

**PRACTICES OF URBAN**  
**Exploring**  
**space and**  
**migration**

Edited by  
Lucia Caistor-Arendar  
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Viviana d'Auria  
Beatrice De Carli  
Stefano Pontiggia &  
Katharina Rohde

**in four**  
**European**  
**cities**

**INCLUSION**

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In recent years, migration policies at both national and global levels have led to the erosion of fundamental rights for migrating persons. Across Europe and globally, the contraction of asylum and citizenship rights is becoming more apparent as the pathways to safe havens, both geographically and legally, are gradually diminishing. Principles of protection and hospitality are not only being increasingly disregarded but are also considerably shrinking. Despite this noticeable decline, the claim for asylum remains significant.

Cities across Europe are essential sites for the experience of migration, serving as both safe havens and exclusionary places. In the most favourable cases, urban spaces have transformed into sanctuary sites and become platforms for political initiatives that challenge hostile national and global frameworks. They provide essential platforms for diasporic communities to voice their claims, with or without support from civil society organisations and government actors. Additionally, cities offer a mobile foundation for individuals to call home, providing infrastructure to escape policing operations and enabling forms of solidarity that push the boundaries of current understandings of citizenship. Given this context, it is vital for urban disciplines such as architecture, urban design, and planning to take a stance and support the creation of urban spaces and practices that promote mutual engagement and solidarity. Transforming these disciplinary fields is an important step towards advancing spatial justice and addressing the challenges to inclusion posed by hostile migration regimes.

With these concerns in mind, this book shares some of the lessons learned from an experimental learning programme in architecture, urban design and planning entitled Practices of Urban Inclusion (PoUI). PoUI emerged from two EU-funded collaborative projects: DESINC – Designing Inclusion (2016–2019) and DESINC Live – Designing and Learning in the Context of Migration (2019–2022). Both DESINC and DESINC Live were funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme, Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions. This thread of the Erasmus+ programme aims to create innovation in education and training by supporting transnational partnerships, knowledge alliances and capacity-building initiatives involving different types of organisations, including higher education institutions, civil society groups and enterprises.

DESINC Live specifically explored the role of urban space and urban practice in creating conditions of exclusion or inclusion in cities. Set within the European context, the project was centred on migration as both a vital component of urbanisation and an important perspective for understanding how dynamics of power, oppression, and emancipation relate to city-making. Importantly, DESINC Live also emphasised the role of knowledge and learning in reproducing or disrupting these dynamics. It sought to examine what knowledge informs decision-making in urban policy, planning, and design; where and by whom this knowledge is produced; and how more diverse and horizontal networks

of knowledge production can facilitate more inclusive forms of city-making. To achieve these goals, we imagined and set up PoUI as a pan-European learning programme spanning across places and organisations. The aim was to co-produce a shared body of knowledge about the implications of observing, designing, planning, and transforming urban spaces through the lens of migration.

The book traces the motivations, methods, and key outcomes of the PoUI programme. The diversity of contributions it contains, including multiple perspectives, voices, languages, and writing styles, aims to reflect the collaborative, translocal, and multivocal nature of the PoUI programme itself. The involvement of academic and civil society partners, programme participants, colleagues, and collaborators in the writing process was a laborious and enriching experience that extended the collaborative journey set with the project.

The book is structured into three main parts.

Part 1 is titled "MAKING SPACE FOR DIVERSITY." It addresses the context of migration in Europe and includes an essay titled "Cities as Asylum". The essay stems from an overview of the work of civil society organisations in the wake of the so-called 2015 "refugee crisis" and it explores how such practices have further evolved in recent years, in response to the progressive erosion of asylum unfolding in Europe. Following the essay, the section "Acting in Space" contains texts in multiple languages, interviews, and visual essays which illustrate how the PoUI programme was grounded in four urban contexts: Berlin, Milan, Brussels, and London. The description of each context is interwoven with insights from diasporic experiences and their connection to issues of exclusion and inclusion. Collaborative learning activities during the programme centred around Marzahn in Berlin and San Siro in Milan, and these two areas are explored in greater detail in the book. A third section, "Stories of Inclusion," collects examples of citizen-led solidarity that relate to the challenges that migrants experience along their journeys. These stories bear witness to the materialisation of new forms of inclusion in urban space achieved through the contribution of civil society.

Part 2 of the book is titled "UN/LEARNING TOGETHER." It draws from the experience of the PoUI programme and explores the role of learning and teaching in responding to and interacting with the dynamics and initiatives presented in Part 1. The section begins with an essay titled "Common Space for Urban Inclusion." This essay draws from debates on the commons and commoning to discuss the value of the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme as a space of encounter between academia and civil society, theory and practice, experience, and reflection. Following the essay is a section titled "Embracing Joy and Getting Lost in Translation." Here, a collection of texts and visual material provides a structured exploration of the interdisciplinary learning and teaching methods experimented during the programme. Each method is introduced with a brief text and a short collection of references that informed our approach, as well as practical examples illustrating how these methods were put into practice during the course. The section concludes with a series of "Stories of Learning" bringing together a variety of learning and teaching experiences that inspired or crossed paths with the development of the PoUI programme. These experiences include architectural, urban design, and planning initiatives held across and beyond Europe, each addressing the interface between cities, migration, inclusion, and urban practice in unique ways.

Part 3 of the book, "IMAGINING FUTURES", aims to project these discussions and experiences forward. It opens with an essay on "Speculations on

Urban Practice," providing pointers towards new ways of thinking about urban practice at times of change. This part also includes a series of "Stories from the Future" shared with us by a network of friends, collaborators, and supporters of the course in Berlin, Milan, Brussels, and London. Each postcard offers a view into what a more inclusive and joyful future for urban practice might look like.

The languages used in the book are a direct result of our collaborative approach. Questions of vocabulary, communication, and translation were key issues during the course as the participants came from different geographical, cultural, social, and professional backgrounds and brought their embodied perspectives into play in the course. Therefore, whereas English remains the main language for the book as the main idiom facilitating our exchange, the volume is enriched by a variety of contributions in the languages used during our collaboration, including Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Greek, and Italian. Navigating through different languages and words involves thinking carefully about naming facts, situations, and places. We hope that experiencing this plurilingual volume might reflect our practice of language as both a barrier and a connector amongst diverse experiences, and our finding that when thinking about inclusion, particularly in the context of migration, there is much value in reflecting on how we might expand our capacities for mutual engagement and understanding.

In contrast to the city of segregation and extraction, our perspective of the city is rooted in a culture of recognition, mutual involvement, and negotiation that establishes connections across cultures, communities, languages, and spaces. Instead of dismissing dissensus or overly celebrating solidarity, we embark on a path that seeks to revise urban practice. This path celebrates the significant role of migration in shaping and constructing urban spaces, offering a hopeful trajectory to tackle present urban challenges.

# LEARNING TOGETHER UN/MN

# Common space for urban inclusion: Practicing critical urban learning<sup>1</sup>

Francesca Cognetti and  
Beatrice De Carli

## Practices of urban inclusion

Practices of Urban Inclusion was a collaborative, experimental learning programme that ran from 2020 to 2021. This essay reflects on this experience by retracing the programme's design, development, and outcomes. Specifically, we want to explore the value of this initiative as a 'threshold space' between academia and civil society, theory and practice, experience, and reflection. In the urban commons literature, the idea of threshold space was established by Stavros Stavrides to describe the spatio-temporal qualities of "passages that connect while separating and separate while connecting" (Stavrides, 2016: 5). By centering the threshold, "one is encouraged to cross boundaries, invent ... spaces of encounter, and appreciate situated identities as open and developing" (Stavrides 2016: 72).

Drawing from Stavrides, we use this concept to analyse the potential of this and other learning collaborations between academic and civil society partners as a means to support processes of urban commoning. Our aim is to identify if and how collaborative learning programmes can enable new forms of life in-common and cultures of sharing to be collectively imagined, practised, and theorised.

As discussed earlier in the book, Practices of Urban Inclusion emerged from two EU-funded collaborative projects: DESINC – Designing Inclusion (2016–2019) and DESINC Live – Designing and learning in the context of migration (2019–2022). DESINC Live specifically explored the role of urban space and urban practice in creating conditions of exclusion or inclusion in cities. The project was set within the European context and centred on migration as both a vital component of urbanisation and as an important perspective for understanding how dynamics of power, oppression, and emancipation relate to city-making. Importantly, DESINC Live also emphasised the role of knowledge and learning in reproducing or disrupting these dynamics. It sought to examine what knowledge informs decision-making in urban policy, planning, and design; where and by whom this knowledge is produced; and how more diverse and horizontal networks of knowledge production can facilitate more inclusive forms of city-making.

To achieve these goals, we imagined and set up Practices of Urban Inclusion as a pan-European

learning programme spanning across places and organisations. Through this programme, the aim was to co-produce a shared body of knowledge about the implications of observing, designing, planning, and transforming urban spaces through the lens of movement and migration.

This learning initiative stemmed from the position that in a world full of differences, new forms of commonality, and cultures of sharing, must be supported through urban practices that are rooted in diversity. We term these 'practices of urban inclusion,' and connect them to a larger debate on spatial agency (Awan et al., 2011), feminist spatial practice (Schalk et al., 2017), grounded urban practices (CLUSTER and Non-fiction, 2019), and urban practice (Aßmann et al., 2017). This debate spans various fields, including architecture, urban planning, activism, art practice, and social development. Developing and implementing such practices is a creative and political act that requires actors from academia, professions, and civil society to unlearn and relearn their own roles, ways of working, and relationships.

## Pedagogies of urban inclusion

Our approach to knowledge is informed by a history of initiatives that have explored how learning occurs in and through the city. Some of these are described by architectural educators Sam Vardy and Julia Udall (2018), who emphasise learning as a means of cultivating "response-ability" among spatial practitioners: the capacity to respond in situated ways, taking responsibility for one's entangled relations with the world (Haraway, 2016). This connects to interdisciplinary debates on critical urban learning, as explored by geographer Colin McFarlane.

Critical urban learning views the city as a learning infrastructure where knowledge is produced, contested, and transformed through social practices and interactions (McFarlane, 2011). It regards knowledge as a relational process and, to effect change, emphasises the potential for collective knowledge exchanges rooted in local practices (Facer and Buchczyk, 2019). Critical urban learning also highlights the importance of engaging with multi-stakeholder networks and power structures (Allen et al., 2018). By centring multiplicity, this approach challenges naturalised

hierarchies of knowledge and power, as suggested by Robin et al. (2019).

Ortiz and Millan (2022) define critical urban learning as being both cognitive and affective, rooted in everyday experiences of place, body, and memory. This approach emphasises the importance of being aware of one's embodied position and perspective in relation to the social context and is locally grounded and situated (Haraway, 1988).

Rather than accumulating information in isolation, critical urban learning involves deepening the relationship with one's surroundings. Anthropologist Tim Ingold proposes a similar approach to knowledge and learning: "correspondence." Correspondence involves habit, improvisation, and agencing, rather than volition and agency. It highlights a relational and generative orientation, immersing oneself in the city with care, longing, and imagination (Ingold, 2017; 2020).

Informed by this debate, the Practices of Urban Inclusion learning programme was conceived to facilitate the co-production of knowledge about the intersections of migration, social inclusion, and urban practice. It involved discussing the meaning of urban practice in the context of migration, and exploring how urban practice can foster new social relations in European cities. To enable this, we devised a programme that functioned as a threshold space: a connector of different people, institutions, and ways of knowing and doing; and a refiguration of more inclusive and emancipatory forms of urban practice and knowledge exchange. Three critical intents made this possible: prioritising experiential knowledge, cultivating collaborative learning, and connecting temporalities, which we discuss below.

## Learning from experience

The Practices of Urban Inclusion programme adopted a situated approach to learning, rooted in Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" (1988), which recognises that knowledge is always situated in time and space, and therefore celebrates partiality. It requires an awareness of one's own subjectivity while attending to the subjectivity of others, and demands careful positioning, attending to power relations, and centring lived experiences and seldom-heard voices. It is grounded in a feminist ethics of care that emphasises connectedness, commitment, and responsibility, as highlighted by Doucet and Frichot (2018).

The idea connects to Stavrides' notion of "comparability", which involves challenging existing hierarchies and establishing the basis of comparisons "between different subjects of action and ... different practices" (Stavrides, 2015: 14). Comparability involves recognising the importance of, and valuing as comparable, the diverse perspectives and experiences of all those involved in common spaces and commoning

practices. At stake is the recognition of the commoning process as being based on multiplicity, rather than homogenisation (Hardt and Negri, 2005: 348–349, in Stavrides, 2016: 41).

The programme aimed to challenge knowledge hierarchies by deeply questioning the differentiation between tacit and codified knowledge, observers and observed, learners and teachers. Activities emphasised the significance of learning from everyday acts of sharing and through mundane commoning experiences. By acting as an open meeting ground, the programme brought together diverse intersectional identities, cultures, and ways of knowing, to facilitate connections.

## Collaborative learning

Practices of Urban Inclusion had a second objective: to establish a learning community that could act as a distributed, yet entwined, learning and knowing subject. By bringing together participants and educators with diverse cultural, geographic and disciplinary backgrounds, the ambition was to establish links between the knowledge arising from various places, fields, institutions, and perspectives. We sought to share understanding through a collaborative process of mutual approximation, linking to the idea that "the common is always organised in translation" (Roggero, 2010: 368).

Stavrides stresses that creating open and expanding commons relies on "opportunities as well as tools for translating differences between views, between actions, and between subjectivities" (Stavrides, 2015: 15). Such emphasis on the processes of translation highlights the acts of care, negotiation and adaptation required to make and manage resources in common, among diverse and expanding communities.

The programme brought together academic and civil society partners, students, practitioners, and residents from different urban contexts to contribute their unique perspectives to shared questions. Creating opportunities for exchange and shared experience generated "emancipatory circuits of knowledge" as defined by Butcher et al. (2022). These circuits democratise the channels through which knowledge is produced, disseminated, and actioned; allowing knowledge to be produced by more people, and challenging dominant narratives. The programme emphasised learning from one another as an act of commoning in itself, producing knowledge through distributed means.

## Connecting temporalities

Practices of Urban Inclusion explored the importance of time in the collaborative learning process. Mason (2021) stresses the significance of long-term engagement in socially engaged scholarship, linking

collaborative research to the idea of “staying”, and to ethical commitments of reciprocity and care. Doucet and Frichot (2018) argue that “once the researcher lives within the world he or she observes, they cannot help but also care for that world.” We agree, and believe that focussing on time is crucial for collaborative learning practices that are sensitive towards the lives of the people and places concerned. The programme emphasised supporting long-term involvement with multiple personal and institutional lives, and trajectories of change.

Thinking about time also attends to Stavrides’ (2016) prefigurative nature of “common space”. Prefiguration refers to the idea of building alternative futures in the present, creating and enacting the society or political system that one hopes to achieve (Fians, 2022). Stavrides, with others, regards commoning practices as prefigurative acts that demonstrate the potentiality of sharing by anticipating a society based on solidarity and mutual aid (2016).

The programme was viewed as intersecting multiple personal and institutional timelines, as well as anticipating future practice. By acknowledging the importance of time and prefiguration, it aimed to take responsibility for its outcomes, impact, and limitations beyond its operational duration.

## Finding common ground

In his book *Common Space*, architect and activist Stavros Stavrides engages explicitly with the idea of the city-as-commons, and the spatial dimension of commoning (Stavrides, 2016). He emphasises a form of common space that is open to new commoners, transcending enclosures and concentrations of power (2016: 5). Here, common space is “produced by people in their effort to establish a common world that houses, supports and expresses the community that they participate in” (2016: 54). This world could be as stable and well-defined as a gated community, or “a porous world, always-in-the-making” (2016: 54). This distinction is important, because it highlights that commons can operate in exclusionary ways. Stavrides advocates for creating open commons, shaped by the networking practices of a diverse and ever-emerging community. He argues that common space does not have to be stable, but can instead be a meeting ground, or a provisional space, for diverse identities and experiences to come together (2016: 55).

In this context, the definition of common space as “threshold space” becomes central. The metaphor of the threshold offers “a counterexample to the dominant enclave city”. Thresholds are areas of crossing and connecting, and as such they symbolise “the potentiality of sharing” (2016: 56). Threshold spaces act both as connectors and prefigurations. They connect across differences and facilitate the creation of worlds

in-common. They also serve as models for alternative futures by embodying acts of commoning in the present. Stavrides associates the spatio-temporal quality of common spaces with concepts of “liminality”, “transition” and “initiation” (2016: 56–58).

Understanding pedagogical initiatives as threshold spaces helps explain the contribution of academic institutions to processes of urban commoning, which are seen as pathways for advancing the right to the city. Threshold spaces contribute to actualising the right to the city because they enact more emancipatory relations and forms of city-making. “Through acts of establishing common spaces, the discrimination and barriers that characterise enclave urbanity may be countered” (Stavrides, 2015:11).

This section discusses the main commoning outcomes of this experience. It interrogates if and how the programme supported the emergence of a collective threshold subject, and the extent to which threshold subjectivity in-the-making allowed for redistributing knowledge and power amongst and beyond participants.

## Creating a collective threshold subject

The idea of community is essential to discussions about commons. As Mies (2014) explains, a community is necessary for the existence of commons; whereas the production and reproduction of commons rely on the formation of networks united by shared responsibilities towards the common good and each other. Such networks are shaped by institutionalised codes and protocols of sharing (Ostrom, 1990), as well as by relationships of care and solidarity (Federici, 2018).

Stavrides suggests that people who are “on the threshold” even temporarily, have the potential to experience a unique sense of community, which he calls “*communitas*”. “Social differentiation may appear quite arbitrary during such an experience. A kind of equalising potentiality seems to dwell on thresholds. Liminality ... gives people the opportunity to share a common world-in-the-making, in which differences appear as pre-social or even anti-social” (Stavrides, 2015: 12). During the programme, we observed this “equalising potentiality” in various ways. It affected relationships between project partners, programme participants, and local residents and organisations.

The project partners formed a horizontal, self-managing learning network, involving people and institutions exchanging knowledge and making decisions collaboratively. We negotiated and co-designed rules and systems for collaboration, expanding to involve others as we went along. Originally, this network consisted of representatives from the four universities and three civil society organisations that initiated the project. It then expanded to include local actors in each city as the project progressed.

Power relations are inherent in collaborative initiatives, and our translocal and intersectoral network was no exception. Despite our efforts to share power, it was not always seamless, and tensions were evident throughout the programme and during the final evaluation. For example, one CSO tutor expressed concern that inclusion was not always prioritised well-enough in our work, including in how we related to each other, taught, and used certain terms. To address these tensions, we devoted significant time to evaluating the quality of our partnership. We constantly strove to self-regulate and resist traditional power concentrations, particularly those related to knowledge hierarchies, which tend to privilege codified over tacit knowledge. We also counteracted structural power imbalances, such as those embedded in the funding structure itself, which valued the contribution of academic and non-academic partners differently.

The programme highlighted the importance of relational qualities such as active listening, empathy, critical thinking, mediation, and communication. Civil society and university participants found the programme stimulating because it placed them in situations where these qualities were essential to connecting meaningfully, navigating challenges in partnership, and reflecting on the political implications of their experience. Strongly emphasised was the value of placing oneself in a position of mutual engagement and vulnerability, connecting to Butler's concept of "bounded selves" (2005).

Velicu and García-López (2018) highlight that recognising interdependencies and mutual vulnerabilities is the basis for learning to live in-common across differences. In practice, the programme's workshops enabled all involved to value and mobilise their own biographies as intersectional subjects who are simultaneously professionals and migrants, teachers and learners, who speak multiple languages and move across multiple cultures daily. This reliance on personal experiences and life trajectories played a crucial role in establishing common ground, and connecting across pre-defined social roles and positionings.

Stavrides (2015) cites Uruguayan activist Raúl Zibechi's assertion that "community does not merely exist, it is made. It is not an institution ... but a way to make links between people" (Zibechi, 2010). This position aligns with Isabel Stengers' concept of an "ecology of practice" (2005), that bonds of interconnectedness are adaptable and evolving. Writing about feminist spatial practice, H el ene Frichot mobilises this idea to assert that "it is not that we can refer to a 'we' as in 'we architects' or 'we creative practitioners', in advance of our practice; instead it is through the practice ... that this 'we' will emerge" (2016: 74). An ecology of practice "always operates in action, on the go, testing, venturing" (ibid. 2016: 21).

The everyday creation of connections, negotiation of relationships, and translation of knowledge were essential in forming a collective threshold subject during the programme. These processes were ongoing and dynamic, and required significant care. It was through these laborious and contingent processes that a temporary collective subject emerged.

### Sharing power/knowledge

The collective subject that emerged catalysed around producing common knowledge about the idea of an urban practice of inclusion. The programme linked professional and experiential knowledge, artistic practice and urban policy, theory and action to temporarily link and learn from practices grounded in different localities. This revealed the power imbalances involved in knowledge production. Foucault famously argued that the production of knowledge is intrinsically power-laden. From the perspective of commoning, the challenge for heterogeneous networks such as the one underpinning Practices of Urban Inclusion, is not to create conditions to erase such power imbalances, particularly between academic and non-academic partners or between teachers and students, but rather to make them visible and therefore, contestable (Haraway, 1988), specifically through acts of comparison.

Embracing the translocal dimension of the initiative was crucial in facilitating the sharing of knowledge and power among partners and participants. Connecting spaces and experiences across different local settings made it possible to generate something new on an urban and international scale that exceeded the scope of what could be known and learnt by any individual in a single place.

Recognising the value of civil society organisations' and academic partners' differing approaches to making and circulating knowledge was equally important. Many participants experienced this as a starting point for sharing their own perspectives, one noted: "I felt a truly genuine will to share opinion and knowledge among the learners, teachers, and practitioners, in the spirit of creating something new, a common ground".<sup>2</sup>

Numerous uncomfortable, but necessary, acts of revealing imbalances of knowledge and power were required. Often, participants took the lead in this process by drawing attention to who had the authority to choose the terminology used when discussing a shared question. An evaluative focus group discussion validated that defining key terms collaboratively was crucial for the future of the programme if it aimed to hold inclusiveness and reciprocity as core values (d'Auria et al., 2022: 49).

Individual participants were also affected by power imbalances, which were discussed throughout the evaluative process. Many emphasised that there

was often a dominant discipline (architecture) and language (English). We recognised that counterbalancing this was complex, partly because this difference was embedded in the institutional and financial structure of the partnership itself which, for instance, enabled the participation of a greater number of university students compared to non-academic learners.

At a subjective level, the programme addressed variations in motivations, existing skills, capacities, and learning opportunities among a diverse cohort of learners. For participants who were asylum seekers or refugees in particular, there were fundamental barriers that prevented them from fully participating. The evaluative process highlighted that some participants were “intersectionally disadvantaged” owing to a combination of factors. These included a lack of knowledge of the programme’s dominant languages; inability to travel due to citizenship and visa status; backgrounds from a lesser-represented discipline; or lack of familiarity with group work (d’Auria et al., 2022: 49). The experience provided valuable lessons for learning initiatives that aim to stay ‘on the threshold’. It is crucial to co-create tools for removing these barriers in order to realise a radically open space and learning experience. Otherwise, as stated by Stavrides, commons can be (or become) exclusionary.

For academic partners and students specifically, the intentional linking and commoning of different knowledge forms can instigate the deconstructing of the privileged perspective of academia as a centre of knowledge and power, and recontextualize codified knowledge production as one among many different and equally valuable processes of learning, sense-making, and knowing.

For civil society networks, and particularly for local residents and their organisations, the process contributes to recognising and articulating tacit and experiential knowledge as equally valuable and worthy of being amplified. However, this process of knowledge-commoning is complex, and not immune to the risk of marginalising minority voices and co-opting the knowledge created by non-academic communities. The creation of clearer institutions and protocols for knowledge sharing is an issue that this, and similar initiatives, should address in more explicit ways.

### What critical learning spaces?

We utilised Stavrides’ concept of “threshold spaces” to explore how urban learning initiatives can counter enclave urbanity. We posited that such initiatives act as thresholds themselves, connecting people, institutions, and knowledge; and prefiguring more inclusive and emancipatory forms of urban practice and knowledge exchange. The programme was an experiment and a prefiguration of possible ways of approaching knowledge and learning on the threshold.

Looking through the lens of commoning and threshold spatiality allowed us to explore the potentiality of similar initiatives to act as connectors and forms of prefiguration, as well as to make more visible the power imbalances involved in co-productive initiatives.

The choices of foregrounding experiential knowledge, fostering collaborative learning, and connecting temporalities shaped the threshold in specific ways.

The programme enabled the emergence of a learning community open to valuing ever-new forms of urban knowledge and knowledge bearers, establishing links across and beyond partner institutions. The process questioned and renegotiated the divides between academia and civil society, tutors and participants, and participants and residents. These crossings went beyond formal policies and codes of collaboration between institutions. They played a key part in weaving together a collective subject that could share knowledge, learn collaboratively, and reach out to others beyond its own boundaries.

Collaborative learning was possible within the framework of pre-existing institutional partnerships and relational networks. The short duration of the programme limited the scope for meaningful interactions with newcomers to these networks; nonetheless, the programme generated important meeting grounds and opened up new opportunities for further connections and collaborations with less-heard voices. This in turn highlighted the importance of time, and understanding the prefigurative potentiality of temporary commoning moments.

The experience prompted participants and tutors from both academia and civil society to question their professional roles, conceptual tools, and subjectivities. It demonstrated how tackling inequality and exclusion requires a collective and multi-pronged approach. This led to challenging ideas of expertise and experimenting with transversal forms of practice. It also triggered reflections on disciplinarity and the position of both the urban practitioner and the university.

During the programme, discussions frequently returned to the question of what urban planning and architecture entail beyond the production and management of built objects. The focus shifted to the architecture of social encounters and the making of networks and common spaces, which was a new perspective for many. This involved a process of learning as much as unlearning and deconstruction, challenging and dismantling preconceived beliefs. For universities, questioning their inherent positions as knowledge holders involves a constant act of reframing, and deliberate engagement with a larger field of subjects also involved in making and circulating knowledge about the city.

Finally, our reflection on the programme highlighted that an emphasis on learners’ own intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1991) is an essential step

in building bonds across differences. However, the experience also revealed the difficulty of deconstructing and subverting entrenched power/knowledge imbalances, and of meaningfully resisting power/knowledge concentrations. Notwithstanding these imbalances, alongside the Urban Commons Research Collective, we find that “connecting knowledge across places, positions, and disciplinary boundaries works to enhance what some would call epistemic permeability” (Urban Commons Research Collective, 2022). As a result, we find that collaborative urban learning initiatives that aim to resist enclave urbanity and foster the right to the city must create new codes and protocols of knowledge-sharing that embrace and, perhaps, subvert these risks.

In contrast to the city of separation and extraction, a view of the city as a commons must be grounded in a culture of recognition, mutual involvement, and negotiation that draws links across spaces, cultures, and communities. In this view, a focus on threshold spaces that “connect while separating and separate while connecting” (Stavrides, 2016: 5) is important for fostering social relations based on sharing, cooperation and solidarity. This will open up more radical spaces of critical learning and knowledge exchange on the threshold and will challenge knowledge injustice by acknowledging the variety of existing knowledges, positions, and perspectives.

1 A longer version of this essay was originally published as a journal article in *Planning Theory*: Francesca Cognetti and Beatrice De Carli. ‘Finding Common Ground on the

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The Practices of Urban Inclusion programme lasted six months and offered a blended learning experience that combined online and offline activities. Two live workshops were held in Berlin and Milan, focusing on hands-on making and storytelling, respectively. Additionally, there were three whole-group online meetings, a series of online seminars and public lectures, regular small-group cluster meetings in each of the four countries (Italy, Germany, Belgium, UK), and personal tutorials. An online open knowledge platform, the Collective Archive, supported both the training and theoretical aspects of the programme.

The Learning Journey map summarises the plan for the Practices of Urban Inclusion programme experience from the perspective of a learner. This map was created to ensure that the learners' experience and

their learning trajectory were at the heart of the design process. In structuring the programme, we tried to think about the range of learners we might have, focusing on their life histories and different points of departure, their experience during the programme, and their desired trajectory afterwards.

'Access' was a driving principle in our design process, intending to create opportunities for each individual learner to reach the resources and relations that they might need to move forward on their learning journey. To achieve this, an infrastructure of support was provided for the learners including opportunities for individual self-reflection, one-to-one tutorials, peer-to-peer support, local cluster meetings at the city level, and group activities as a whole cohort connected across Europe.

## COLOPHON

Practices of Urban Inclusion:  
Exploring Space and Migration  
in Four European Cities

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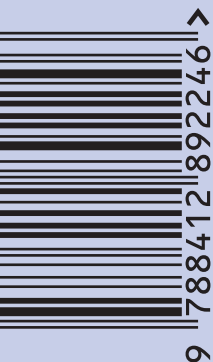
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In recent years, migration policies have led to the erosion of fundamental rights for migrating persons in urban areas, with pathways to safe havens, both geographically and legally, gradually diminishing. This book explores the role of urban space and urban practice in creating conditions of exclusion and inclusion in European cities, especially in Berlin, Brussels, Milan and London. Building on collaborative partnerships between civil society organisations and universities, it shares some of the lessons learned and concerns raised by an experimental learning programme situated at the intersection of architecture, urbanism and migration. The volume presents a collection of texts in multiple languages, interviews, visual essays and situated examples from citizen-led solidarity initiatives, pedagogical experiences and spatial practitioners. Taken together, this assemblage of materials seeks to revise urban practice and acknowledges the fundamental role of migration for critically understanding what cities are today and re-thinking what they could become in the future.



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