schools and in the past, the mentally disabled to asylums.

The relationship between school and city today

Today we are in the position of having to reformulate the relationship between education and space. During the pandemic, we realised that the response based on widespread territorial centres and basic medicine

was more resilient to the virus, where the strategy of taking charge of people and providing care became territorial. In the same way, education should also function, organised in multiple learning paths that relate to the city's spaces. It follows that it is not only the school that must change, but the city itself: the "boundless school" should be matched by a similar movement in favour of the "trespassing" (Hirschman 1994) of urban space and the porous character of cities; of anomaly, unpredictability, surprise (the characteristics that sustain innovation); of accessibility to the most varied resources: to services, markets, relationships, knowledge; of "conviviality" (Illich 1973), of "negative capacity" (Lanzara 1993). Education conceived as urban policy is a laboratory of citizenship, a device for cultivating people's "capacity to aspire", to awaken their desire. Desire is part of the group of skills which we learn to exercise when we are encouraged to do so: as a skill, it can also be lost if it is not used, but if it is practised, it becomes an instrument of agency.

In this vein, desire does not only represent an individual impulse but becomes a collective reality, because aspirations are never simply individual but take shape in close connection with social life (Appadurai 2011). This is the aim of the Municipality of Milan's *Wish MI project*, based on the premise that a different approach to educational policies contributes to broadening and redefining welfare policies.

The city as an actor in educational processes

One desires within and in the presence of an enabling environment. Education as an urban policy encourages people to build a relationship with the city, involving it as a teacher and engaging with it at close quarters, so as to see their aspirations through the eyes of the city: *Seeing like a city* (Amin. Thrift 2017) is an invitation as well as a blueprint for action. The city is a device for learning: it does not offer the setting in which to do the education, but participates in the game of learning and provides the strategic resources.

In support of education as an urban policy, the territory becomes an "educating community", playing several roles. In some cases, it gives rise to formalised instruments: "educational community pacts". In Milan, the *School Hubs* project is designed to experiment with transforming a number of target schools into centres of high educational intensity, which include supplementary activities to strengthen and accompany students and extracurricular educational, cultural, recreational and sporting activities. These activities are co-designed by the school community with

¹³ «Since our educational system is intended to generate predictable citizens, it aims to amputate those undesirable internal states that generate unpredictability and novelty [...]. The interventions of our educational system aim in most cases at the trivialisation of our children» (von Foerster 1987, p. 212-13).

multidisciplinary teams, in collaboration with local resources and with the involvement of families.¹⁴

In other cases, the territory is a means of integrating social demands and policy provision. This is the case of the *Neighbourhood Schools* of the Municipality of Bologna, which promote workshops in fashion, music, theatre, dance, handicrafts, new technologies and street furniture, and which are developed at the juncture between citizens' demands and target areas, recognised on the basis of an analysis of territorial fragilities. In other cases, it is a field around which networks of relations between actors are established and strengthened. This is the case with the *Dergano Network*, where young people from the cultural world, small shops, social enterprises and informal groups give rise to rich networks of relations, mutual support and cooperation.

Here we encounter a key element, which turns our attention to a much broader scenario, where we understand that the many signs of the territory becoming an educational community are steps towards change. In a recent book, Pierre Veltz (Veltz 2021) argues that we are already undergoing a transition from an economy of objects to an economy of uses and experiences and this is already apparent in areas that relate to personal well-being (health, mobility, food, leisure, education, etc.). It is a difficult transition, because if the economy we are in the process of leaving behind was organised in juxtaposed silos, the one we are moving towards is an economy of links, which calls for integration and requires the creation of networks that strengthen relations between individuals, and between the local workshop and global connections. The medium for establishing this integration is the territory, around which we must develop the infrastructure (organisational, regulatory and physical) that can support the transition.

Spaces and networks

Veltz's proposal is a key theme for understanding the cases presented in this publication. They can be interpreted as experiments in the infrastructure of the territory aimed at supporting its educational dimension. In this way, we can understand the function of the spaces that have been revitalised as community hubs, the third places that

the New European Bauhaus places particular emphasis on. It is no coincidence, then, that in Dergano, a good number of subjects active in the networks of the neighbourhood manage spaces (buildings and their gardens and adjoining courtyards), which are flexible, well-kept, and facilitate the development of new ways of living together, forms of social enterprise and widespread educational practices.

On a micro scale, the infrastructures we are talking about can be temporary set-ups that function as "trading zones" between different actors. In the case of *#OvestLab*, the discussion tables set up by Amigdala are "boundary objects", around which it is possible to bring together people who speak different languages and express positions that are also very far apart: infrastructures that encourage discussion and possibly joint action, without being bound by shared visions and values, but simply finding it advantageous to exchange and learn from each other in order to pursue their own goals.¹⁵ On the urban scale, the five *MARES* in Madrid, the development poles for social and solidarity-based economic chains, located in as many areas of the city, act as "learning communities", in which everyone can be an expert regarding the various needs of the project.

Exchange initiatives between different competences accompany the various stages of the policy process, from initial analysis to solution design and management.

The case of the *Oude Dokken* area in Ghent adds another element to this discussion, because in this case the city entrusts the educating function to the redevelopment process that is affecting a part of it. The area of the dockyards is thus invested with initiatives that anticipate its future uses, mobilising the knowledge of its inhabitants for this purpose and helping to hone their skills, with reference to sustainable land uses, social innovation, energy transition, sea economy, etc.

As to combining people-oriented approaches to education in their relationship with their surroundings, one important example is *the School for Neighbourhoods* of the City of Milan. It addresses a fundamental point: the participation of people in the construction of urban policies is now practised through direct activation, by encouraging their protagonism. This transforms the function of the public administration,

¹⁴ The project interprets in a freely way a guideline contained in an OECD report, with reference to schools as "learning hubs" (OECD 2020).

¹⁵ The reference here is to the notion of "trading zones" proposed by Peter Galison with reference to the construction of contexts for the development of interactive knowledge (Gorman 2010).

which is called upon to play the role of enabler and co-participant in change: for this reason, it needs to foster capacities and collective learning, towards society and towards itself. Education as an urban policy, however, needs to be looked at more broadly: when we say city, we definitely mean the territory, but we are also referring more generally to educational situations that focus on spaces and our bodies, on food and the Earth. This is the case for *Madre Project*, "the school of bread and places", aimed at training the skills of urban agricultural bakers as actors of social innovation and sustainability. It puts the issue of regeneration-innovation-inclusion in the New Climate Regime at the centre of its training and develops a teaching proposal around collectives formed by human and non-human actors (Latour 2018).

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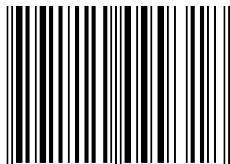
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