

Transforming cities into open and empowered communities is in full swing across Europe. In many places people have found new ways to collaborate across alleged divides. This shows also in the number of interesting initiatives that promote the integration of recently arrived migrants. However, bringing about collaboration that includes true co-creation remains a challenge. Therefore we wish to highlight some examples that

WITH

we studied before proceeding with our own project “Refugees for Co-creative Cities”. We hope that the contributions provide insights for rethinking housing and job provision as well as societal engagement. We encourage storytelling and cooking together, not only because they are fun but because they help in creating inclusive cities and communities.

Home Is the Place You Left

Every travel we make casts a different light on what makes a home. We are always somehow held in relation to our homes. This connection plays out on different scales, from an somewhat abstract notion to the closest relationships like family and friends.

Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé
DEMOS HELSINKI

In 2010 I bought a book on emotional homelessness called "Home is the place you left". What struck me most in the book was the breadth and diversity of the home-related anecdotes and personal stories. One contribution seemed close to my own view of home as something I am always simultaneously leaving and returning to. Other stories in the book featured also a number of traumatic relations with the places where the authors come from. Some authors did not feel like returning to the places where they grew up, as they sensed that they might not be welcome back. Still they felt the need of settling accounts with their past homes, in order to move on in life, to the process of creating one's new home.

Now in 2016, when I see the book on my bookshelf, new kind of associations come up. The growing flows of forced migration have put the concept of home in a new perspective. Both private and work related encounters with the topic have reshaped the meaning of home for me. The project - "Refugees for Co-creative Cities" - has made me familiar with a great amount of initiatives that have been in place across Europe to welcome refugees and to cater for their long-term needs and desires. They can be seen as attempts to give the migrants room, both physical and abstract, to think of having arrived in a potential new home.

I have also volunteered in building up the Finnish home accommodation network for asylum seekers. This network has offered a number of newcomers the chance to live in Finnish families while waiting for the results of the asylum seeking process. For those involved, home accommodation may also have drastically increased the awareness of one's own home.

Finding a home is not about walls but about relations. Although a number of basic features can be associated with homes – water, shelter, food and room to gather all in one place for security – they might not be the necessary conditions for feeling like home. In a true home, I think, you have room to feel comfortable both with your close ones as well as with your thoughts and desires. But if you have been separated from the people that used to share a home with you, and have hardly any contacts with whom you can talk about things that are important to you, it will be troublesome to feel like home.

The people who migrate voluntarily as they get a new job or spend an exchange year abroad do not start from scratch in their new domiciles. The forced migration path, in turn, may mean having to start a new a number of times, fully on your own, without chances to take a rest and plan further ahead, having to constantly think about finding a shelter or earning your next meal. Even if you end up in a place where your existence is not constantly threatened, it may be hard to build relations within the surrounding society. You may find accommodation but still lack relations. You will gradually make friends, and even move in with them to a new home. If you have a job, you might like to spend some of your earnings to make your accommodation look more like home. Some day as you are able to invite people to your place for dinner, you would actually be quite far in a process of feeling like home.

Our international editorial team is aware of being very privileged. We live and feel at home in Europe where we are able to freely travel and settle in places that we have bonds with – in Oberhausen, Berlin, Ljubljana, Thessaloniki, Helsinki and many more. With this publication we hope to support the accommodation of newcomers in Europe, to catalyze processes of home-making and home-shaping across this continent. We feel for those that have no other option than to start anew after having fled the unbearable circumstances back home – or whatever is left of that.

This publication serves also as an invitation to join a process of co-creation currently underway in Oberhausen, a city of in the Ruhr region in Germany. There the above-mentioned “Refugees for Co-creative Cities” has initiated an experiment of collaborative upgrading and social encounter in a centrally located multistorey apartment building. The intention is to turn the building into true homes for as many of its residents as possible.

PS. This is a publication of KITEV (Kultur im Turm e.V., Oberhausen), IPoP (Institute for Spatial Policies, Ljubljana) and Demos Helsinki. It is a report of the Refugees for Co-creative Cities project, financed by Advocate Europe idea challenge.

DE

Zuhause ist der Ort, von dem man aufbricht und zu dem man zurückkehrt. Jede Reise wirft ein anderes Licht darauf, was es mal war und nun ist. Abstrakt bestimmt man sich immer in Beziehung zum eigenen Zuhause. Das manifestiert sich in verschiedenen Hinsichten, von Familienbeziehungen bis hin zu globalen Verhältnissen.

Die wachsenden Ströme erzwungener Migration haben die Konzepte vom Zuhause in ein ganz anderes Licht gestellt. Sowohl private als auch berufliche Begegnungen mit dem Thema haben die Bedeutung von Zuhause für mich grundlegend verändert. Ein Projekt - "Refugees for Co-creative Cities" - hat mich vertraut gemacht mit einer grossen Anzahl von Projekten, die sich in Europa gegründet haben, um Geflüchtete willkommen zu heissen und sich um ihre langfristigen Bedürfnisse und Wünsche zu kümmern. Man kann sie begreifen als Versuche, den Migrierten einen Raum zu geben, sowohl physisch als auch abstrakt, um sich überhaupt vorstellen zu können, in einem neuen Zuhause anzukommen.

Unser internationales Herausgaberteam ist sich der eigenen Privilegien bewusst. Wir leben in Europa und fühlen uns hier zu Hause. Wir sind in der Lage, frei zu reisen und uns immer wieder neu für Lebensorte zu entscheiden, mit denen wir uns verbunden fühlen: in Oberhausen, Berlin, Ljubljana, Thessaloniki, Helsinki und vielen weiteren Städten. Mit dieser Publikation möchten wir die Behausung von Neuankömmlingen in Europa unterstützen, Prozesse vom Bilden und Gestalten eines Zuhauses auf diesem Kontinent katalysieren. Wir fühlen uns an der Seite von denen, die keine andere Möglichkeit haben, als von vorn anzufangen nach einer Flucht vor den unzumutbaren Zuständen in ihrer Heimat - was auch immer heute davon übrig geblieben sein mag.

FA

خانه تنها جایی است که بعد از ترک آن به طور مداوم به آن برمی گردیم. هر سفر فقط

هر نفر همیشه به صورت انتزاعی به خانه اش متصل است. این رابطه سطوح مختلفی از رابطه خانوادگی تا سطوح جهانی را در بر میگیرد.

سیل جدید مهاجرت اجباری (پناهندگی) معنای جدیدی به خانه بخشیده است. هر دو بخش خصوصی و کاری زندگی من در رابطه با موضوع "یکپارچه سازی" ذهنیت من نسبت به معنای خانه را تغییر داد. پروژه اول " پناهندگان با شهروندان برای بازسازی شهر " من را با تعداد زیادی گروه مردمی که در سراسر اروپا شروع به خوش آمد گویی به پناهندگان کرده و شروع به تهیه نیازهای بلند مدت آنها کرده بودند آشنا کرد. این اقدام میتواند به عنوان یک تلاش برای دادن جا و مکان (یک خانه بالقوه) به مهاجران چه از لحاظ فیزیکی و انتزاعی دانست. تیم تحریریه ما از امتیاز ما در اروپا آگاه است. ما در اروپا زندگی میکنیم و آن را خانه خود میدانیم. جایی که ما میتوانیم به راحتی در آن سفر کنیم و در جایی که به آن متصلیم (روحی و مکانی) زندگی کنیم. در اوبرهاسن - برلین - اسلوانیا - تسالونیک، هلسینکی و تمام شهر های دیگر . با این مقاله ما امیدواریم بتوانیم از مسکن تازه واردان (مهاجران) به اروپا حمایت کنیم و روند خانه سازی برای آنها را در سراسر این قاره تسریع ببخشیم. ما کسانی را که چاره دیگری به جز شروع دوباره بعد از فرار از شرایط غیر قابل تحمل در خانه قبلی اشان را دارند درک میکنیم.

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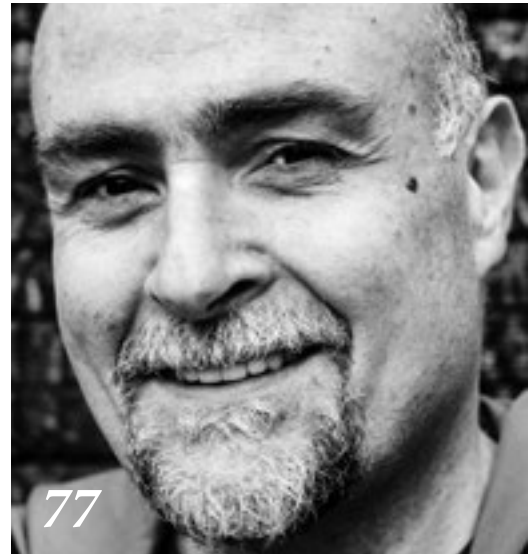
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Crossing Over

In 2015, over one million refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea by boat to reach Europe. The main route was no longer from Northern Africa to the Italian island of Lampedusa, but across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece. Even in the winter of early 2016, the flow of people remained strong despite the harsh weather conditions. While at least 3771 people died or were reported missing in 2015, the UNHCR estimates for 2016 are also drastic, reaching 2856 by early June.

After the EU-Turkey statement, which returns people arriving on Greek island back to Turkey, the routes to the EU have changed and become even more dangerous. People fleeing war, conflicts, persecution, poverty and hopelessness often end up being exploited by smuggling and trafficking business and even losing their lives or their family members along the way - and that is sadly what we are now seeing in the area.

Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé



The Near East Situation

The country from which the largest refugee flows originate is Syria, followed by Afghanistan and Somalia. The country that has for long hosted the vast majority of those refugees is Turkey. Already before the EU-Turkey statement, 2.7 million refugees lived in Turkey, and the number is on the rise.

In April 2016 a total of 4 801 400 Syrians were registered to live outside of Syria in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq – and this figure does not factor in the large amount of unregistered refugees.

For a small country like Lebanon, the residing refugee population is a great challenge. The situation is particularly demanding in the most vulnerable and deprived parts of the country, which are also hosting the largest numbers of displaced persons from Syria. The Lebanese Government and the UN estimate that of the current 6 million people in Lebanon, a total of 3 million are considered as vulnerable: 1.5 million displaced Syrians, 1.5 million Lebanese and 0.3 million Palestine refugees. Turkey is also struggling with the situation. Less than 10 percent of the refugee population have a place on a camp – the rest live in towns and cities, struggling to find housing and employment, as well as education for their children.

Heading to Central Europe

To leave the hardship confronted in countries like Turkey and Lebanon, a large number of the refugees are determined to continue their journey. With the improving weather conditions in the summer, Greece will most likely continue to see boats arriving on the shores of the Aegean Islands. No doubt without the current border control regime in Europe, few would stop in Greece. Indeed, many would most likely head further north in order to reach Germany or, for instance, the UK, as was the case last winter. The same applies to those that have managed to cross the Mediterranean to Italy from as far as Libya: the newcomers are reluctant to stay in the overcrowded reception centres and would rather seek better living conditions and job opportunities further north.

The share of children among migrants is considerable: 38 per cent of the total sea arrivals in Greece in 2016 were children. Among them, unaccompanied and separated children form a group that has even more acute needs. In 2015 the number of applications by unaccompanied children was 88 300, constituting 23% of all asylum applicants under the age of 18. Germany currently hosts as much as 60 000 unaccompanied children, primarily from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Sweden, in turn, received a total of 35 369 asylum applications from unaccompanied children in 2015.

In addition to the dramatic images of people being rescued from the small and overcrowded boats, the media imagery on the European refugee crisis has been shaped by images from the Balkans. Until mid-February 2016, the majority of refugees/migrants trying to reach central Europe used the so-called Western Balkans route, which went through Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. The scale of people in transit was particularly notable in the Slovenian case. After Hungary sealed its borders in September 2015, the main route went across Slovenia. A country of just over 2 million inhabitants saw a total of 550 000 migrants pass through it in 2015.

Since the introduction of border restrictions and closures along the Western Balkans route in 2016, the number of people staying in Greece has increased. According to UNHCR, some 57 000 refugees and migrants are currently staying in the designated sites across the country. Some stay in the Balkan countries where, for various reasons, their journey was interrupted.



Most refugees in
relation to population:

SWEDEN

15/1000 refugees and/
or asylum
seekers per
inhabitants.

Most refugees in in
absolute terms:

GERMANY

1.1 million

Highest relative
increase in asulym
applications:

FINLAND

10X from 2014

Unprecedented amount of applications

Where, then, did people end up? Among EU countries, two countries stand out of the rest. In relation to the country's population, Sweden currently hosts the most newcomers – 15 refugees and/or asylum seekers per 1000 inhabitants. The number of asylum applications in 2015 was 162 877, which is a ten-fold increase from 2010, and twice as high as in 2014. In absolute terms no country compares with Germany, where as many as 1.1 million migrants arrived in 2015 and, mostly, still stay. The numbers of asylum applications (440 000 in 2015) also broke the earlier German record number from 1992 (440 000), when people from eastern and southern Europe, including Yugoslavian war zones sought refuge in Germany. In 2015 the highest relative increase in asylum applications was registered in Finland, where figures saw a near ten-fold increase (from 3 651 in 2014 to 32 476 in 2015).

One would think that Europe, the home of a quarter of global GDP, would be in a good enough position to accommodate refugees fleeing hardship. Instead, the word "crisis" is being reproduced by the European media and decision-makers. While there are many problems and challenges related to the new situation, it is hard to see how and where a real "crisis" manifests itself - unless one takes into account the conflicts from which refugees flee in such distress.

Era of migration

What makes the current situation exceptional for Europe is that it is an arrival continent during an era of increasingly global mobility. Never before have people been so much on the move, in absolute terms. According to the UNHCR, 65.3 million people around the world have been forced from home. Another striking figure is that persons living in a country other than the one they were born in reached 244 million in 2015 for the world as a whole, which represents a 41 per cent increase compared to 2000.

The linkages between migration, development and well-being are strong and diverse. This relates to the point explored elsewhere in this publication: the need to remember the ways in which migration and other forms of global mobility have enriched our lives – even if some members of the receiving societies fail to see this. Also, from the perspective of an individual migrant, migration may be a series of tragedies. Here, we encourage everybody to empathize with those struggling to settle in a foreign country, and invite you to learn from the variety of interesting practices in the sphere of refugee integration.

65.3 million people forced from their homes in 2015

41% increase compared to 2000

Integration is the Word?

Global urbanisation and migration mean that we all live in one interconnected metropolitan realm. Like Mark Terkessidis writes, this metropolis is a bundle of different pasts, where no single type of existence can represent “normality”. What can be shared, though, is the future.

Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé

However, a shared future would only work out if it was intercultural, i.e. where management of diversity and individuals' equal access to resources were maintained by institutions. Judged by Terkessidis, an intercultural future in Germany would require major institutional reforms – radical intercultural openings. One should no longer blame “outside” forces for some alleged crisis, as it hinders us from seeing the need to renew the system from within. This would encompass making new kind of connections within the existing diversity.

If culture is seen also as a set of practices or organization principles and not only ethnic belongings or cultural identities, the challenge is to allow for meaningful presences for all individuals than requiring that ethnic minorities prove their ability to integrate in a society defined by the majority. If we acknowledge that difference exists just as much within groups as it does between groups, the question of integration becomes obsolete. What remains is the challenge of diversity management, i.e. the utilization of all valuable resources regardless of their origin. Our urban thrown-togetherness is here to stay: cherishing it makes far more sense than attempting to downplay it by forcing people into structures whose superiority has since long become questioned.

The book ‘Interkultur’ by Terkessidis was published in 2010 but it remains highly topical. It is a clear-sighted diagnosis of the various institutional efforts – mainly unsuccessful despite of the often good intentions – to cope with the increasingly multicultural life in Germany. What Terkessidis proposes as a solution, or at least a direction to follow, is to conceive ‘Interkultur’ (the intercultural) as absence of barriers (Barrierefreiheit). We ought to give up the illusion of “a normal user” and, instead, concentrate on providing equal access to all users of, for example, urban spaces.

Further terminology issues

This publication features a series of practices that deal with refugees and migrants by welcoming and accommodating them in Europe. In more accurate terms we mostly talk about integrating asylum seekers or persons protected under international humanitarian law. For practical reasons we also sometimes use the more generic term ‘refugee’ when referring to the newcomers seeking protection from Europe.

The word ‘integration’ might not be the best term for describing what people actually strive for when they try to successfully settle in a foreign country or welcome immigration in their own society. The correct word might not yet even exist. From the

”One can look at integration as pathways to integrity”

perspective of the newcomer the optimal state of being might be ‘integrity’: the feeling of being a whole human being instead of only a ‘refugee’. This would entail the genuine possibility of gradually realizing and striving for what one considers to be the good life. However, there might be a great number of hurdles to be overcome prior to reaching integrity, a fact that actually applies to much of the “original” population as well.

Promising approaches

When one looks at the successful cases of ‘integration’, one can also look at them as pathways to integrity. Think of, for instance, all the projects that have to do with food and cooking, design and building, or storytelling and giving a voice to the newcomers.

Instead of just providing nourishment, cooking unites. It forms both long-term and spontaneous communities, and offers the chance to communicate with the help of the universal language of cooking. Design and building projects, on the other hand, showcase your agency and skills – you are able to contribute to the community you are becoming part of – while storytelling highlights your survival and gives hope about being respected as an individual who is special and important, even if your loved ones might be far away or might no longer live.

Also, many newcomers need to do something

just to kill time. Many successful projects have provided valuable opportunities to simply do something else than wait. Wait for your asylum decision, wait for your language course, wait for an agency to provide you a room of your own. During these agonizing phases of waiting, people need things to do and people to talk to. While being busy in various activities, one may also gain necessary capabilities such as new language skills.

Memory matters

People need to both remember and to forget. Successful integration projects often offer chances for this. If you become certain enough that you are safe, you may be able open up your past to others. On the other hand, you need moments to get carried away, to forget the past and maybe even the present, to just live in the moment or to think about the future.

In this publication we have examples of all of the above. We highlight steps both big and small on the path towards integrity, as a member of the recipient community.

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WENN WIR ANERKENNEN,

dass verschiedenartigkeit ebenso zwischen als auch innerhalb von Gruppen existiert, wird die Frage nach Integration überflüssig. Übrig bleibt die Herausforderung des Diversitymanagement, also die Nutzung aller wertvollen Ressourcen, unabhängig von ihrer Herkunft. Die urbane soziale Gemengelage ist gekommen, um zu bleiben: sie zu wertschätzen ist ohne Zweifel sinnvoller als zu versuchen, sie herunterzuspielen. Dabei werden nicht selten Menschen in Strukturen gezwängt, deren Gültigkeit sich eigentlich schon lange in Frage gestellt sieht.

Das Wort Integration ist ein problematischer Begriff um zu beschreiben, wonach Menschen streben, wenn sie versuchen, sich erfolgreich in einem fremden Land niederzulassen. Und auch um zu benennen, wie man Migration in der eigenen Gesellschaft willkommen heisst. Vielleicht gibt es dafür noch keine richtigen Worte. Aus der Perspektive der Ankömmlinge mag der ideale Seinszustand die Integrität sein: das Gefühl, als gesamter Mensch wahrgenommen zu werden, anstatt bspw. als "Geflüchteter". Integrität beinhaltet die grundsätzliche Möglichkeit, anzustreben und umzusetzen, was dem eigenen Konzept vom guten Leben entspricht.

In dieser Publikation haben wir verschiedene Beispielprojekte untersucht, die im Zusammenhang mit der aktuellen Einwanderung in Europa, schwerpunktmässig Deutschland, stehen. Wir stellen damit sowohl kleine als auch grosse Schritte dar auf dem Weg zur Integrität dar: der Einzelne erscheint so als Mitglied einer offenen Gesellschaft.

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اگر ما قبول کنیم که تفاوت به همان اندازه که در درون هر گروه وجود دارد در بین گروه های مختلف وجود دارد سوال از یکپارچه سازی منسوخ میشود. آنچه باقی میماند چالش مدیریت تنوع است. برای مثال استفاده از تمام منابع ارزشمند صرف نظر از منشاء آنها است.

شهر از هم در رفته ما اینجاست تا بگویم : گرامی داشتن شهر به مراتب معنای بیشتری نسبت به تلاش برای کم اهمیت جلوه دادن آن با وادار کردن مردم به ساختارهای که برتری آنها زیر سوال است میدهد.

کلمه یکپارچه گی ممکن است بهترین لغت برای تفسیر آنچه مردم در حقیقت با آن دست و پنجه نرم می کنند تا بتوانند در یک کشور خارجی ساکن شوند و یا میکوشند که به مهاجران در کشور خود خوش آمد گویند نباشد. لغت درست شاید اصلا وجود نداشته باشد. از منظر تازه- واردان (مهاجران) حالت مطلوب ممکن است واژه "تمامیت" به معنای انسان کامل با تمام حقوق بودن و نه تنها یک پناهنده. این تمامیت شامل امکان واقعی برای درک تدریجی و تلاش برای یک زندگی بهتر است.

در این نشریه ما از همه موارد فوق نمونه هایی ارائه میدهم. ما همچنین به عنوان عضوی از جامعه دریافت کننده (دریافت کننده پناهندگان) گام های بزرگ و کوچک در مسیر تمامیت را برجسته می سازیم.

Reference: Terkessidis, Mark (2013, 5th Edition). Interkultur. Edition Suhrkamp 2589. Suhrkamp, Berlin.

See book review in English:
<http://transit.berkeley.edu/2012/dzierson/>

Stories from the Reception Centre

In summer 2015 Finnish journalists were trying to grasp what would result from the unforeseen amount of applications for asylum. As the number of applications increased tenfold from the previous year, media's attention was on how the crisis was evolving and how it was dealt with. At the same time they were dealing with unprecedented opposition towards immigration, as well as racism and misinformation.

Julia Jousilahti

Jaakko Blomberg,

founder of Yhteismaa (“Common Ground”) Association, felt something important was missing from the public discourse. We had not heard the voice and the stories of the people who had left their homes to find a decent life. There was more to learn than mere statistical information.

At the time Blomberg was planning a series of short interviews with people who regularly seek food aid. As this form of aid is called bread queue in Finland, the project was called Stories from the Bread Queue. The events of summer 2015 changed his focus, towards the people who were migrating through Europe. He believed first hand stories could bring in the missing perspective and help evoke empathy towards people.

Blomberg’s idea was that sharing and openness would reduce the uncertainty and alleviate the fears public had about the situation. Stories from the Reception Centre was created as a means for asylum seekers to tell who they are, where they come from and what they hope for. “We wanted to be a neutral messenger and not have a strong opinion in the heated discussion. That was something new at that time”, Jaakko says.

Jaakko posted his idea to a Facebook group called “Finnish Refugees Hospitality Club” and it received an enthusiastic response. With the help of an interpreter Jaakko, Ruut Luukkonen and photographer Reeta Paakkinen began interviewing people at the reception centres.

“We just went there and tried what works. First some people were a bit sceptical, but when we started to talk, many people were eager to tell their story”, Jaakko recalls. “You could sense that many people had an urge to talk, almost as if it were therapeutic for them. Only a few people refused to be interviewed”.

The form of an interview is always the same. The person can tell whatever he or she wants to tell about themselves and the story is published on the Stories from the Reception Centre Facebook page with the interviewee’s name, age and a photo in which the person cannot be identified. The anonymity is important as the interviewees should not be put at any risk in Finland or in their country of origin in case they are deported.

Jaakko and his association Yhteismaa are behind many urban events and projects in Helsinki and abroad. Their aim is to make life in the cities more fun, sustainable and communal. Among other things, Yhteismaa has turned the entire city into a giant flea market where people come to the streets and sell the things they no longer need while enjoying the carnevalesque atmosphere. On a day called Dinner Under the Sky, Yhteismaa devoted one of the main streets in Helsinki for pedestrians, and set a table for 1000 people who brought their food to share with friends and strangers.

In July 2016 Stories from the Reception Centre had over 5200 followers. Jaakko, Reeta and Ruut and other participants had published over 50 stories. The most recent posts are from February 2016. Jaakko admits that at the moment the site is on hold.

“Each of us has worked for the project pro bono, which always makes things a bit difficult. For each interview we need a photographer and an interpreter. And even though we have a lot of eager volunteers, it is often tricky to try to combine everyone’s schedules”, Jaakko explains. However, he hopes the site will get funding so that the project could continue.

“I would like to show how the lives of the refugees’ continue in Finland once they have received their residence permit. And I would also like to understand who are the people that are arriving here today.” Sadly it seems, there will still be many stories to tell.

Mohammed, 19

from Iraq

Text **Elna Venesmäki**
Picture **Sara Hornig**



EN

"I played in Iraq football and I was really good at it, the second best in my town. I am a goal-keeper. I was in high school, and I left because Isis had control over my city. My dad worked in the army, and Isis asked him to join them. He refused and Isis burned our home. A week later my family helped me over the border, so I made it to Turkey. I took a boat to a Greek island close by, as everybody did. I took only my telephone with me. I took a plane to Finland, because my cousin lives here. My family lives in Turkey now.

I have been here for three months and I play now with a local football team. We are training four times a week.

FI

Pelasin Irakissa jalkapalloa ja olin hyvä siinä, maalivahti. Minut valittiin kaupunkini toiseksi parhaaksi pelaajaksi. Olin lukiossa, ja lähdin, koska Isis hallitsi kotikaupunkiani. Isäni työskenteli armeijassa, ja Isis pyysi häntä liittymään heihin. Hän ei suostunut, ja Isis poltti kotimme. Viikkoa myöhemmin perheeni salakuljetti minut yli rajan ja pääsin Turkkiin. Jatkoin siitä veneellä lähimmälle saarelle niin kuin kaikki. Otin mukaani vain puhelimeni. Lensin Suomeen, koska täällä asuu myös serkkuni. Perheeni asuu nyt Turkissa.

Olen ollut täällä kolme kuukautta, ja pääsin mukaan paikalliseen jalkapalloseuraan. Harjoittemme neljä kertaa viikossa.

Mahmud, 25

Painter from Bagdad

Text **Ruut Luukkonen**
Picture **Eini Nyman**



EN

"I want to find a job here in Finland soon, get a grip of everyday life again and support myself as a painter. I did not stay in Turkey where I had fled from Iraq a bit more than a year ago because making one's own living in Turkey proved to be impossible. In Turkey, I had found a job in a factory located in Eskişehir. On my third working day, the police raided the premises and gave a huge fine to the owner of the factory for having employed foreigners without work permits. I lost my job. After having stayed in Turkey for about a year, I had so little left of my savings that I had to decide what to do with my life. In Turkey it was going nowhere. I could not return to violence-ridden Iraq either. There you never know when the bomb hits your home or when you will be forced to join the war. Violence has taken over everyday life. My parents leave the house only to quickly buy their groceries. My only alternative was to leave from Turkey to Europe. In the small boat that I crossed the sea to Greece, there were more than 40 other passengers. A few children drowned on the way. It was a very harsh, nightmarish journey."

FI

"Haluan löytää Suomesta pian töitä ja päästä takaisin kiinni arkeen, elättää itse itseni maalarin töillä. En jäänyt Turkkiin, jonne olin paennut Irakista reilu vuosi sitten, koska Turkissa oman elannon ansaitseminen osoittautui mahdottomaksi. Turkissa sain töitä Eskişehirissä sijaitsevasta tehtaasta. Kolmantena työpäivänäni poliisi teki sinne ratsian ja antoi tehtaan omistajalle suuret sakot työluvottomien ulkomaalaisten työllistämisestä. Menetin työpaikkani. Noin vuoden Turkissa oltuani säästöni olivat hupenneet niin, että minun oli pakko päättää mitä aion elämälläni tehdä. Turkissa se ei edennyt mihinkään. Väkivallan repimään Irakiin en myöskään voinut palata. Siellä et voi koskaan tietää koska pommi osuu omaan kotiin tai sinut pakotetaan osaksi sotaa. Väkivalta on saanut yliotteen arjesta. Omat vanhempani pysyttelevät sisällä ja käyvät ulkona nopeasti vain ruokaostoksilla. Ainoa vaihtoehtoni oli lähteä Turkista kohti Eurooppaa. Pikkupaatissa, jolla ylitin meren Kreikkaan, oli yli 40 ihmistä. Matkalla muutama lapsi hukkui. Se oli todella rankka, painajaismainen matka."

Israa, 27

Journalist from Mosul

Picture & text
Ruut Luukkonen



EN

"I left because it was impossible for me to live and do my job in Mosul. Besides, as a woman my situation in Mosul is more difficult than for men of my age. Because of Isis, I couldn't leave my home, because of the way I look. I'm a young woman who works in the media. It's not a best combination in the eyes of Isis.

In Iraq, media is in a really poor state. There is no freedom of the press. Isis' propaganda is everywhere, you cannot know what is true and what is not. No one knows what is really happening.

Even before Isis, journalists had to be in someone's favour, a political party or a person. But before Isis, my situation was relatively better. I had the freedom to go out and felt myself safe in a way.

I travelled here alone. The journey was terrible and really tough. Crossing the sea and walking in the woods was frightening. I have seen death with my own eyes. Now in Finland I hope that at least I could do my job as a journalist."

FI

"Lähdin, koska Irakissa minun oli mahdotonta elää ja tehdä työtäni. Lisäksi naisena tilanteeni oli Mosulissa vaikeampi kuin ikäisilläni miehillä. Isisin takia en voinut poistua kotoani sen takia, miltä näytän. Olen nuori nainen, joka työskentelee media-alalla. Se ei ole Isisin silmissä paras yhdistelmä.

Irakissa median tilanne on todella huono. Lehdistönvapautta ei ole. Kaikkialla ympäröi Isisin propaganda, josta ei voi tietää mikä on totta ja mikä ei. Kukaan ei tiedä, mitä oikeasti tapahtuu.

Jo ennen Isisiä tehdäkseen työtään toimittajan oli oltava jonkun suosiossa, joko poliittisen puolueen tai henkilön. Ennen Isisiä tilanteeni oli suhteellisesti parempi. Silloin minulla ainakin oli vapaus lähteä ulos ja oloni oli tavallaan turvallisempi.

Tein matkani tänne yksin. Matka oli kamala ja todella raskas. Merimatka ja kulkeminen metsissä oli pelottavaa. Olen nähnyt kuoleman omin silmin. Suomeen saavuttuani toivon, että toimittajana pääsisin edes tekemään työtäni."

Abu-Ali, 50

Police officer from Baghdad

Text **Ruut Luukkonen**
Picture **Eini Nyman**



EN

"I had to leave. There were people threatening to kill me, had I stayed in Iraq just a day or two more. It's a miracle I got away. I know that if I go back, they'll kill me before I even get out of the airport.

Back in Baghdad I left for a journey that I never returned from - because I almost got caught during it.

I told my children they had to leave our house. They've been on the move ever since, due to their own safety. I don't even know where they are at the moment. I have four children; three daughters and a son.

My children are the reason I left. They are the only thing I care about. If my children aren't allowed to come here and be with me, I will go and die in Iraq. I will gladly die in Finland if only I can have my children here.

I'm worried about the lousy behavior of some young refugees from Iraq. They've always dreamed about a kind of freedom and responsibility that they never had back in Iraq. Now this freedom is given to them suddenly, and they don't know what to do with it."

FI

"Minun oli lähdettävä, koska minua peloteltiin tappamisella, jos olisin jäänyt Irakiin vielä päiväksi tai kahdeksi. Pakoon pääsystä on ihme. Tiedän, että jos palaan, minut tapetaan jo lentokentällä.

Bagdadissa lähdin matkalle, jolta en koskaan palannut, koska sen aikana minut melkein otettiin kiinni.

Ilmoitin lapsilleni, että heidän on lähdettävä kotitalostamme. Siitä lähtien he ovat olleet turvallisuutensa takia jatkuvasti liikkeellä. Tällä hetkellä en edes tiedä, missä he ovat. Minulla on neljä lasta, kolme tytärtä ja yksi poika.

Lähdin lasteni takia. He ovat ainoa asia josta välitän. Jos lapseni eivät saa tulla tänne, kuolen silloin Irakissa. Kuolen mielelläni Suomessa, jos vain saan lapseni tänne.

Olen huolissani joidenkin nuorten irakilaisien turvapaikanhakijoiden huonosta käytöksestä. Se johtuu vastuusta ja vapaudesta, josta nuoret ovat aina unelmoineet ja jota heillä ei ole Irakissa koskaan ollut. Nyt he saavat vapauden aivan yhtäkkiä, eivätkä osaa käyttää sitä."

Shelter Lodging Accommodation Housing Homes

This continuum is far from straightforward. Finding a shelter may be the first prerequisite of a home. On the other hand, you may have found a place to stay in a mass accommodation unit but still fully lack every feeling of home.

The question of affordable housing has become more and more problematic across European urban regions. The recent immigration flows have not caused but revealed a syndrome the reasons of which lie deep. Investing in real estate for pure profit-seeking purposes happens even in medium-sized cities previously free from worrying about rising rents. The public sector can also be blamed for its reluctance to develop new models of social housing - and home making.

Many refugee related projects are preoccupied with providing housing - or finding homes - for the recent newcomers. The Ruhr Region in Germany serves an interesting example showing both shortcomings and potential best practices. In Oberhausen there is much going on. Collaborative building and renovation projects are not only contributing to providing homes but creating new models of coexistence.

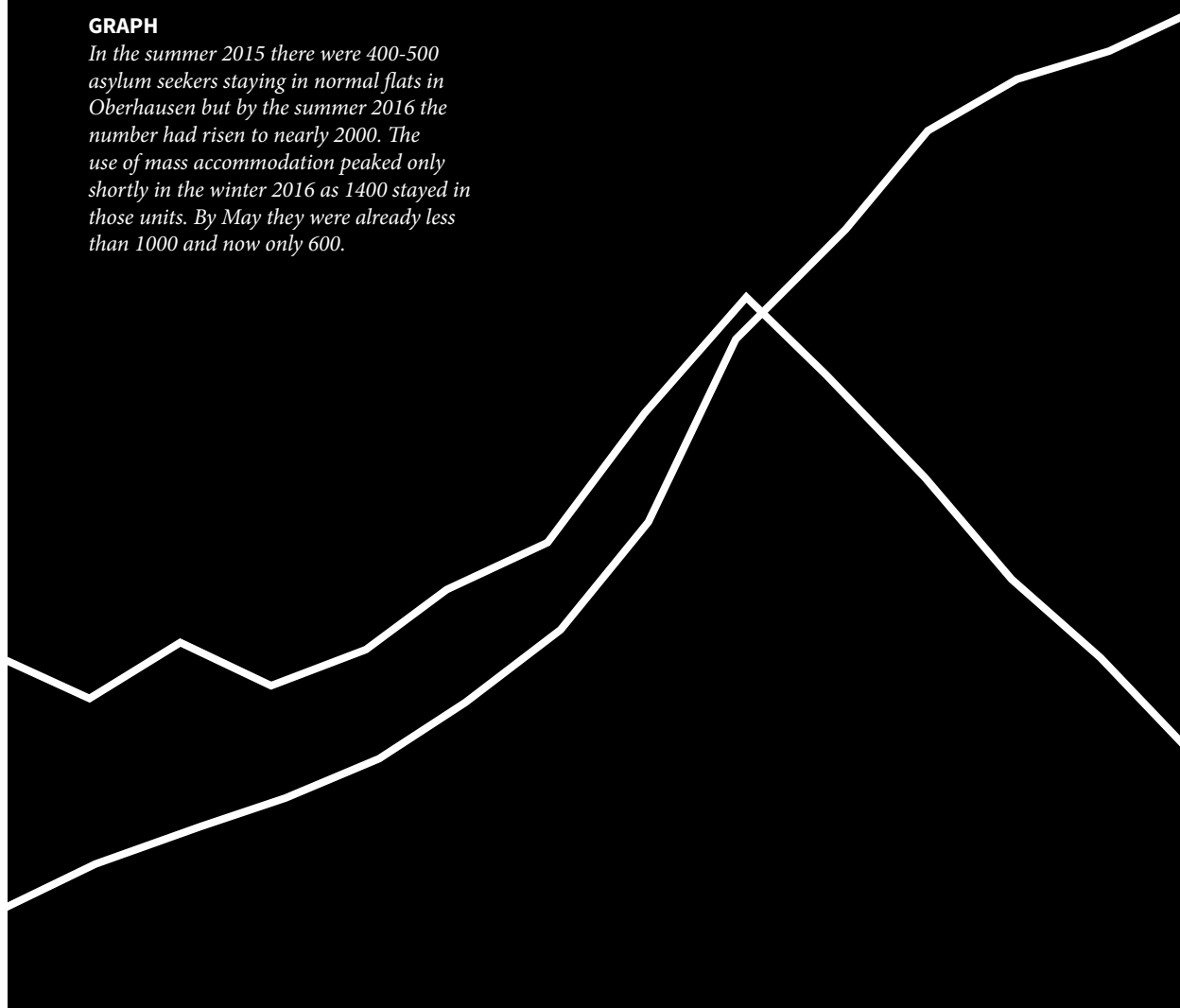


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GRAPH

In the summer 2015 there were 400-500 asylum seekers staying in normal flats in Oberhausen but by the summer 2016 the number had risen to nearly 2000. The use of mass accommodation peaked only shortly in the winter 2016 as 1400 stayed in those units. By May they were already less than 1000 and now only 600.



At Home in the Ruhr Region?

Agnieszka Wnuczak, Gesina Rath & Marielly Casanova

There are a number of refugee accommodation models in use within the Ruhr region, in Germany.

It seems that each and every city has decided to act on its own - quickly and reactively, often not thinking of the long-term sustainability of the chosen solutions. Some encouraging experiences from the past year stand out though.

The City of Oberhausen has managed to refrain from providing massive camp like arrangements to the asylum seekers, as it took a collaborative approach and sought accommodation in private apartments instead. In the summer 2015 there were 400-500 asylum seekers staying in normal flats but by the summer 2016 the number had risen to nearly 2000. The use of mass accommodation peaked only shortly in the winter 2016 as 1400 stayed in those units. By May they were already less than 1000 and now only 600.

The situation in other cities looks different. As the data collected from the three Ruhr region cities (on the period from June 2015 to July 2016) shows, thousands of asylum seekers have now for long been living in temporary mass accommodation. This bleak reality holds for Essen in particular.

	Oberhausen	Gelsenkirchen	Essen
Total number of asylum seekers in July 2016:	2.867	4.300	5.400
The development since August 2015:	<i>About 2.000 refugees arrived in Oberhausen between June 2015 and January 2016.</i>	<i>From August 2015 until January 2016 2.000 refugees arrived in Gelsenkirchen. The number has fallen since.</i>	<i>Until January 2016 arrived around 4.000 up til 5.000 refugees per week. Since February the numbers went down.</i>
What is the current housing-situation of the refugees?	<i>About 1.954 are living in private accommodation, around 662 in collective accommodation.</i>	<i>The first three months in collective accommodation. After the permanent residency is permitted the housing should be private based.</i>	<i>About 4.800 refugees living in so-called "time-villages", transition-accommodation. 600 living in so-called project-apartments rented by the city of Essen.</i>
Total number of people living in private accommodation	<i>1.954 in July 2016.</i>	<i>3.500 in the inner city of Gelsenkirchen.</i>	<i>It is the plan until 2017 to facilitate the collective accommodation in the private sector. The cooperation between apartment companies will be forced.</i>
How many apartments are mediated through the city and how many found on its own?	<i>About 300 apartments are current housing stock rented by the city of Oberhausen.</i>	<i>No exact number</i>	<i>No exact number</i>

In the Search of an Inclusive Neighbourhood

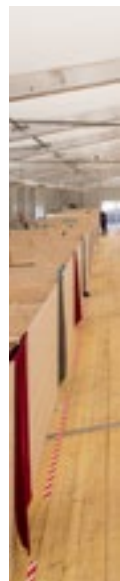
In Essen Karnap, one kilometre is long enough a distance to exclude 400 refugees from the daily life of Germans. In the Mathias Stinnes Stadium, industrial buildings, highways and railroads form effective barriers that divide the residents of the camp from the surrounding neighbourhoods. The separation is both physical and social. The residents feel unsafe to leave the premises and walk to daily facilities. Mothers fear leaving their children alone in the camp to attend German language courses. The area has created an atmosphere of distrust and people feel as if they are being punished for something.

Marielly Casanova

We are beginning to understand what social exclusion causes for refugees and to societies they inhabit. In a research seminar “Inclusive Neighbourhoods” students compared tent camps in the city centre to those in more isolated districts in Essen. They analysed the problems and limitations of inclusion in urban neighbourhoods. From this research they were able to draw some conclusions for workable solutions.

The refugee camps located in dense urban areas offer a direct contact to the city’s facilities and local residents. The result is the opposite to that of the distant camps. The refugees in the tent camp in Erbslöhstraße (Altenessen Süd) expressed gratitude and a desire to become part of the German society. They felt free to walk in the neighbourhood, get involved in the round table’s activities and had the desire to look for their own housing in the area. Often the local residents and shop owners were not able to differentiate between a refugee from an established neighbour with immigration background as the district is already very diverse.

In a refugee hostel in Hülsenbruchstraße (Altenessen Süd) offers families a possibility for private rooms and for cooking their own meals in shared kitchens. They also have common spaces for gathering and two backyards for recreation. The volunteers from the corresponding round table referred to them as “our refugees” and were willing to defend





Photographs by **Michael Heinrich**

The high number of refugees has put pressure on cities to come up with efficient ways to create living spaces for everyone.

Many current solutions are efficient in terms of construction time and costs. But are they able to create inclusive neighbourhoods?

(Above) Two initiatives in Munich, Germany, with a focus on efficiency.

them against opponents in the neighborhood. They were also open to opportunities for self-development (like a bike repair workshop) or promote collective improvements in the house (like painting, repairs and decoration).

Instead of capitalizing in the new human resources, Europe might end up repeating the old mistakes of social housing. In 2015 in Germany a total of 1.1 million people were registered as asylum-seekers. The overwhelming situation has resulted in the improvisation of camps not only in the inner cities neighbourhoods, but in the periphery of cities.

In the City of Essen, the GVE Gruppe built a new “multifunctional temporary shelter” for 800 refugees in a protected green area in the southern region of the city. The barrack style settlement was built on a former industrial complex and the nearest urban center (Fischlaken) is two kilometres away, making it difficult to reach by foot or public transportation. The refugees will not have the same opportunities to exchange with the local population, or have the same freedom to get acquainted with the city like the migrants hosted in central areas.

Building social housing in the periphery of cities has proven detrimental for social and economic development. Homogenisation (lack of roots and identity), lack of participation and disconnection from urban life are the fundamental causes for stigmatisation of neighbourhoods and its inhabitants.

If the right approaches are not implemented on time, the housing solution for the refugees will mean expenses in the present and high costs in the future. We should consider new inclusive models for urban development housing solutions to enable the integration of migrants and disadvantaged communities into the society.

Building social housing is no longer the sole responsibility of governments, architects or dwellers. It is a collaborative process of development. It provides a platform for personal fulfilment, empowerment and community building through the construction of the dwellings and the environment beyond the house. Migrants bring valuable assets that might not be quantifiable in terms of economic capital, but essential for the construction of social capital.

The Spirit of Oberhausen

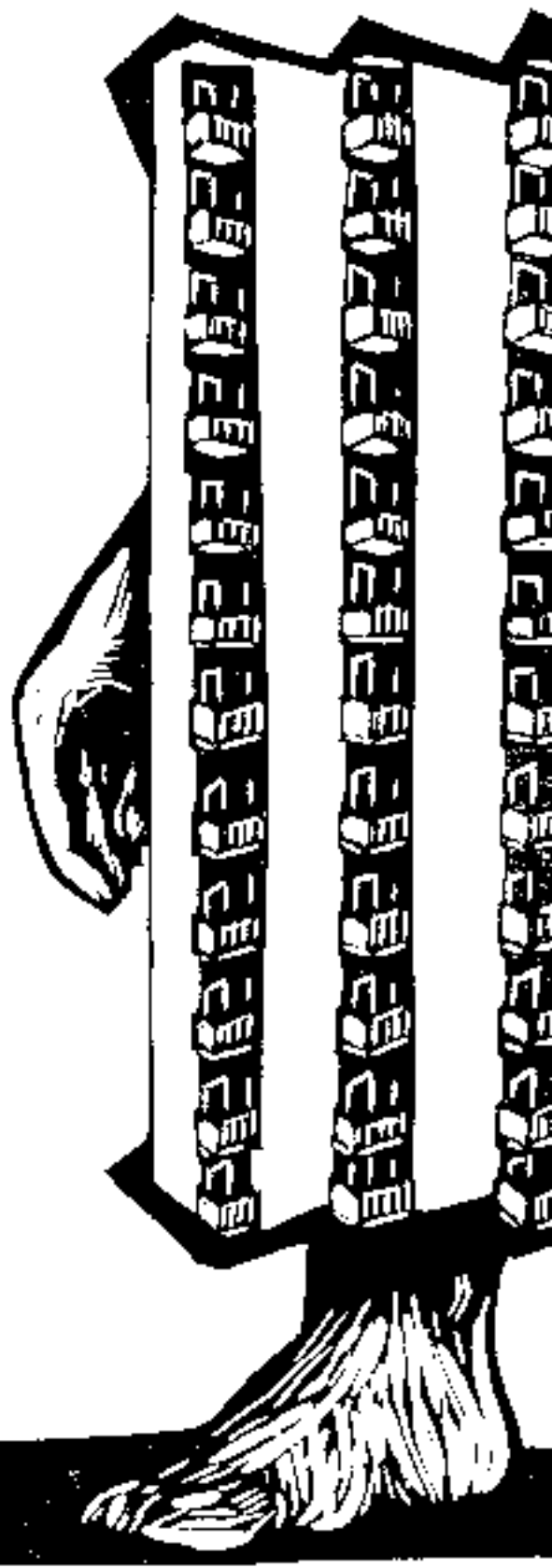
As has recently been discussed in Oberhausen, among others, housing and other construction of repairing projects have strong social potential. Creating more living space can serve also as an integration process of the socially disadvantaged people. It can also be a route for many migrants to get access to housing as their situation on the housing market is particularly vulnerable.

Agnieszka Wnuczak, Christoph Stark & Johanna-Yasirra Kluhs

Kitev initiating co-creation

A city maker group, artist-activist collective called Kitev (Kultur im Turm e.V.) has always seen building and space provision as a tool of self-determination and community building. In one of its current projects Kitev is starting a gradual upgrading process in Oberhausen, in a centrally located high-rise building built in the 1950s. As agreed with the owner Vonovia, the current and future residents of the apartment building as well as other interested citizens are invited to join Kitev in the renovation activities. The pilot project shall demonstrate how it is possible to revitalize neglected buildings, to improve the housing situation (of the migrants) in the city and to foster intercultural dialogue – all at the same time.

Despite its great location, the building at Friedrich-Karl-Strasse is not the most popular address. The small flats favour high fluctuation of residents and one-sided socio-economic structures. Most of the rents are paid through housing benefits as many tenants are unemployed or underemployed – or not permitted to work due to their recent arrival. Although the building does not look attractive, it is in a relatively good basic condition. However, the signs of neglect and lacking social control show in the high maintenance costs of the building. Many residents simply do not care - yet.



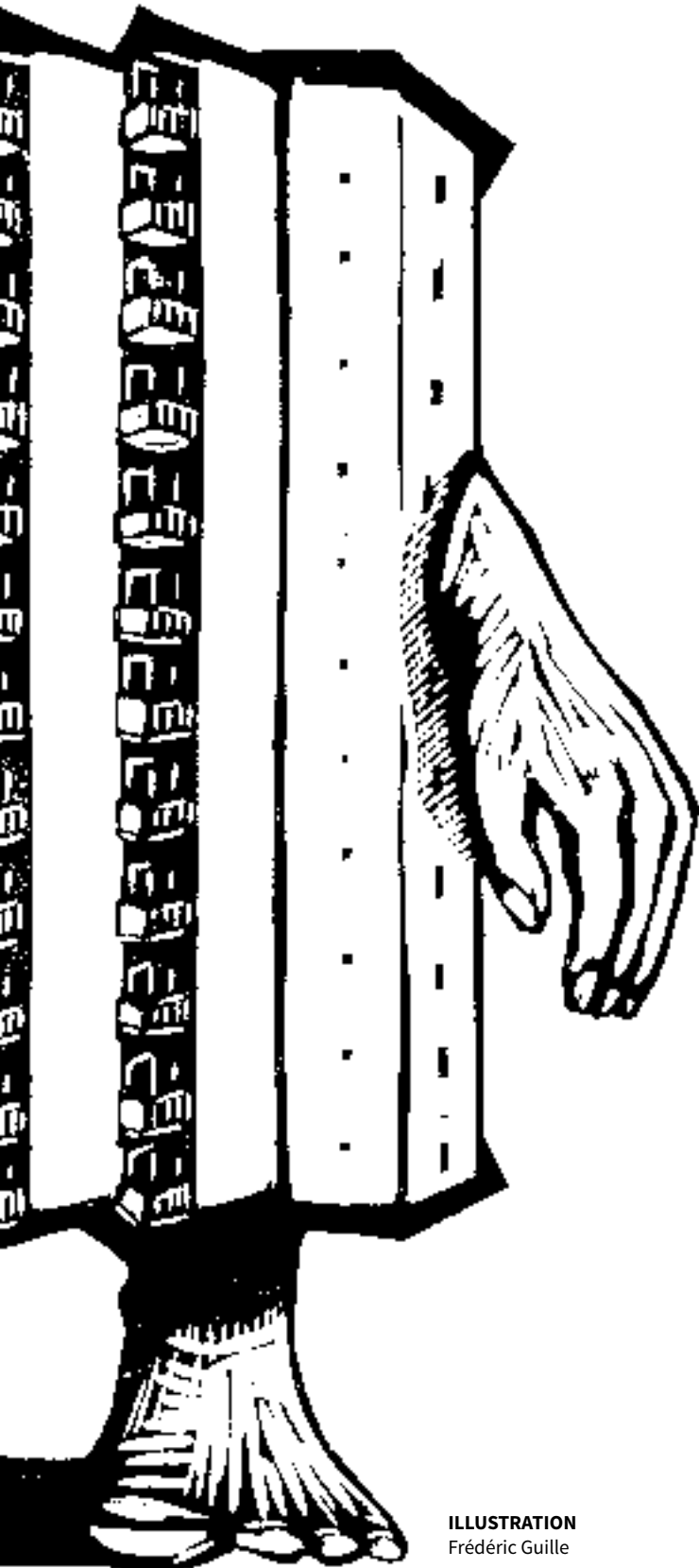


ILLUSTRATION
Frédéric Guille

Team in good mood

Now that the Kitev team has moved into the building and started the first interventions, the feeling is positive. The first encounters with the current tenants have been pleasant, and the international renovation team is highly motivated to get things done. One of the team members, Mohammed Sayed Hashemi, a recent immigrant from Iran, would also move into his first own apartment after first fixing it with the team. He is also working at the sewing machine of the workshop space that has been put up in the empty store room at the street level of the building. Some of the furniture for his future flat is also being built there.

What the team wants to avoid is a costly renovation process the results of which are not truly appreciated or are used only seldom. Therefore their high priority is to familiarize with the current residents – e.g. to talk with the long-time anchor tenants and residents, to initiate a series of small gatherings to gather knowledge about the priorities of the current tenants. It also has to be ensured that the rents do not start rising along the process.

New narratives emerging

Christoph Stark and Agnieszka Wnuczak, the two heads of the Kitev team, have also moved into the high-rise. "For us it's crucial to become part of the structure here. We aim to build a model for long term changes in housing policies and the ways that cities function", they say. Kitev hopes that the development of common usage and employment models in the highrise will spread to its urban environment and more broadly in the Ruhr Region. "This is a workshop for future concepts of a strong city center which is no longer based on retail. This could work as a best practice, and new episode in the tradition of historically active neighbourhoods of Oberhausen. The city has always been a flagship, talking about cooperative civic structures", praises Christoph Stark.

Kitev hopes that as many people as possible will be actively involved in the planning and renovation activities. Through the collaborative process it might be possible to create a new narrative for the building and thus the city center. It feels that a purposefully changed gaze on the situation is already starting to create a different reality. Ramash Imanifardazar has proposed to start with a big neon sign on the rooftop, saying "Oberhausen needs you". And for sure, she is not just talking about the building itself.



PICTURE

Christoph Stark with the letter E that the migrant youth have fixed for Oberhausen.

Gemeinsam Unterwegs

Ein Gespenst geht um im Ruhrgebiet. Es ist das Gespenst der bedingten Teilhabe. kitev stoppen den Glauben an das Problem und (er)finden Möglichkeiten. Seitdem seit etwa einem Jahr grössere Völkerwanderungen ihre Spuren in Europa, und somit auch im Ruhrgebiet, hinterlassen, ist das ArchitektInnen- und PlanerInnenkollektiv im Auftrag der Lösungen unterwegs.

Johanna-Yasirra Kluhs

Das Ruhrgebiet steht exemplarisch für eine deutsche Identität, die sich konstitutiv aus multiplen nationalen Zugehörigkeiten zusammensetzt. Multipel im Sinne einer Koexistenz, aber auch im Sinne der Verwebung. Zugehörigkeiten verflüssigen zunehmend und die Geschichte der Region wäre nie möglich gewesen, wenn nicht Zugezogene sie mit gemacht hätten. Doch die Geschichtsbücher, und auch die aktuelle Berichterstattung, wird allzu häufig von Anderen geschrieben. Wie kann man also Spuren hinterlassen als problematisierte Existenz in Bundesdeutschland, das sich erst nach gut 50 Jahren großer und eigeninitiiertiger Migrationsgeschichte als Einwanderungsland erkennen will?

Fremdheit war immer schon eine Bedingung für Erkenntnis und Veränderung. Im Rahmen einer Fachdiskussion zum Thema der Repräsentation von MigrantInnen in der deutschen Presselandschaft an der Ruhr Uni Bochum wurde vermehrt Deutschland als beinahe utopistisches neues Modell der Vereinigten Staaten bezeichnet: multikulturell und -lingual sei das Land und behauptete daher so eine Art von tran-

snationaler Ordnung. Aber, wenden andere ein, die Zugänge zu Räumen der Profilierung und Mitbestimmung, symbolisch oder ganz pragmatisch, seien nach wie vor extrem limitiert. Ob im Zusammenhang von Aufenthalts- und Arbeitsgenehmigungen, sozialem Status oder fixierter Identitätserzählungen: Zugewanderte in Deutschland leiden nach wie vor unter einer strukturellen Benachteiligung.

Wir können aktuell beobachten, wie Ordnungen von Benachteiligung und Privileg entsteht. Und wir können auch erkennen, wie die Bildung identitärer Narrative beinahe automatisch sich vollzieht: schon sind aktuell Zugewanderte in der Rolle des ewig Geflüchteten gefangen. Auch wenn diese Rolle oftmals von Aufmerksamkeit und Sorge geprägt ist: sie legt fest. Und sie erkennt den Benannten niemals als selbstverständlichen Teil der eigenen Umgebung an.

Hier setzen kitev ein mit ihrer informellen Wanderung des „E“ durch Oberhausen. Seit vielen Jahren schon leuchtet über Oberhausen ein Leuchtschriftzug, direkt gegenüber vom Hauptbahnhof: „Oberhausen – Wiege der Ruhrindustrie“. Oberhausen fehlt das leuchtende E, eine Lücke in der Selbstbenennung der Stadt. Womöglich aus dem Mangel der Notwendigkeit einer Selbstvergewisserung: bereits seit einigen Jahren leuchtet das „E“ nicht mehr bei Nacht.

Christoph Stark und Agnieszka Wnuzak sehen in der Lücke das Potential, neue Wege zu gehen: kurzerhand beschließen sie, die Neonleuchte gemeinsam mit neuangekommenen Jugendlichen zu reparieren. Und das zeitgleich zur Gründung von Bürgerforen und steigender An-

gst vor Überfremdung in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit. Seit einigen Monaten schon erproben die beiden dagegen kollaborative Arbeitsverfahren mit ihrer Gemeinschaftsküche: der Foodtruck Ellie firmiert als „Refugees’ Kitchen“ dafür, dass „der einfachste Weg uns eigentlich nicht interessiert“, so Christoph Stark. „Wir wollen nicht an den Problemen bauen, sondern an Lösungen. Klar ist es schwieriger, zusammen zu arbeiten, zu sein, zu denken, wenn man keine Sprache teilt und sowieso ungleiche Voraussetzungen hat – aber für die zukünftige Gesellschaft, in der wir ja im Grunde jetzt schon leben, sind inklusive und empowernde Strukturen zentral.“

Und so scheint die Wanderung aktuell die Bewegungsform der Stunde. Auch das reparierte „E“ zieht als Sinnbild für einen neuen Blick auf sich selbst mit seinen Bauherren durch die Stadt. Über Parkplatzdächer, Aussichtspunkte, Flüchtlingsunterkünfte, erste eigene Wohnungen. Und spätestens in dieser Bewegung spricht es plötzlich über viel mehr als kollaborative Mängelbehebung: über Identifikation, Stolz und Zugehörigkeit und vergessene Orte in der eigenen Stadt. Es wird zur Kunst, „die ja immer ein bisschen mehr kann“, sagt Stark. Und dann zum Anlass, genau darüber zu sprechen. Über Kunst. Die sich nicht versteht als exklusives Spezialwissen für einen kleinen Ausschnitt der Gesellschaft, sondern als Teil einer sozialen Plastik, die jede/n TeilnehmerIn wertschätzt und involviert. Womit wir dann bei Beuys wären. Und auch bei den möglichen Fortgängen des Projekts. Da schwebt es kitev vor, den gesamten Schriftzug gemeinsam mit RegelschülerInnen aus dem örtlichen Berufskolleg zu renovieren, da das neue „E“ ja heller strahlen wird als die beinah historischen Buchstaben. Und das gegenüberliegende Hochhaus, das als Problemhaus in den Lokalzeitungen besprochen wird, könnte eigentlich auch dringend einen neuen Text gebrauchen. Köpfe zusammenstecken und los!

EN

For years there has been a letter missing. On top of a building opposite of the Oberhausen main station, there is a text „OBERHAUSEN – Wiege der Ruhrindustrie“, i.e. cradle of the region’s industry. When the text is illuminated in the night, the letter E does not show as its light is out. As if the city had a problem of self-designation – or self-assurance.

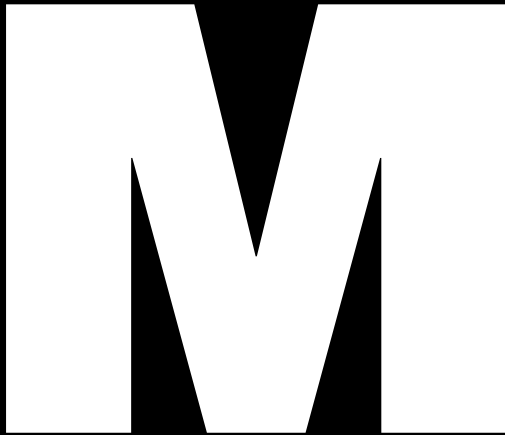
Christoph Stark and Agnieszka Wnuczak have recently decided to fix the neon lights of the E with the local immigrant youth. They have been since months been trying out collaborative working methods while working with the Foodtruck Elli, or „Refugees’ Kitchen“. „The easiest route does not interest us“, says Christoph Stark. „For sure it is more difficult to work, be and think together, when there is no common language and when the preconditions are not equal. But in the future society, which we actually already live in, inclusive and empowering structures are central.“

Before getting returned to the text, the fixed E is being taken for a walk through the city. It is given a new self-understanding as the builders show it around and take the E with them to parking lots, viewpoints, reception centres and their first own flats. Latest here is becomes obvious how the project has been a matter of identification, pride and belonging, as well as forgotten places in the city that is becoming their own.

The Power of Food

Besides being a necessity, food is a means for expressing oneself. It conveys a range of meanings that depend on the social context in which it is prepared and enjoyed. Cooking and eating habits are a central aspect in what we tend to call cultural differences. However, a great number of examples show that the power of food lies in creating togetherness and inspiring cross-cultural exchange.

Urban Jeriha & Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé



any of the most vibrant projects that aim at bringing together asylum seekers and the native population are busy with cooking. The project “*Über den Tellerrand kochen*” (“*Cook beyond the plate*”) wants to achieve “long-lasting integration in a process that involves people from all corners of society”. The asylum seekers are teachers on its cooking classes and the best recipes get published as cookbooks. Some pop-up restaurants have also been put up together by the team that involves both asylum seekers and long-time Berliners.

The driving force is the joint interest in cooking and dining together. It seems that food offers a comfortable zone also for many people who might not otherwise actively socialize across the cultural and language barriers. For those far away from home it is also a way to maintain and renew the connection with their homeland and culture while making new acquaintances in Europe. Since November 2015 the initiative has got its fixed premises in Berlin-Schöneberg, in the Kitchen Hub. It has also started a satellite programme that supports teams who want to join the community with their initiatives or launch a new “Beyond the plate” in their home town.

Another German project - *Kitchen on the run!* - has been touring through Europe this summer with a kitchen container. The container has daily hosted a group of 15 to 20 refugees and locals and given them the opportunity to share food, recipes and stories. The project received its funding for the tour and the remodelling of the container from the Advocate Europe Idea Challenge. Follow the project blog to see what the young trio behind the touring kitchen plans to do next! They are already part of the above mentioned association *Über den Tellerrand* which might help in multiplying in the project.

<http://www.kitchenontherun.org/>

Food unites

In March a group of people met in a day centre for migrants and refugees in Kypseli, Greece, and got the idea of a pop-up kitchen where Senait from Eritrea could try out his cooking skills. As the event was a success, they connected with other aspiring chefs and formed a collective called **OneLoveKitchen**. More events around Athens followed. It was agreed that the organising is done by volunteers and the cooks shall split the profits.

As the highly international team - with members from Senegal, Gambia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Nigeria, and Sudan - became popular and the events grew in size, OneLoveKitchen started to develop towards a catering business. Now a catering cooperative “*Options FoodLab*” has been opened in Athens. With its professional kitchen and co-working space for food training it will offer many asylum seekers and other newcomers the opportunity to showcase their talent.

<http://options.limited/>

Skuhna

Restaurant of the Global South

Skuhna is a restaurant in Ljubljana, Slovenia. It has been operating since 2012 as a social enterprise with the mission to bring together migrants and local inhabitants. The restaurant employs cooks and waiters of diverse nationalities, so every day they serve food from another country, making it a vibrant cultural spot.

How did it get started?

The initial aim of Skuhna was to broaden the multicultural activities of the NGO Zavod Global, such as workshops, theatre and education. Together with Zavod Voluntariat they have started bringing together rich culinary knowledge of migrants from the countries of the so called the Global South. It first started as a catering service and then expanded to a restaurant in 2014. The name Skuhna is a wordplay in Slovenian, as it combines the words for “to cook up” (skuhati) and for “kitchen” (kuhinja). So Skuhna is a place where something more than just cooking is happening.

Why is Skuhna important for Ljubljana?

Slovenia is quite a homogeneous society. Residents that originate from ex-Yugoslavian republics are well integrated and well present through food, music etc., but apart from that, Slovenia has little foreigners. Slovenia also belongs to the Eastern European countries, who have been averse to hosting new people on a larger scale.

Skuhna therefore represents a notable case of cultural exchange from remote territories. It serves as a platform for labour and social integration for newcomers and learning through cuisine for the locals.

What do they do but cook?

Skuhna is not just another restaurant and catering with World Cuisine – it is also a venue for cultural events. Friday dinners with stories are events where migrants tell their life stories and play traditional music accompanying the meal. Skuhna Talk! is an open debate about hot topics in the society. SkuhnaWOOD are film and dance events from the Global South. And to wrap it up, they organise cooking workshops, too.

What can we learn from Skuhna?

In the short period of existence, the social enterprise Skuhna has proved it is possible to combine a successful operating restaurant and a social impact at the same time. If that works even in a culturally reserved country, then this model deserves closer attention of migration policy makers across Europe.

www.skuhna.si

Address: Trubarjeva 56, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Refugees' Kitchen

Co-planned, co-built and co-operated through a collaboration between artists and refugees. Refugees Kitchen is a mobile kitchen that rolls from city to city and sheds light on the respective regions that the asylum seekers have left behind. At different inner-city sites, the team members cook traditional dishes from each of their regions. Over food, small appetisers of political information will also be offered. The theme of flight comes in with subjective histories, as well as with political backgrounds. The kitchen confronts those uninterested in (global) politics through culinary as well as additional programs: concerts, lectures and discussions.

Agnieszka Wnuczak & Christoph Stark



PICTURE

Raymond & Samuel working on the kitchen container

The grand premiere in September 2016 will be a true acid test of the co-created mobile kitchen, but it will also be a well-deserved party for the team members. A lengthy process of planning, building, fixing and paperwork will come into an end. We are so proud of our team!

In summer 2015 we started the process of looking for a suitable vehicle to build up the planned kitchen mobile. In August we were happy to find her, a vintage 7,5-ton truck whom we named Elli. Her special feature is that she can sit (!) and let the kitchen roll to the street level. Then we started with inviting people to collaborate. And cooked together multiple times with the interested candidates. The plans got more concrete by every meal.

In the late autumn we had a team together and found the Babcock workshop, a place to realize the kitchen plans. In the midst of the preparations we got a highly gratifying letter from the Office of the Federal Chancellor: Refugees' Kitchen was nominated for a special prize for projects that promote the cultural participation of refugees. The award came right on time to pay the first half of the staircase and the roof railing!

There is still a lot to finish but we try to keep calm. On our construction site counts: calm, patience and insistence bring us further.

Kick-off from curiosity

As we started to play with project ideas, we had pretty egoistic motives. We wanted to eat well and get to know new people that would be interested in developing something new together. We were curious. We felt that the newcomers come here with their hopes and energies as well as with the wish to become an active part of the society. The Ruhr Region needs exactly this kind of people as many problems of the region can only be solved through collaboration. Getting a new start for the migrants can also mean a new start for Oberhausen. From the side of the local establishment this requires curiosity, openness, interest in experimenting and active invitations to collaborate.

Refugees Kitchen has been an invitation. An invitation to join experimenting and to live in the moment. Unlike many art projects, we do not ask about the past of our team members in order to avoid reducing people to their pasts. Sometimes they bring their experiences and trauma up themselves, but those are private moments.



Christoph Stark



Kitev

The kitchen truck Elli before its face lift and a series of other repair works that were necessary.

Learning together

We have never before been working in such an incremental manner. Every day has brought about new kind of situations and problems that we have been able to solve by extending and deepening the partnership involved. The unexpected issues have often been of bureaucratic origin, but it was also surprisingly difficult to find a space where we could build our mobile kitchen. When bringing in a multicultural team with mixed backgrounds there are a number of regulations to follow. It is also necessary to map the skills of the team members whom you did not know in advance.

We knew we had to expect a new kind of work rhythm, but not that all our scheduling would have to be rethought. We had to plan differently and to work in a far more communicative manner than before: making our work more transparent in order to make it possible for others to participate and to become responsible for their part of the work. Increased openness also gave room for the team members to come up with their own ideas and skills that complemented and enriched our work.

Respect and recognition

Besides the concrete task of getting a mobile kitchen up and running we have been dealing with the issues of responsibility, respect and recognition. The process has been a matter of common and shared responsibility. The success is a common accomplishment that all team members can be proud of.

Our advice for those who want to make a similar invitation to collaborate is to take time. Time for work and life. Do not think about projects but about people and the long-term coexistence. In terms of the worklife try to let others participate or even become part of your work process on equal footing, with shared responsibility.

DE

Refugees' Kitchen ist eine soziale Skulptur. Sie ist ein Gemeinschaftsprojekt von Geflüchteten und Künstler_innen, eine mobile Küche, die in gemeinsamer Arbeit geplant, gebaut und betrieben wird.

In monatelanger Arbeit wurde beim Bau des Küchencontainers von der Pike auf das Handwerk des Selbermachens gelernt: Es wurde geplant, geflext, geschweißt, gebohrt, gezimmert und eingerichtet.

Die mobile Küche ist unterwegs zu verschiedenen Standorten mit traditionellen Speisen zubereitet von geflüchteten Menschen.

Über das Essen finden zufällige Begegnungen zwischen Geflüchteten und Alteingesessenen statt. Zudem werden so in kleinen Häppchen auch politische und kulturelle Informationen verabreicht. Hintergründe zu Kriegen und Krisen, Geschichte und Kultur des jeweiligen Landes: Fastfood mit Fastfacts zu Krisengebieten.

Refugees' Kitchen unterfüttert das Thema Flucht mit subjektiven Geschichten sowie mit politischen Hintergründen und konfrontiert (welt)politisch Uninteressierte mit dem Thema Flucht.

Somit wird der Verzehr von Essen zu einem gesellschaftlichen und politischen Akt.

FA

آشپزخانه پناهندگان یک مجسمه اجتماعی است که با همکاری بین هنرمندان و پناهندگان توسعه یافته است. آشپزخانه متحرک که با کار مشترک طراحی؛ ساخته و اداره می شود.

در طول چند ماه کار بر روی ساخت این آشپزخانه؛ هنر " دست ساز" یادگرفته شد. این آشپزخانه برنامه ریزی؛ خم؛ حفر؛ جوش داده و تزیین شد.

آشپزخانه متحرک به سمت نقاط مختلف در حرکت است و اعضای آن هریک به طبخ غذاهای محلی از شهر خود می پردازند.

علاوه بر غذا برخورد های تصادفی بین پناهندگان و ساکنان قدیمی منطقه اتفاق می افتد. علاوه بر مواد غذایی؛ اطلاعات سیاسی و فرهنگی هم با پیش زمینه جنگ و بحران؛ تاریخ و فرهنگ کشور های مربوطه عرضه خواهد شد. " فست فود با حقایق سریع در مورد مناطق زیر کشمکش"

آشپزخانه پناهندگان موضوع پناهندگی و مهاجرت را با موضوعاتی چون تاریخ و سیاست لایه گذاری میکند و کسانی را که به موضوع سیاست (جهانی) علاقه مند نیستند با موضوع مهاجرت و پناهندگی مواجه می کند.

بنابراین مصرف مواد غذایی یک عمل اجتماعی و سیاسی است.



Kitev



The Refugees' Kitchen team is starting to look confident that everything will be ready by the premiere in September 2016.

*from left to the right:
Haben Haile, Samuel Kress,
Julian Czempik, Raymond
Kpoghomou, Simon
Mellnich, Johanna-Yasirra
Kluhs, Chiara Nardini,
Christoph Stark.
picture by Agnieszka
Wnuczak*

Vier Fragen zu Refugees' Kitchen

Im Rahmen des Buches "Geflüchtete und Kulturelle Bildung" wird Refugees' Kitchen durch vier Fragen vorgestellt. Kitev hatte Lust mit den engagierten Neu-Oberhausener_Innen neue kreative Ansätze kennenzulernen und zu erproben, was zu einer Öffnung der eigenen Arbeit führte.

Agnieszka Wnuczak & Christoph Stark

Was war das Ziel des Projektes?

Gut zu essen. Und wir wollten neue Menschen kennenlernen. Neugierige, engagierte Menschen, die Lust haben, gemeinsam etwas zu entwickeln, gemeinsam Neues zu erschaffen. Geflüchtete sind ja nicht nur Schrecklichem entronnen, sie kommen hierher auch mit Hoffnung und Kraft und mit dem Wunsch, aktiver Teil ihrer neuen Gesellschaft zu werden. Das Ruhrgebiet braucht dringend solche Menschen, es gibt hier sehr viele Probleme und Aufgaben, die nur gemeinschaftlich zu lösen sind. So gesehen birgt die Hoffnung der neu hier lebenden geflüchteten Menschen auch ein enormes gesellschaftliches Potential. Ihr Neuanfang in Oberhausen kann auch ein Neuanfang für Oberhausen werden.

Das aber muss erkannt und gewollt werden und bedarf seitens der länger schon hier lebenden Menschen und bestehenden gesellschaftlichen Gruppen sowie auch von den politisch verantwortlichen Personen und Institutionen Neugier, Offenheit, Erprobungslust und Einladungen. „Refugees` Kitchen“ war und ist so eine Einladung und eine ebenso konkrete wie exemplarische gemeinsame Erprobung. Wir legen unsere Projekte immer so an, dass wir engagierte Menschen darin involvieren. Für dieses haben wir sie bewusst unter den Neu-Oberhausener_innen gesucht und gefunden. Das Motiv war durchaus auch ein egoistisches: Wir sind neugierig, wir wollten neue kreative Ansätze kennenlernen und erproben.

Inwiefern haben sich Ihre ursprünglichen Planungen geändert?

Ja, der Zeitablauf war anders als gewohnt und geplant. Wir haben noch nie so prozesshaft gearbeitet. Täglich konnten für uns neue Situationen und bisher nicht gekannte Fragen und Probleme auftauchen, für die wir dann gemeinsam eine Lösung gesucht und zuletzt immer auch gefunden haben, mit neuen Partnerschaften und mittels neu erschaffener Synergien. Die unerwarteten Probleme betrafen vor allen rechtliche, versicherungstechnische und andere bürokratische Fragen. Doch auch die Suche nach geeigneten Werkstätten war komplizierter als gedacht. Wir verfügen ja über keine eigene Infrastruktur für's Bauen und arbeiten hierfür immer mit Partnern zusammen. Doch es ist ganz offensichtlich ein Unterschied, ob vier deutsche, weiße Diplom-Künstler_innen eine Werkstatt benötigen oder eine Gruppe mit sehr unterschiedlich ausgebildeten Geflüchteten. Auch die praktische Arbeit hatte einen besonderen, für uns neuen Takt. Abstrakt hatten wir dies erwartet, konkret haben wir es in der gemeinsamen Arbeit gelernt. In einer Gruppe von einander anfangs unbekannt Menschen mit vielen unterschiedlichen Talenten, Fähigkeiten und zudem verschiedenen Sprachen ist der Rhythmus der Zusammenarbeit ein anderer als in einem Team, das sich untereinander bereits kennt oder nach Professionen zusammengesetzt ist. Man muss anders planen und anders, sehr viel kommunikativer arbeiten: die eigene Arbeit transparenter machen, offener gestalten, damit andere daran aktiv und eigenverantwortlich teilnehmen und sie mit ihren eigenen Ideen und Fähigkeiten – die beide oft erst in der gemeinsamen Praxis sich zeigen – sinnvoll ergänzen, bereichern, verändern können. Dies zu lernen, den dieser Zusammenarbeit angemessenen Rhythmus zu finden und dann so zu arbeiten braucht mehr Zeit als die Arbeit in bereits erprobter Routine. Sinnvolle Arbeits- und Lebenszeit.

Dieses Interview ist im Buch 'Geflüchtete und kulturelle Bildung - Formate und Konzepte für eine neues Praxisfeld' von Caroline Gritschke und Maren Ziese im Transcript Verlag erschienen. / This interview has been published in the book by C.Gritschke and M.Ziese, brought out by Transcript publishing.

Wie ist das Verhältnis von Ihrem Verein zu den Geflüchteten?

Das Verhältnis gründet in gegenseitigem Respekt und Neugier aufeinander. Unsere Neugier bezieht sich auf die Menschen, die unsere neuen Mitbürger_innen sind, ihre Interessen, Gedanken, Eigenschaften, Fähigkeiten, Wünsche, Ideen. Wir fragen nicht nach ihrer Vergangenheit, nach dem Erlebten, dem Erlittenen. Manchmal erzählt jemand etwas, dann ist dies aber ein privater Moment. Viele künstlerische Projekte mit Geflüchteten haben ja Biographiearbeit zur Voraussetzung. Das hat seine Berechtigung, v.a. weil sie aufklären und Empathie erzeugen. Es steckt darin aber auch ein Moment der Reduktion: des Menschen auf seine Vergangenheit. Unsere Arbeit bestand und besteht aus Bauen und Kochen, sie hat ihren Schwerpunkt also in der Jetztzeit und – entwerfend, planend – in der nahen Zukunft. Gefragt sind von allen Beteiligten ihre jetzt vorhandenen Fähigkeiten, ihre heute bestehende Kraft und Lust, gemeinsam etwas zu erschaffen und ihre in die Zukunft reichenden Ideen darüber, wie dieses Erschaffene – hier konkret: eine gemeinsam entworfene und gebaute mobile Küche und ihr Betrieb – aussieht und funktioniert. Es geht also ums gemeinschaftliche Arbeiten, entwerfend und umsetzend, im hier und jetzt und für die Erschaffung von etwas daraus entstehendem Neuen.

In diesem Prozess ist wesentlich die gemeinsame und hierfür je auch geteilte Verantwortung. Jeder Mensch hat ein Recht auf Anerkennung. Wenn sie von außen erfolgt, wie in unserem Projekt durch Lob und Auszeichnungen, ist dies schön für alle Beteiligten. Intern, in der gemeinsamen Arbeit, erfolgt die gegenseitige Anerkennung als geteilte und gemeinsame Verantwortung. Dies reicht von der eigenständigen Verantwortlichkeiten für einzelne Arbeitsabschnitte über je individuelle Verantwortung für ganz konkrete Tätigkeiten bis zu einzelnen Handgriffen in diesen und weiter bis zur Wahl der hierfür benötigten Werkzeuge und dafür, dass diese Werkzeuge nach ihrem Gebrauch wieder an den Ort zurückkommen, wo die in ihren Bereichen selbstverantwortlich Mitwirkenden sie in ihrem Bedarfsfall suchen. Die gemeinschaftliche Verantwortung für das große Ganze basiert auf diesen je einzelnen Verantwortlichkeiten.

Dies hat auch eine gesellschaftliche, politische Dimension: Die in Oberhausen (im Ruhrgebiet, in Deutschland) neu lebenden Geflüchteten wollen nicht nur geduldet werden, nicht nur toleriert, nicht nur respektiert, sondern sie wollen verantwortlich mitwirken in ihrer gesellschaftlichen Umgebung und an deren Entwicklung. Ihre tatsächliche Anerkennung – und damit auch die Realisierung der zuvor genannten Potentiale – misst sich an den ihnen gegebenen Möglichkeiten zu solcher Mitwirkung. „Refugees` Kitchen“ will hierfür Erprobung und Beispiel sein. Auch wir haben neue Verantwortungen übernommen. Rein privates Kunstschaffen war auch zuvor nicht unser Programm, und das menschliche Miteinander – dazu gehört für uns immer schon auch das gemeinsame Kochen und Essen – war immer schon wichtig in unseren Projekten. In „Refugees` Kitchen“ wurde das Zwischenmenschliche basaler Teil der Arbeit, mit Menschen, die wir in der gemeinsamen Arbeit erst kennenlernten und mit denen wir über diese Arbeit hinaus verbunden sind. Das Arbeits- und das Lebensverhältnis sind nicht zu trennen, die Verantwortung reicht weiter, sie kennt keinen Feierabend.

Für unser Haus hat die Arbeit an „Refugees` Kitchen“ zu einer Öffnung geführt. Insbesondere die oben beschriebene, von der Struktur des Projekts geforderte größere Transparenz und Kommunikation der eigenen Arbeiten wird dauerhafte Veränderungen erzeugen – für kommende Projekte sowie für unseren alltäglichen Betrieb.

Was wäre Ihr Rat zur Kulturprojektarbeit mit Geflüchteten?

Nehmt Euch Zeit! Arbeitszeit und Lebenszeit. Denkt nicht in Projekten, sondern an Menschen und an ein langfristiges Miteinander. Für den Arbeitsprozess bedenkt vor allem anderen: Wie kann ich andere an meiner Arbeit teilhaben lassen? Nicht als in ihrer Praxis kontrollierte Ausführende Eurer Ideen und Pläne, sondern als gedanklich wie praktisch gleichberechtigt Mitverantwortliche. Und stellt Euch die Frage: „Wie lang kann man mal etwas Neues, bisher Unbekanntes ausprobieren?“ Und beantwortet sie in Euren Plänen und Konzepten und praktisch stets mit: So lange wie nötig.





From Working For to Working With Refugees

It is quite easy to name several reasons why work is important for us as individuals and communities. Working is seen as motivating and life-pacing – yet routine-alike and necessary – part in life which we may find both mentally and economically rewarding. Opportunities to work bring various positive effects for several groups – and refugees are no exception.

Leena Alanko



*Peter Maas, Okechukwu Levi Kpaduwa
and Lookman Olanrewaju Kazeem
@ Babcock Fertigungszentrum - a big
industrial locksmithery in Oberhausen,
which provided space for work on the me-
tal construction of the kitchen container.*

Since 2015, Europe has been facing an unforeseeable influx of refugees and migrants. 'The EU Policy Department A' reported that in 2015, up to more than one million asylum applications were received across the EU. An estimated 350 000 to 450 000 people have been granted refugee or similar status – more than ever since the Second World War. These sudden turns call for efficient ways to integrate a high number of refugees into their host societies. One of the dominant questions in Europe – and beyond – is how to integrate migrants into the European labour markets.

Holistic integration means opportunities to work

'The EU Policy Department A' identified key elements of a strategy for labour market integration of refugees. The report underlines the significance of these practices: For the majority of refugees labour market integration is the most relevant solution and most significant factor favouring long-term integration into society. Finding and applying for jobs would not only help migrants to get on on a daily basis but to integrate into host society.

The significance is also two-sided: labour market integration is central to fiscal contributions refugees make to the host society and the only way to support the EU's economic development in the long term.

All in all, access and integration to labour markets is a multi-leveled process and the scale of new action models is vast. It seems that simple, efficient solutions are difficult to invent since there are several challenges that need to be solved in the integration processes. A lack of language skills and transferable job qualifications, and a low educational background are the usual barriers explaining slow labour market integration of all categories of migrants.

A Strength or a burden?

However, the sudden growth of newcomers in Europe brings with it challenges and but also opportunities. The sudden growth can also be seen as a strength instead of a burden. Refugees form a diverse group and have varying social backgrounds, working skills and education. In other words, skills worthy to their host societies as well.

This has been seen for example in Germany, where declines in native working-age people is already posing challenges. The influx of newcomers could have various long-term benefits when the younger workers complete the skills of older and help to pay for the pensioners. All in all, refugees' ability to take part on the economic development depends on not only their personal capabilities but also on the socio-political structure in their host society.

Asylum applications in the European Union have surpassed in 2015 which causes that a high number of applicants are awaiting the application decisions. This position makes it difficult for an individual to settle into the destination country. It is not common for a country to grant asylum seekers the right to work immediately which makes it challenging for one willing to work to stay active: it is not possible to work without residence and work permit.

The length of asylum procedures is seen as one of the main problem in the current integration processes, forcing individuals into passivity. This a challenge to which associations like 'CUCULA - Refugees Company for Crafts and Design' and 'Refuhome' have started to create solutions.



CUCULA

Looking for ways to provide jobs for asylum seekers

'CUCULA' is a Berlin-based association that has two main focuses: its workshops and educational program. Since its launch as a pilot project in 2013, 'CUCULA' has given hand to refugees to establish an own professional future by grasping the opportunity to provide working solution for those who are still on the waiting list to obtain a legal residence permit.

The name 'CUCULA' originates from the Hausa language, mainly spoken in the West Africa, and means 'to do something together', as well as 'to take care of each other'. The name speaks for itself. CUCULA wants to provide a welcoming culture for refugees and emphasize their own capabilities through collaboration: everyone at CUCULA work together with refugees instead of working for them.

The participants, five trainees, come from West Africa, from Niger and Mali, who have fled from their home countries due to unbearable conditions and want to get involved in building their future in Berlin.

By collaborating with designers and pedagogues in the factory and in the workshops, refugees get to acquire working experience and craftsmanship with a main focus on furniture design. As the furniture pieces contain artifacts from their journey over Mediterranean, the furniture pieces are not only design classics but also represent the stories of their makers.

Besides being an association and workshop, CUCULA is also an educational programme. Besides craftsmanship basics, the CUCULA-Education program offers general education, such as German language classes, additional support with the trainees' daily routine and legal advice. As a non-profit organization, the revenue from the furniture disposals are invested back into these costs of living and educational purposes for the ones involved in CUCULA's programmes.

The influence of the Italian modernist designer Enzo Mari provides the pillars for the furnitures made in CUCULA. In his book 'Autoprogettazione' in 1974, Mari presents a collection of do-it-yourself furnitures. He suggests the democratisation of product design by providing new idea of building your own furniture when needed, objection to the capitalists paradigm of mass consumption.

Now, 40 years later Enzo Mari has given permit to the CUCULA team to redesign and sell his designs. This is how these furnitures combine not only design and practicality but also the stories of these young African men who fled their homeland and are now building their lives from whole new perspectives.



Enzo Mari grants CUCULA the rights to use his designs, to build and further develop his furniture.

Pictures: CUCULA

Refuhome

Innovative solutions towards employment

In September 2015 the Lauttasaari Parish in Helsinki, Finland received over one hundred asylum seekers to be accommodated. 'Refuhome' organization was created to rapidly gather volunteers from various sectors to collaborate with the newcomers and promote their integration. Since then has Refuhome had the same mission: to make sure the newcomers feel they are welcome and treated equally.

Today 'Refuhome' is not only formed from Finnish volunteers who started it but quite the opposite: today over half of its members are asylum seekers and refugees. 'The fact that over 60 percent of our members are newcomers is one of the practices to show that we genuinely are making this together' explains Nora Ojala, one of the co founders of Refuhome. 'We wanted to get across that this is our mutual community where we organize activities not only for us but to support integration in a wider perspective. And this is an important factor why we wanted 'Refuhome' to be an association', she explains. Refuhome does a lot. The volunteers for example organize leisure and cultural activities for the newcomers and help them to pass the Hygienic Proficiency Test. The organization has also done

important impact work in Finnish schools to increase knowledge about asylum seekers' and their lives. The important thing is to work together and co-create with everyone. Most of the work is done in pairs, formed by a volunteer worker and a newcomer.

Ojala describes working in pairs as their 'best practice', a concept that has proven to be very effective in various contexts - to promote employment for example. 'And that's how we organize pretty much everything, from band nights to employment activities. Right now I'm working in pair with a refugee who is about to launch his own company. Sometimes my experience about administration or language skills can be useful to him, but sometimes I'm more like a bridge builder between the newcomer and the Finnish society.'

Job offers through ‘Job team’

“Job team’ (Duunitiimi) is Refuhome’s newest pilot project to help refugees to find work and promote integration into the Finnish labour market.

The concept of the ‘team’ is simple: Refuhome makes it possible for everyone to hire one or several Refuhome’s member to work for them. Need someone to help in moving, carrying your groceries, washing windows or cutting the grass? These are some examples of the tasks that could be offered.

Refuhome collaborates with the Finnish Tax Administration to guarantee that the reward is paid legally and guarantees that the one hired gets justly paid for the work. ‘The Finnish tax Administration has been really collaborative in creating this employment model. They have shown a great support to plan a functional tax model to enable working through ‘Job team.’ Nora explains. Refuhome does not demand payment for the employment but the wage is directly paid for the worker him or herself and for the retirement pension insurance meaning.

”One day our services could be served for everyone else seeking for a job”

Refuhome has done a great deal in educating the potential workforce to act in the Finnish labour market. ‘We find it important that the workers understand that for example punctuality is appreciated among finns. This kind of cultural education assures that both the worker and employer are satisfied with the employment process.’ And it seems that the feedback has been mostly positive: ‘We have gotten so much positive feedback about this project. One can tell that the communication between the worker and employers can work despite limited language skills. Employers appreciate the positive attitude and flexibility that our Job team workers have proven to have.’

What’s the future like?

Ojala holds out bright prospects to Refuhome’s employment services and stresses out the importance to develop these practices to be even more effective and to have a bigger impact. ‘The whole process is now ran by the volunteers and I hope that one day we could hire someone to run this. Maybe that someone could be one of the asylum seekers too.’ Ojala predicts.

She also stresses the importance to strengthen the larger, societal impact of their work. ‘As an active association, Refuhome could make a positive impact on the attitudes towards migration, newcomers and multiculturalism. The youth are the future and that’s why I am glad we have had the opportunity to go round Finnish schools to tell students about refugees and their lives.’

Today unemployment is a problem considering not only refugees but many others, such as young people. According to a Labour Force Survey from Statistics Finland, there were 280,000 unemployed in June 2015, a number 22,000 greater than a year before. ‘The struggle finding a job is not only refugees’ but everyone’s issue. One day our services could be served for everyone else seeking for a job. This is how we could support all kind kind of employment and once again, bring people together and build bridges between the newcomers and Finns.’

Trampoline House

The antidote to asylum centres

No European country was prepared to receive as many applications for asylum as they did in 2015. Some of the asylum seekers were granted a residence permit, some were deported and some returned voluntarily. But many more are still waiting for the most important decision of their lives. While they wait, their autonomy is significantly restricted by authorities.

Julia Jousilahti

”

Waiting can be even more traumatizing than the experiences from the crisis one has escaped from”, says Morten Goll, the founder of Trampoline House, a community center in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The story of Trampoline House began six years ago when its would-be founders felt the need to change the problematic situation of asylum seekers who were waiting for the results of their application. They wanted to offer something instead of asylum centres (or, as the asylum seekers call them, “camps”).

“People waiting in the camps feel powerless. We wanted to shift the power in such a way that they would feel like a part of the society”, Goll explains.

Trampoline House was founded by a group of artists, asylum seekers, students and other professionals six years ago. It is an independent community centre in Copenhagen intended as a space for refugees, asylum seekers, Danish citizens and other residents in Denmark.

Among the first things they did was a workshop. The residents of the asylum centre and the Danish participants created short movies in which they discussed their current situation and their past experiences. “Many of our asylum seekers come from dictatorships and are not used to telling their opinion. It is

quite a big task to make people understand that their opinions are wanted. We wanted to create a social platform where this is possible”, Morten Goll explains. They decided to start with a video workshop, because a tool like camera can help people interact with one another.

“The participants had to find a question they could ask everyone in the workshop, without anyone feeling framed by it, in order to find a middle ground. The movies were about answering those questions”.

The workshop revealed that the main problems of the people in the asylum centres were poverty, isolation and mental paralysis as they stayed in “limbo” for too long, waiting their residence decision, not able to start a normal life.

Trampoline House was established soon after to intervene in this situation and to continue the dialogue. In the beginning Morten Goll and his fellow co-founders thought that the main problem was, that the asylum seekers were stuck in the remote centres, so they decided to hand out free bus tickets to the residents so they could travel to Trampoline House. That proved to be the wrong thing to do.

“The problem was, that the tickets were were distributed like charity. The camp system is based on charity. All resident get their basic

SINGA Nights: Musicians get the chance to show their talent and to get discovered.

”You need to demand something from people, nobody wants to be a client of charity” →

needs covered, but they are not seen resourceful survivors with skills that could be put at use. Instead the system is content with covering their biological needs. They feel like they are slowly killed by charity, because the system on one side pays respect to their biological bodies, but on the other hand refuses to respect their experience, resources and social needs. It is a schizophrenic way to work. With our free tickets, we were becoming an extension of the camp. We saw them as victims and they were so fed up with victimization”, Goll reminisces.

Today, Trampoline House is a lively hub that offers different activities, such as Danish and English classes, legal counselling, a theatre group, a tailor, a bible school run by Farsi speaking Christians and much more. There is a cafe too, and on several days a week people in the house share a hot meal. Once a week everyone gathers together for the house meeting, which is the democratic foundation of the house with an open agenda. In the meetings people discuss asylum politics, the house rules and program, actions and activities. It is an experimental democracy in which participants exercise freedom of speech and unconditional respect, which are the core values of Trampoline House.

The initial mistake of handing our bus tickets eventually came to inform the foundational ideology of equality at Trampoline House. All activities are carried out together, equally from people to people. Those who have arrived earlier teach the newcomers. Everyone contributes and agrees to certain set responsibilities in the house, such as a couple of hours of kitchen duty. In return, they receive free bus tickets.

“If you want to develop a democracy based on solidarity, You need to demand something from people. Dignity is in the fact that you contribute as brothers and sisters: shoulder to shoulder”, Morten Goll says, “Charity is really a perversion of solidarity, and it destroys the foundation for democracy”

When a new person comes to the house, he or she is asked about his or her interests, resources and aspirations. Then, a suitable internship or task is found for the person. Many activities in the house depend on the resources the volunteers have. The key idea in Trampoline House is to mobilize the asylum seekers’ energy by letting them use and develop their own aspirations.

“Then people can walk on their own feet and don’t need to be herded like cattle”, Morten Goll says, “One may have a nearly finished university degree but then he or she has been captured by ISIS for five months. It is all about de-victimization. You can recover when you are allowed to rediscover your potential”.

One important part of Trampoline House’s activities is to educate newly arrived people in how the Danish society works, and what are people’s rights and responsibilities. But it is not just the immigrants who have things to learn.

“Danes also have to learn about democracy in a multicultural society”, Morten Goll claims and concludes: “When I started this house, I thought only Danes were racist. Today I know that fear of the other is a normal psychological condition. We are all racists! So it is not about whether you are a racist or not, it’s about how you deal with it.”

Read more about Trampoline House at <http://www.trampolinehouse.dk>

Eveline de Brauwijn



After First Aid Comes Singa

We hear and speak about refugees most often in a time of crisis. Sinking boats in Mediterranean, unbearable living conditions in the Calais' camps and the threat of terrorism connected to extremism. Aside from flashy headlines, there is a well-meaning, but problematic outlook on refugees as something professionals and humanitarian workers aid and manage. Refugees are seen as a unitary group in need of support to have their basic needs covered.

Julia Jousilahti

Four years ago two friends living in Paris, Nathanael Molle and Guillaume Capelle, founded a network for refugees, asylum seekers and locals to approach the arrivals from a different perspective. Instead of providing first aid, Singa looks further.

“Non-professionals are traditionally kept out of the picture, because refugees are thought to have too many problems and be unable to connect with regular people. For this reason the issues of the refugees feel remote and locals cannot relate to them”, Nathanael Molle explains over the phone.

Singa wants to ease the integration for people with a recent residence permit or refugee status. Being allowed to stay is only a beginning and many barriers still need to be conquered. People are often unfamiliar with the language or the administrative system. They may be struggling with non-equivalent diplomas. Most often, they have many socio-cultural codes to internalise.



*Getting ready for the catwalk.
Singa Fashion Show 2015.*

Singa is a community for people, who wish to know and better understand each other.

“If a woman has never shook a hand of a man, she won’t start doing it just because there is now a stamp on a contract”, Nathanael Molle says.

Simply put, Singa is a community for people, who wish to know and better understand each other. It creates spaces for newcomers and locals to meet others with similar interests. It has over 20 000 voluntary members and 14 paid staff members.

Singa is organized around several different themes. In “Language and culture” newcomers can pair with a tutor in order to learn the language. A tutor can be a local or someone who has been in the country for a longer time. Singa members also visit cultural sites, do sports and come together for Singa nights, where the stage is open for anyone to perform.

Singa is not only about leisure activities. The Singa community supports the refugees in creating their own businesses and co-operates with existing companies. For instance, chefs from Singa can test recipes in business dinners prior to opening their own restaurant and sometimes gain their first customer. Singa also trains companies and organizations who work with refugees and asylum seekers to better understand their needs. Singa aims to let everyone fully discover but also contribute to the society.

“Singa is a community where you won’t feel like a refugee at the end of a day”, Molle concludes.

Welcome, All, to Grandhotel Cosmopolis!

In Augsburg, southern part of Germany, there is a peculiar hotel. Grandhotel Cosmopolis is a work of art, a process and a social laboratory. It provides accommodation for asylum seekers, a hotel, a venue, a café bar and it has studios for artists under one roof.

Mirja Hämäläinen

The six-story building belongs to the Diakonie Social Services Organization, which rents it to two parties: the government of Swabia and a non-profit association Verein Grandhotel Cosmopolis e.V. The government of Swabia rents the space as accommodation for asylum seekers and the association runs the hotel. We talked to **Tina Bühner** from the Grandhotel Cosmopolis team about the project.

If you could start with telling a bit about the daily life at the hotel: How is it different from a normal hotel and from other means of housing for asylum seekers?

I think the most special thing is, that there is nothing special. You see people in the Hotel and will not be able to tell whether they are travellers, inhabitants or guests. Even if you think you can – you might be wrong. One idea of the Grandhotel Cosmopolis is to treat every person with the same respect and kindness. No matter what its bureaucratic status is. The fact that you may not differentiate who is who gives a beautiful picture of this approach.

How do the staff at the hotel and the asylum seeker residents work together?

Asylum seekers can get involved in any part of the hotel if they want to and according to their legal status. Some of them cook, others are part in an art project, some help behind the bar. Some just want to be at peace and don't get so much involved.

You state participation as basis for your activities, how is it part of your daily life?

People of all ages and types appear in the GHC. There is a smaller team of people that work every day for the Grand Hotel. Others contribute a few hours. That means there are between 20 and 200 persons involved in the house. In the kitchen, in language lessons, in activities, in the cleaning team, the baking circle and so on. Grandmas next to students and so on...





The Hotel has been active for a few years now, what has been the biggest surprise?

I think there are too many. Or none. To me: That the idea of treating humans like humans seems to be so fascinating to many people.

How has the project changed during this time?

It's changing all the time. It's more a process than a status. From an idea, to a concept to a huge working space to a refugees' home to a hotel to a hotspot, to an inspiration for many other projects, to a networking space and much more.

If you could give advice to similar projects what would it be?

Be creative, persistent and do it with love.

Do you have any "role models", other projects you got advice from?

No other than some art projects that the founders of the GHC did in Augsburg before in empty buildings and left over spaces. The GHC became a role model itself. There are regularly invitations and requests to present the idea and talk about special issues like architecture and urban planning. The GHC is networking with artists and projects and institutions that deal with similar ideas in Germany and all over Europe. The GHC is also working on workshops and offers for different needs and questions.

What does the future of Grand Hotel Cosmopolis look like?

We are working on ways to transform, transfer and share the knowledge and experience that has been developed in the last few years.

Further housing projects to check out:

Another hotel project is the Magdas Hotel in Vienna. Run as a social business, Magdas hotel tries to solve social and economic problems with entrepreneurial tools. Two hotel suites are dedicated to refugees and most of the hotel's staff are refugees.

<http://www.magdas-hotel.at/>

Completed in 2012, Harzer Straße 64–67 by the Aachener Siedlungs und Wohnungsgesellschaft in Neukölln, Berlin was a rubbish-overfilled building but now it offers 137 flats, childcare facilities, rent advice and various artistic and recycling projects. The project's aim was to improve the living situation of Roma in the district.

In Die Heimatwerker -project the plan is that asylum seekers work alongside students and volunteers in renovating a building in Nieheim's historical center to be used for integration projects. Apartments will be built in a second stage to follow. The work will start next year and the project has a total lifespan of 10 years, and, if successful, will be repeated in other municipalities.

*Aravena's project in Chile:
Quinta Monroy housing
financed from the public purse
for the low-income groups that
may continue upgrading the
houses themselves.*

Refugee Housing at Venice Biennale

Architects respond to the challenge

Is it possible to lessen the suffering of the world through architectural practices? The curator of the Architectural Exhibition in the Venice Biennale 2016, Alejandro Aravena would not hesitate to say yes. To Venice, he had invited contributions that would indicate how the collective benefit can get the upper hand over individual gain.

Ossi Korhonen & Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé

Aravena has worked with the same challenge himself, at a “Do Tank” called Elemental, which focuses on “projects of public interest and social impact, including housing, public space, infrastructure and transportation”. Aravena’s approach to design is participatory, architects working closely with the public and end users. In the book “Incremental Housing and Participatory Design Manual” he and his colleague Andrés Iacobelli address the possibilities of alleviating social deprivation through reorganization of resources, e.g. public facilities and egalitarian infrastructure and transportation projects. They also shed light on how to finance such projects, for example through participative building.

Aravena's theme for the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale is Reporting from the Front, which refers to the difficulties to produce quality in the built environment, for everybody's benefit. In his own projects Aravena has been able to build publicly funded developments on good spots, even expensive inner-city land, giving poorer residents good access to transport links and thus workplaces. In Venice, he was hoping to see similar solutions developed for European cities now struggling to provide housing for the recent refugees. And the kind of housing that would not become dated too soon. “It would be a disaster if in 100 years looking backwards what you produced did not stand the test of time”, he said in an interview of Dezeen.

Three countries with related pavillons

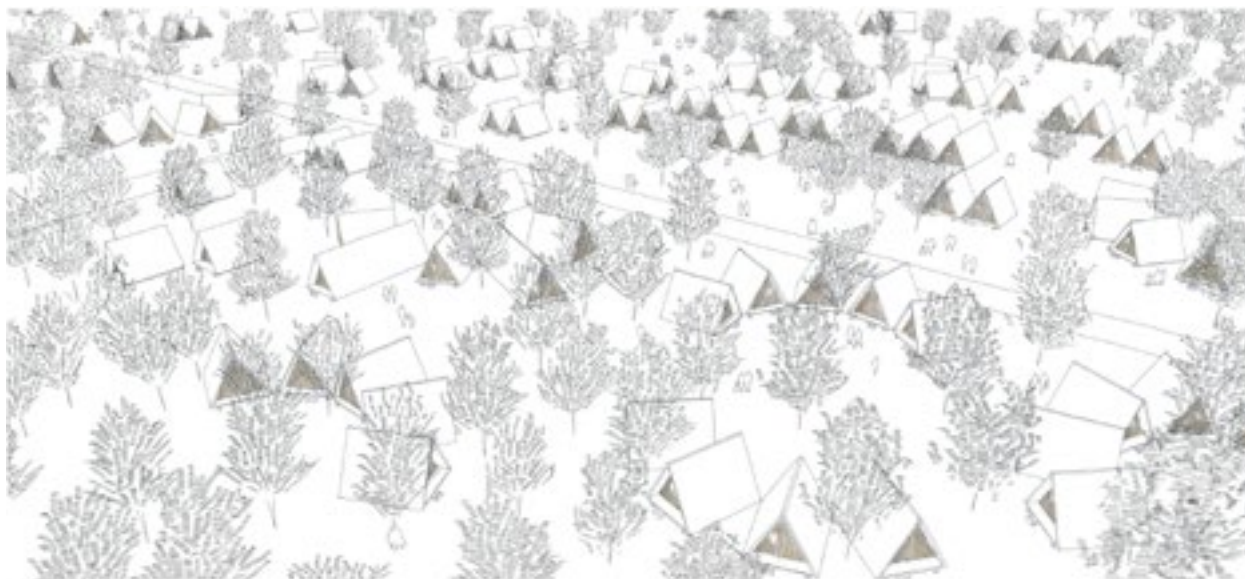
Three countries had chosen the European refugee question to be the core of their pavilion: Germany, Austria and Finland. All three had felt somewhat helpless with the high (absolute or relative) number of migrant arrivals in 2015, and wanted to provide responses to the challenge put up by Aravena as the curator.

In the Austrian case – “Places for People” – the pavilion is merely a display place: the interventions themselves are real places in Vienna. All three projects focus on adjusting existing buildings into accommodation. One is an inexpensive method of dividing empty office space into private spaces with the help of parasols and curtains. The idea is that 280 people can achieve privacy in 5 minutes, with the cost of 50 euros per person. Another project, Social Furniture, consists of 18 furniture designs “intended for a collective self-building process”. Easy-to-assemble furniture is intended to form places for the collective life in premises that would otherwise lack certain key facilities of living, cooking and working. The project claims to have transferred DIY (do-it-yourself) to DIT (do-it-together). The third Austrian project featured in the pavilion is a room-in-room structure, which is tested in housing project bringing together student and refugee housing, including a number of unaccompanied minors among the refugees.

Tadeuz Jalocha



Cristobal Palma



ZONE - TEMPORARY DWELLING



ZONE - PERMANENT HOUSE

Start with a Roof, Satoshi Ohtaki

The theme of the Finns is built around the “from Border To Home” competition that sought for solutions to the asylum-housing problem. The competition, which was launched in 2015, asked to submit tangible solutions that support longer-term living arrangements but it was left open whether they should be individual buildings, digital platforms or something else. The Finnish pavilion now showcases the three winners and four honorary mentions that were chosen in February 2016. According to the curator Marco Steinberg, the Finnish pavilion wants to frame the opportunity space around the European asylum-housing challenge and to question our concepts of migration, housing, and leadership.

The ‘Start with a roof’ project claims to be making part of the future in advance instead of wasting resources on temporary structures that will soon be abolished. First the refugees are given a roof to live in, but later the same roof can be lifted onto a house. The idea, by Satoshi Ohtaki, received one of the honorary mentions of the ‘From border to home’ competition launched in 2015 by The Museum of Finnish Architecture, in collaboration with the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA).





Kirsten Bucher

The German Pavilion shows examples of the archive of realised and under-construction refugee buildings across Germany and discusses the need for affordable and high-quality residential space.

“Arrival cities are the places where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born, or where the next great explosion of violence will occur.”

The theme of the German pavilion - Making Heimat - takes a higher level of abstraction in relation to the Austrian and Finnish ones. As Heimat refers to deep bonds of belonging and feelings of home, making Heimat is for about much more than efficient provision of quality accommodation. Whether the exhibition lives up to the challenge is another matter. It is about solutions required in the Arrival City, the abstracted contemporary metropolis where international mobility is the new normal. Doug Sounders, the Canadian author of the novel Arrival City, has been involved in planning the exhibition. “In his book he writes: “Arrival cities are the places where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born, or where the next great explosion of violence will occur. The difference depends on our ability to notice, and our willingness to engage.”



Felix Torkar

The theme of the German pavilion is to break down walls.

Home Is More Than Policy

Integration isn't failing because the system misplaces people. It is failing because we don't include people.

Minea Koskinen & Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé

A widely shared parody of Finnish man, “Tis is Finland Män”, portrays a work-o-holic GNP enthusiast who eats an entire moose while checking emails. The text is written in parodical English that follows Finnish pronunciation: “Must wörk lot. Pefore die, häv tu pay haus to pänk”. In real English another example would read like this: “when Finland man was little child, not get milk from mother. Get protestant ethic. When Finland Man have own funeral, then downshift.”

The likely reason behind the popularity of the writing is that we understand how some of our so called national characteristics are not fully functional and we might be short-sighted to value them. Another joke in the Finland Män is that it shows how much we weigh on an individual to make sure they work with the system, not against it.

In June 2016 the OECD and the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment organised a workshop in Helsinki to identify bottlenecks for the integration of refugees. The OECD is hoping to develop the skills that the humanitarian migrants “need to work productively and safely in the jobs

of tomorrow”¹ From the OECD perspective, fulfilled integration would entail that the newcomers do not differ from the native-born population in terms of their “socio-economic outcomes”². Their participation in the labour market as well as the quality of their jobs would be equally high. They would have equal access to and results from education and training programmes, and there would be no major income, housing or health disparities. Needless to say, this is an ideal.

The Finnish word used in the context is “kotouttaminen”, which does not directly translate into English. It encompasses the word “koti”, a home, and its extension “kotouttaa”, to make someone feel like home, or to “homify”. However, the definition in the current legislation is not as cozy as the word homify implies. Integration refers to what the authorities can do and what resources they have devoted to the settlement process.

The purpose is to support the individual development of each migrant so that they can enter the labour market and engage with the society without losing touch with their own language and culture.

Integration seems to be more about casting migrants in a mould than a warm-hearted welcome. Practically no integration is put in place before an asylum seeker has received residence permit.

Anita Lehtikoinen, the permanent secretary for Ministry of Education and Culture, explains the sub-optimal performance of the Finnish policy instruments by the country's allegedly short history with immigration as well as the economic situation. She addressed the concern that Finland is lacking behind the other OECD countries in learning assessments: "this is something we are very much aware of". According to her the Finnish authorities are "trying to make the best of the situation", as any country with a rapidly ageing population should do.

The implicit message of the Finnish integration policy is that the asylum seekers are first supposed to wait patiently. Then, if allowed to stay, the newcomers are supposed to do a number of things right in order to come closer to some imagined ordinary citizen. A final product would then be an integrated member of the Finnish system. This line of thinking seems to entail that after having become a non-disturbance, the newcomer would be able to feel like home.

If we extend the rules of integration to Finnish natives, many of them probably would not qualify as integrated. Many groups of Finns suffer from precarious employment and not everybody's capabilities match with the expectations of the labour market. Despite being native speakers, they are vulnerable in partially the same ways as the newcomers, equally prone to not be counted as full members of the society. Still one does not talk about "homifying" them but rather about prevention of their marginalisation.

Emily Farachy from the OECD noted that Finland has a poor record of integrating humanitarian migrants. As they often lack the connections that the other types of immigrants have, their position is particularly challenging. There are severe employment disparities between the native and foreign-born women in particular. The gap is still big also in the second generation: the children of immigrants lag far behind the children of the native born. Many immigrant children also choose to leave school early.

Lehtikoinen also cited the programme of the current government aiming at "an innovative, caring and safe country where we all can feel important". She finds it tragic for all stakeholders

that in Finland it can take even 10 years before the humanitarian immigrants can properly enter the labour market, "although they are eager to work", she reminds. For her, the reasons behind this delay include limited opportunities of the migrants to demonstrate their skills but also their limited language skills and lack of knowledge of the Finnish institutional landscape. She also recognized the role of discrimination.

The civil society has shown to be capable of creating truly welcoming places

The participants of the Helsinki workshop included mainly integration professionals. System was well presented, but we were caught by surprise by the scarcity of representatives of civil society. Judging by the great number of promising civic initiatives presented in this publication, and the unsatisfactory outcomes of the official integration policies, one should probably reconsider the situation. The civil society has in many countries not only worked hard in parallel to the official System (at different levels of public administration), but also shown to be capable of creating truly welcoming places.

A state secretary may refer to mismatches in immigrants' educational attainment by saying that "we put them into wrong places". Why should this way of thinking prevail? Shouldn't we rather be searching for collaborative ways, for suitable activities for each and every one? Instead of the top-down commanding immigrants to "homify" themselves, we could start taking the word "home" seriously. That would mean acknowledging all the various ways to contribute to common well-being across all sectors from home to neighbourhood and to the broader urban realm. It would mean providing people with relations that help them grow their capabilities also in other ways than through the formal employment and education system foregrounded by the OECD.

This Time Sweden Is Not Where We Should Look

In Finland it is common to screen how Sweden performs. Studies undertaken by OECD make it possible to compare between different outcomes. The review of the Swedish policy was recently accomplished and the Finnish review is currently on-going.

Despite of the popularity of Sweden as a migration destination, the results of the Swedish integration policy are not all too convincing. According to the OECD review, migrants' labour market outcomes continue to lag behind those of other Swedes. The major problem in terms of access is the highly-skilled nature of the labour market. Only 5% of the jobs require only low levels of skills, say the estimates.

For promoting the job readiness, Sweden offers a two-year introduction programme of education and labour market activities to all migrants. For the highly-educated migrants the two-year programme is mostly too long. On the other hand, there is still need for supplementary support after the programme for those lacking basic skills. It is thus no surprise the OECD calls for a more flexible approach that would combine longer-term educational support with gradual labour market introduction. "In 2015, only 28% of low-educated foreign-born men and 19% of low-educated women were in employment one year after the programme", says the review³.

Another major bottleneck in Sweden is the situation in the housing market. Getting access to affordable housing is complicated not only for the immigrants but also for the native Swedes. This obstacle hampers integration as a whole: the delays in settlement tend to postpone the labour market integration, as many activities are put on hold until the migrants are permanently settled. Furthermore, as the housing of the asylum seekers is often not assimilated within existing communities, which results in segregation that hampers social interaction and language training. The OECD is generally critical towards the Swedish housing policy, irrespective of the migrants housing, as the housing shortage in metropolitan areas is perceived to limit the economic growth.

Sweden stands out of the rest of Europe not only in the highest share of recent asylum seekers in relation to the population of the country, but also in the large amount of adolescents among them. As many as half of the 71 000 minors who arrived in 2015 came unaccompanied, without other family members, which adds to challenge considerably. These young arrivals are particularly vulnerable if they end up dropping out of school early, without acquiring the education and language skills required on the labour market.

1. *OECD Press release, OECD and UNHCR call for scaling up integration policies in favour of refugees*
2. *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015, OECD*
3. *Sweden in a strong position to integrate refugees, but support for the low skilled needs to be strengthened, OECD Articles 2016.*





adidas



Anna Kuokkanen

Picture on previous fold by Anna Kuokkanen

Home Accommodation For Asylum Seekers

Experience from a network of Finnish volunteers

In Finland, a comprehensive home accommodation network was established in a matter of weeks in September 2015. The arriving asylum seekers made headlines but many saw that the authorities were not in the position to welcome the new arrivals properly. The Finnish Immigration Service concentrated on putting up reception centres at high speed across the country and had no time nor energy to consider other issues than “storing” the newcomers. It felt that few thought of alternatives to the top-down model. Did anybody consider how things should work in the long run? Would these people be treated like storage items throughout the asylum seeking procedures or could one try to truly help them?

Mirka Seppälä & Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé

Birth of the network

Many concerned individuals had been pondering on alternatives and once an inspiring person said it loud, things started rolling. **Marjaana Toiviainen** initiated a meeting and spread the invitation in the social media. Close to 100 persons gathered spontaneously to a working meeting and continued the efforts in working groups, reporting to each other via the digital means tailored for the network by some of its ICT-skilled members.

It was remarkable that few of these people knew each other prior to the September meeting. What united them was the will to help while the state driven system seemed to be inhumane, and the curiosity to see whether the citizen network could make it to establish a functional structure on its own. It was agreed that no leaders will be chosen and no formal decision making will take place. A

set of guiding principles about the home accommodation were agreed on, but after that each and every member would be free to proceed on his/her own or after having discussed a new challenge in a broader meeting or via the digital platforms.

There was a great sense of urgency in the air. It was important to get things running right away, as it was felt that the solidarity of the Finns might not last as long as it should. People were still desperately trying to help the new arrivals but might lose interest and channel their energy elsewhere if setting up the network would take too long. Many also thought of the approaching winter as a threat, being afraid of asylum seekers ending up sleeping in tents or other temporary structures not meant for Finnish winters.

Independent but aware of parallel international efforts

The networkers were so much in a hurry that they decided to build an own system in Finland and to not join forces with the initiative born in parallel in Germany – Flüchtlinge Willkommen. Although its basic principles were and still are close to the ones agreed in the Finnish network, one major difference still existed. In the Finnish network it was felt that the most potential hosts would be found among ordinary Finnish households. The German initiative, in turn, started with getting refugees out of mass accommodation to private shared flats. Besides Germany, living in a shared flat is a common and popular alternative among students and young people in much of central Europe. The German network thus got a great number of support requests from abroad, and has now grown to a multi-country network, Refugees Welcome International.

Basic principles

The network brings together asylum seekers and people willing to host them in their private homes. The idea is to help the newcomers to start a new life in Finland in a meaningful way, respecting human dignity. Home accommodation is also about spaces but above all it is about relations. It offers the asylum seekers and the Finns an opportunity to encounter with each other. Through home accommodation both the hosts and the hostees can learn from each other, and the asylum seekers get started with their integration process.

The principles include mutuality, equality and trust. According to the current Finnish regulations the people that invite the asylum seekers into their homes, are not yet financially rewarded. Those active in home accommodation are part of the so-called fourth sector, citizen engagement outside of the associations that are formally established. All materials, including the website, home accommodation tutorials etc. have been made by volunteers. By summer 2016 only a small grant has been received from a foundation willing to support the network. The rest has emerged through passion, persistence and the great amount of available skills. Funding from the domestic charity resources is now hoped for, and an application to RAY, the Finnish gambling monopoly, has been submitted.



*The Finnish hosts are also of help in finding activities outside of home.
Yousef (2nd from right) playing volleyball with local people in Velkua school gym.*



Alessandro Rampazzo



Alessandro Rampazzo

Ihab (pictured) and Yousef (previous page) arrived in Finland in September 2015. For few months they lived in Turku in an asylum seeker facility near the city. In January they moved in with Outi, a Finnish woman who offered to host them for some time, while they are waiting for their request of asylum to be answered.

Ways of operating

The core of the work is done in the local groups that were established across Finland. At a time they were as many as 14, but after the rearrangements of the reception centres, the number of local groups has varied. The local groups are responsible in bringing together those willing to host and those willing to get into home accommodation.

The local groups are independent and can adjust their practices to suit the local circumstances, as long as they respect the values and principles compiled in the network manual. The purpose of the network is to bring together asylum seekers and hosts and to support them during the time they live together. The network is no partner in the arrangement but the decision to share a home is always done by the persons who host and who move in.

In a first meeting of the host and the hostee(s), somebody from the home accommodation network always joins in. Usually he/she acts also as the support person during the joint accommodation. If

needed, a volunteering interpreter will be invited to the meeting, which is often held in a café or other semi-public space or directly at the potential host's place. The asylum seekers that have found home accommodation through the network often volunteer as active members of the network and spread the message about the available option.

After the first meeting, the network member contacts the two parties. This is meant to lessen the social pressure to respond against their gut feelings. The intention is to match people who are likely to cope with each other as long as the asylum seeking process lasts. If both parties agree to start the home accommodation, they shall agree together on how and when the move shall take place. They also take care of informing the respective reception centre. Sometimes the asylum seeker first tries out how it feels to stay at the host's place over night or two, prior making the final decision. The asylum seeker retains the right to return to a reception centre anytime during



Ihab with Outi's son Paavo

Alessandro Rampazzo

the asylum seeking process. The reception centre is also obliged to offer those in home accommodation the same social, health and legal support services as to those staying in reception centres.

At the moment there are hundreds of volunteers in the network that devote some of their time in making this happen. They come from diverse backgrounds and include both native Finns and asylum seekers and others with migration background. People from all age groups and educational and professional backgrounds have participated, from all across the country.

The home accommodation network keeps no register about the asylum seekers having found home accommodation with its help or otherwise. Only the local groups know about the home accommodation arrangements in their region. By July 2016 about seventy arrangements have been made. The number of people staying in home accommodation is higher than that. In many cases it is more than one person that has found a new home: a whole family, siblings or friends. It is thus over hundred individuals that are staying in home accommodation thanks to the network.

This figure does not include those who have not turned to the home accommodation network but have invited an asylum seeker to their home on their own. Some of them may have made use of the material prepared by the network, or may be members of the network's Facebook group which currently has 4 335 members.

Status of the network

Although the network has formally been acknowledged by the Finnish Migration Service as the partner in matters of home accommodation, no compensations have been put in place. Considering the big savings that home accommodation would bring the state, this is puzzling. The volunteers that are now engaged in tasks belonging to the jurisdiction of the state are acting on their free will but many would like to see that the welfare state would prove its existence by acknowledging their efforts through a minor reward.

The vision of the network is to become an established alternative working in parallel but in cooperation with the reception centres. The network sees that besides being able to provide homes instead of shelters only, it brings also other societal advantages. Through the support given by the hosts, the arrangement adds to the legal protection of the asylum seekers and to the transparency of the regulatory system. By providing encounters it also adds to societal peace.

The accommodation arrangements have worked well – so well that they can truly be called home accommodation. The orientation provided for the hosts and hosts by the network volunteers has played a role here, as well as the principles mutual agency and commitment. Support functions have also proven to be necessary: there are people to turn to in case problems start to emerge after a promising start.

Comprehensive learning processes

Nearly all who have agreed to become hosts in home accommodation tell how surprised they have been on how easy everything has been and how smoothly the joint life has found its shape. The core of humanity is the same everywhere. Home bears the same meanings of security/safety and protection to all of us.

– We had all kinds of scenarios, but then we thought that they are people just like we are. If we happened to be in a similar situation ourselves, we would certainly hope that someone welcomed us in his or her home, and everything has been just great, said Karoliina Ek about her experiences as a host in an interview she gave to the Finnish public radio in January 2016. Sahar who moved in to live with with Karoliina's family has felt surprised about the freedom that the Finnish women have to decide on their own issues and appreciates how much the family father participates in house keeping.

From the very beginning the network has had a number members who are or have been asylum seekers or other foreign newcomers themselves, also with cultural traits that are radically different from those usual in Finland. The network has done its best in preparing the hosts and hostesses to deal with these differences also in situations where a common language is still missing and thus complicates the situation. The newcomer may also be struggling to deal with serious trauma while trying to settle in a new

home. Some home accommodation arrangements have been dissolved earlier than originally intended if a joint way of life has not been found despite the effort made and support given.

In May, Aamulehti, a major Finnish newspaper, told about the experiences that Aimo Salo had made after opening his home to asylum seekers. He said that he has enjoyed the immediacy of the friendliness that the asylum seekers have shown, contrasting with the Finns who tend to seldom do the same. Home accommodation is a mutual learning process where both parties get to see into the other culture from close by. On the other hand, people are diverse individuals, and many asylum seekers have felt it liberating to start building a new identity in home accommodation instead of being surrounded by their own countrymen and -women in the reception centre.

Future developments

After having received their residence permits, some have been willing and able to continue living by their hosts. In these cases home accommodation turns into a normal relationship between a host and a tenant/subtenant. Based on the experience gathered, the networkers have come up with the idea of establishing a broader room mate service with the purpose of finding rooms for those who are allowed to stay but are likely to face difficulties in finding housing on their own. In the room mate model, the benefits of the home accommodation would remain but the deal would be less of a burden for the hosts.

For the sake of the labour market and social bonds many newcomers would like to head to Helsinki region after having received their residence permits. As the rental housing market is very tight in the growing urban region, the risk of ending up homeless is high. This is where the room mate service could be a valuable addition in easing the situation. It is also clearly visible that home accommodation tend to build ties of the asylum seekers with the municipalities that they reside in while waiting for the decision. Whereas the asylum seekers of the reception centres get on their way to Helsinki once they have received their permits, those having stayed in thome accommodation often prefer to stay in the area where they had been waiting. Home is and stays what has become your home.

Revitalising Villages

Alexia Spyr

Natural hazards and historical events such as pirate raids have left plenty of Italian villages and towns – once prosperous and charming establishments – in ruins or with serious deficits (e.g. lack of electricity and running water). In the recent history massive emigration flows mainly towards America have contributed to their further abandonment. The population of numerous small localities has been dropping and aging steadily. Many professions have fully disappeared as they used to be closely related with the basic functions of the towns and the local agrarian economy.

With the young generation missing incentives to move into the partly abandoned villages and towns, these localities are condemned to live as long their old inhabitants will. The Government has seen the population decreasing steadily, but has been unable to react on it. But someone else has reacted, despite the apparent ‘dead end’. Domenico Lucano wanted to intervene.

Newcomers in Riace

Back in 1998, 200 Kurdish refugees, fleeing the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, reached the shores of Calabria region in the south of Italian mainland. Domenico Lucano, school teacher in Riace (a town in the province of Calabria) at that time, sprang into action. Instead of letting the authorities to get the refugees packed off to the grim reception centres, Lucano offered them houses in the village that had been more or less abandoned as the local population dwindled. ‘My parents always taught me to welcome strangers,’ he said in an interview with the Guardian.

The start was not smooth. While plenty of people welcomed the newcomers, others, claiming religious and cultural barriers, held them for unwanted in their communities. The Calabrian mafia also tried to intimidate Lucano, as the BBC reported. The integration challenge for the refugees themselves was also big. Safety was for sure the initial need, but soon they also needed something purposeful to make a living.

While others saw refugees as a threat, Lucano saw mostly a merit in bringing them in their aging communities.

Thanks to Lucano’s efforts, refugees were given shelter, language lessons and work preparation. He offered Italian classes to children, set up parents with jobs and handed out tokens able to be exchanged for food in local shops. Young skilled refugees, eager to earn a living, were helping out in construction works, picking fruit and other activities. The town was brought back to life.

Scaling up the model

It did not take too long for the positive contribution of the newcomers to become visible to the local community. Sooner or later it was evident that different cultures and ethnicities can co-exist harmonically. The newcomers, not only provided precious help on practical aspects, but on top of that they brought their colours, their culture, their history, their spirit and they transformed Riace into a multicultural colourful town with new perspective!

The Riace experience influenced also the work done in SPRAR - System for Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees - that was established in early 2000s to coordinate reception projects for people forced to migrate. SPRAR started to encourage resettlement and employment opportunities by sponsoring the municipalities that agreed to receive asylum seekers.

Satriano is one of the villages where SPRAR sponsors the refugees for 40 euros a day. The first newcomers came in 2014 and by now their presence is perceived positively. "Thank God they brought us these people," said Luigi Marotti, the 68-year-old villager in an interview by Bloomberg, "Satriano was dead. Thanks to them it's alive again. The village can start growing. If they leave, I don't know where we can go."

Balance

Today, about a quarter of Riace's 1800 residents are former refugees, hailing from more than 20 countries. Since 1998 altogether 6 000 migrants have stayed in Riace at least for a while. After the one-year subsidies that SPRAR is offering, many migrants have moved northwards in Italy or elsewhere in Europe, to access the bigger labour markets.

Despite the high fluctuation, the subsidizing has been a win-win model. The villages have been stepping stones for the refugees on their integration path while the local communities have been given an economic and demographic boost and a new sense of hope. The positive influence of the newcomers has also been a great antidote against xenophobia.

The SPRAR system has been able to scale up good practices and involve volunteers, innovators, citizens and policy makers in a sustainable plan. With those developments in Italy, Lucano sends a powerful message to Europe: "To those Europeans who fear migrants bring disease, take away their jobs and sense of security," he told NPR, "they bring us their culture, their world, their colors, and their knowledge."



IMPACT THROUGH CO-CREATION

Let's invite
the newcomers
to co-create a
new integration
programme

Text **Leena Alanko**

Photographs **Irene Stachon**

MEET HANI TARABICHI, Doctoral student from Aalto University, who is passionate about entrepreneurship and the buzz around startups. Hani has lived with his (half Finnish half Syrian) wife and family in Leppävaara, Finland for three years now. They fled to Finland in 2013, when the civil war in their homeland Syria made the living conditions unbearable: “Things just didn’t make sense for us to stay anymore, neither from security, business or social point of view, it was just getting from bad to ugly,” he describes the situation that time. “We decided to come to Finland in August 2013 to try something new.”

Finland was not an unknown land for him before their arrival in 2013. Hani got to know the Nordic country when he started working at the agency of Finnish pulp and forest industry in Syria in 1996. But doing business or visiting a foreign country is something else than living in one.

Hani mentions two characteristics he appreciates the most in Finland: space and freedom. “Here people have not only the physical and mental space but also the freedom to realize their dreams. The tragedy happening in Syria is somewhat cause of not having the space to realize one’s dreams, unfortunately.”



*Hani Tarabichi pictured outside
of Startup Sauna in Otaniemi,
August 2016*

Speaking from his own experiences

According to the Finnish Ministry of Interior, integration means that immigrants adapt themselves to the society and acquire skills, competences and practices which facilitate and enable them to participate in the life of their new home country. Services specifically intended for immigrants to promote integration and employment include guidance and advice, an initial assessment, an integration plan and integration training. Hani has gone through the government's official integration and language program from 2014 to 2015 and describes it as "effective but not efficient".

"Projects that have been made by using co-creation do not have an output but an impact."

What frustrates Hani, is the slowness of the processes. He describes having sat idle for six months waiting for the integration process to start: "The language and integration course were magnificent but again you have to wait." What Hani is the most worried about is the prolonged waiting period. "What will happen when especially young people are sitting idle? Are they going to be radicalized in one way or another?", he asks.

Investigating co-creation with the end users

What Hani hopes is that the end users should be more involved in the integration programme. This is why he speaks about the importance of co-creation in the process of planning and developing not only efficient integration processes but other services as well. "Now it's 'design thinking' but no one is thinking about the end user. No one is asking me or my colleagues what do we think about the processes or invite to co-design them."

What Tarabichi wants is to challenge the current system and take the interaction between frontline personnel and the end user into further examination. His personal experiences have driven him to prepare his dissertation at the Aalto

University. In his thesis he is about to study how to make the idle processes more efficient, to grow into their full potentials by using co-creation, design thinking, innovation management and information technology. Hani is interested in using these findings in improving the current integration processes and other processes that are currently designed without activating the end users.

But why co-creation?

"Efficiency, giving value to the end user and the feeling of being appreciated from the beginning." These are the main reasons why Hani describes co-creation as important in design. He proposes inviting the elder immigration generation to co-design the integration programme. Eventually they are the ones having real experiences about the program and who could pinpoint its strengths and weaknesses. And this is also the most effective way to avoid critics: "Instead of objecting, people will be more approving to the result and its implementation when they have been involved in the processes from the beginning."

In employment and integration services, Hani does not only mean co-creating with the beneficiaries but also with the companies that offer job vacancies. "It is the only way to find out what sort of workforce and skills they are looking for. By co-creating with both the end users and the companies the output will be in alignment with the company's employment opportunities." Finally, Tarabichi puts weight on the impact that co-creation adds: "Projects that have been made by using co-creation do not have an output but an impact. All innovations lead to an output but what you need is impact after the output. Currently, there is an output in an integration process. But when putting it out from a new business model you can also get an impact from it." In the future Hani hopes to finish his PhD so that one day when the situation has settled down he could go back to Syria and help building minds. Minds? "People talk about building factories or buildings but it is the brain and the soul that is hard to rebuild. I want to get this PhD so that I can go to Syria and continue teaching in the university." Hani wants to continue spreading the word through his personal experiences: "Don't give up, be active, get out, build a network, volunteer and then things will happen."

The shortcut.Org

Hani underlines the importance of volunteering experiences which he describes "having been keeping me alive and sane". As a startup enthusiast he has been coaching and mentoring as a volunteer for example in the Finnish Startup Sauna and Summer of Startups.

His latest initiative is called The Shortcut.org which is an organization inspiring new arrivals to Finland to create and work for startup companies. They intend to use technology and entrepreneurship for the benefit of society at large. The organisation wants to inspire and empower as many people from as many backgrounds as possible, to create and work for high growth companies. Hani emphasizes that the services are open to all and hopes that they could educate and inspire also other marginalized communities in Finland about startups. It is more about the attitude: The Shortcut.org is open to everyone curious about technology and entrepreneurship.

Find out more about The Shortcut.org:
<http://theshortcut.org/>

AR

يعمل هاني الطرابيشي كباحث و محاضر في جامعات فنلندا, وهو يسعى لتطوير آليات بحث عن طريق التشاركية في تقديم الحلول معتمداً على خبرته الطويلة. سنواته الطويلة كرجل أعمال و كمهاجر سوري الى فنلندا عززت لديه اهمية التشاركية في تصميم ووضع وتنفيذ الحلول للمشاكل التي تواجه دمج المهاجرين في فنلندا. قام هاني بالكثير من أعمال التطوع كمرشد ومدرّب للكثير من الشركات الناشئة وريادتي الأعمال. يؤمن هاني بأهمية حصول طالبي اللجوء والمهاجرين الجدد على فرص العمل اللائقة ذات معنى تساهم في دمجهم بأسرع ما يمكن. من أحد طرق تسريع عملية الدمج و الحصول على العمل المناسب هو التعاون بين عارضي فرص العمل و المهاجرين.

FI

Hani Tarabichi toimii tutkijana ja opettajana, koska haluaa oman vankan kokemuksensa pohjalta olla kehittämässä vuorovaikutteisia prosesseja. Sekä vuodet kansainvälisenä liikemiehenä että syyrialaisena maahanmuuttajana Suomessa ovat saaneet hänet vannon yhteistoiminnallisuuden ja -kehittelyn nimeen. Hän on sparrannut oppilaitosten startup-toimintaa ja kouluttanut yrittäjäksi aikovia vuorovaikutteisten menetelmien käyttäjiksi. Turvapaikanhakijoiden pääsyä työelämään - tai muun mielekkään tekemisen pariin - pitäisi hänestä pystyä tuntuvasti nopeuttamaan. Ratkaisuja tähän hän etsisi tietenkin työnantajien ja maahanmuuttajien yhteistyön avulla.

<http://www.intermin.fi/en/migration/integration>

Lessons Learned

So you have your own project in mind? Great!
Maybe these ideas will help you with your work.

See people as capable individuals, not victims.

Accept that you also have a lot to learn.

Everybody has prejudices.

Listen.

Or you don't have a project but want to do something in a co-creative spirit with refugees? Maybe answering these questions will give you some ideas.

Think about daily life:

What brings people together?

How does one live a good life?

*Could your project some how be economically viable?
It doesn't have to be lucrative, but it doesn't have to be charity either.*

What other social problem than the ones concerning asylum seekers could be solved with them?

And the most important thing, whether you already have an idea or not: Be creative, persistent and do it with love. <3



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