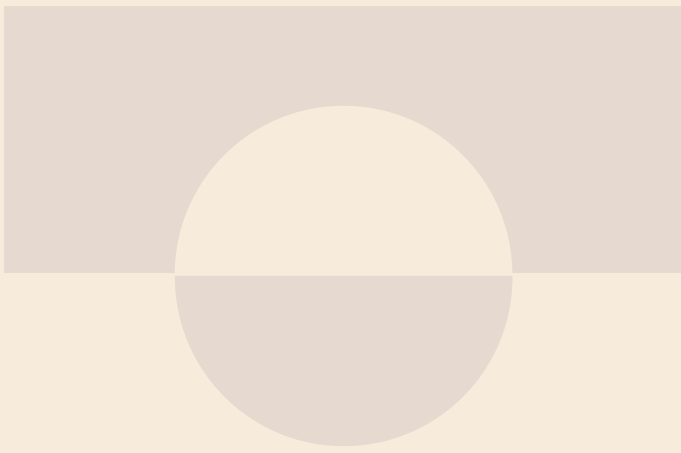


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Nantes, France
2025



ethical leadership
a new frontier for design



Ethical Leadership: A New Frontier for Design

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Ethical Leadership: A New Frontier for Design

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Chapter 1

CARE AND PUBLIC INNOVATIVE ACTION ISSUES

Managing new ethics of public design

Track Leader: Clémence Montagne, PhD

Care Design Lab director - L'École de design Nantes Atlantique





ethical leadership
a new frontier for design



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Community Engagement in Co-designing Design Education: insights from the "School Day" initiatives and the shifting curatorship role of institutions in educational transformation.

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ABSTRACT | Technological advances, fluctuating political dynamics, the unpredictability of global crises and, more recently, other contemporary overwhelming paradigms such as climate change, wars, and economic instability, have forced educators worldwide to rethink their teaching and have required students to adapt to novel ways of learning and things to learn. Institutions-wise, this shift has pushed an ongoing process of questioning the overall instructional framework in which higher education has traditionally existed. We argue that these recent experiences and challenges have been critical triggers for education stakeholders to move from contextual traditions to a period of dynamism, where reflection on undertaken actions may lead to an overall innovation of teaching and learning practices, valuing people's involvement, knowledge, competence, ethics, and relationships.

This contribution presents how the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano, a top-ranking institution in the design field, employed design methods to leverage

diverse competencies developed by different stakeholders to collaboratively re-design future design curricula and the university experience. The re-design process shifted from the traditional institutional "authorship" model, where leaders take the ownership for curricula design and strategic decisions, to an institutional "curatorship" model. In this model, the institution acts as a connected cultural intermediary, curating the design of the educational offer by creating opportunities to co-design educational innovation with various stakeholders. The authors present the case study of co-design activity named the 'School Day' initiative, a day dedicated to reflecting with teachers, administrative staff, and students on the educational offer and co-designing possible future directions together. The focus extends beyond institutional considerations, presenting a strategy to involve the broader educational ecosystem and fostering a continuous dialogue for participatory design. We detail the structural elements, activities, and tools utilised in co-design, collaboration, and designerly ways of thinking employed to rethink future trajectories of instructional design, considering the shared experience of the school's community.

Insights into the co-design process are provided by revealing its agenda through protocols, timelines, and photographic documentation. Data collected within the initiative are reported and analysed, considering subsequent developments and follow-up actions, such as the launch of a new academic program and planned activities with students in the upcoming academic year, among others. Finally, the contribution concludes with a discussion of the nuanced relationship between authorship and curatorship, reflecting on the results of the participatory activity and ongoing institutional efforts in promoting co-design approaches. The emphasis on community engagement and participatory design enhances the educational experience and empowers stakeholders to actively shape the future of education and its organisational change.

KEYWORDS | DESIGN EDUCATION, CO-DESIGN, CURATORSHIP, PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

In recent years, global challenges such as technological advancements, political upheavals, and climate change have necessitated a re-evaluation of traditional educational models. As societies face increasing uncertainty and complexity, the field of design education is also undergoing significant transformation.

Historically, design education has followed a structured, top-down approach in which institutions held sole authority over curricula design and pedagogical frameworks. However, in response to these evolving challenges, institutions are now embracing participatory models that integrate co-creation and collaborative methodologies with various stakeholders. This paper explores the shifting role of curatorship as an institutional model for fostering community engagement and innovation in education. Specifically, it examines how curatorship—understood as a move from centralized authorship to distributed facilitation—allows institutions to act as cultural mediators, enabling a more inclusive and adaptive learning environment. By positioning institutions as curators rather than sole authors, this

model acknowledges the diverse expertise and perspectives of faculty, students, and external collaborators in shaping the educational landscape.

Using the *School Day* initiative as a case study, this paper investigates how participatory design methods can empower stakeholders to actively shape educational practices. *School Day* is an annual event organized to facilitate reflection and collaborative envisioning among educators, students, administrative staff, and external partners. The initiative serves as a co-design platform where key institutional actors engage in structured discussions and workshops to identify future directions for design education. The transition from authorship to curatorship is exemplified through this initiative, highlighting how design institutions can innovate their roles and practices by embedding participatory strategies into educational governance. The discussion will be structured as follows: first, we contextualize the rapid shifts in global and educational landscapes, emphasizing why design education must evolve to remain relevant. We then present the core research problem—namely, how institutions can transition from rigid top-down educational models to more dynamic, co-created approaches. This is followed by an exploration of the *School Day* initiative as an operational example of this transformation. The paper details the theoretical underpinnings of this shift, the methodology employed in the research, key findings from the case study, and broader implications for design education.

By presenting a concrete example of contextual innovation, this paper aims to expand knowledge on how design education institutions can redefine their roles and practices leveraging collective intelligence. It contributes to the ongoing discourse on participatory design in education, illustrating how institutions can cultivate spaces for shared decision-making and long-term strategic engagement within academic communities. Ultimately, the study seeks to offer insights into how co-design methodologies can serve as a tool for institutional transformation, fostering a more inclusive, reflexive, and responsive approach to educational development.

2. Background Knowledge

The contemporary educational landscape is undergoing profound transformations driven by rapid socio-technical shifts, technological advancements, and evolving societal needs. Compared to other disciplines, design education is particularly sensitive to these changes due to its inherently dynamic and practice-oriented nature (Rampino, 2022). Historically, design as a discipline has continuously evolved in response to external influences, integrating emerging methodologies, tools, and technologies. Today, these influences manifest in the pressing need for educational models that take advantage of diffuse knowledge, are motivating and engaging for both teachers and students, are more adaptable, participatory, and reflective of complex realities.

2.1 Instructional design innovation in a rapidly evolving context

Given the evolving nature of design practices, design education must not only respond to change but also anticipate and shape it. Curricula must be designed with a proactive approach, fostering an environment where students and educators collaboratively explore, experiment, and redefine pedagogical frameworks. This requires institutions to shift from static educational models to dynamic, co-designed learning ecosystems.

Research on instructional change provides a valuable lens to understand how innovation can be embedded in teaching practices. Castoldi (2021) identifies three distinct relationships between research and educational improvement: research on improvements, which provides external feedback without directly influencing teaching practices; research for improvements, where research acts as a preliminary step to trigger transformation; and research as improvement, where research is embedded within the change process itself, making research and innovation inseparable. This framework is particularly relevant in the context of design education, where iterative learning and reflexivity play a crucial role in shaping pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, the situatedness of curriculum innovation (Mattioli et al., 2023) highlights the importance of understanding how global socio-technical shifts are being tackled within specific educational contexts. Curriculum innovation cannot be seen as a one-size-fits-all approach but must instead be deeply contextualized, integrating both global trends and local educational needs. This perspective aligns with emerging discussions on the necessity of combining top-down strategic frameworks with bottom-up participatory approaches to educational reform.

This paper argues that a significant step in this direction can be the transition from an authorship model to a curatorship model in educational institutions. Traditionally, design education has been shaped by a centralized authorship approach, where a select group of institutional leaders define curricula and pedagogical strategies. However, contemporary challenges necessitate a more inclusive and systemic approach, positioning institutions as curators rather than sole authors of knowledge. This curatorship model acknowledges the complexity of educational transformation and recognizes the value of diverse stakeholder engagement in shaping curricula (Ashton & Couzins, 2015; Ruitenbergh, 2015). In this model, institutions act as facilitators of collective intelligence, integrating contributions from faculty, students, industry partners, and administrative staff to co-create learning experiences that are relevant, adaptive, and future-oriented.

This paradigm shift reflects a broader institutional transformation that seeks to embed community engagement and participatory design into curriculum development. The School Day initiative serves as an example of how this transformation is operationalized, illustrating how participatory processes can lead to more responsive and contextually relevant educational strategies. By moving from a prescriptive model of education to a facilitative one, institutions can create more resilient and innovative learning environments that reflect the complexities of contemporary design practice. Therefore, instructional design innovation in the context of design education requires a systemic shift that

embraces participatory methodologies, recognizes the situatedness of curriculum development, and redefines the role of educational institutions as curators of learning rather than unilateral decision-makers. This approach not only enhances the adaptability of design education but also ensures that it remains relevant and impactful in an ever-changing world.

2.2 Reshaping the Institutional School Role in a Situated Context: from Author to Curator of the Curricula Innovation

For decades, the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano—like many other higher education institutions—has operated under a rather conventional governance model of institutional authorship, where curricula, pedagogical frameworks, and educational policies were prevalently defined through top-down decision-making processes. While programme coordinators and course teachers had, obviously, a vast degree of freedom in defining contents and subjects of their activities, the overall strategy of the School was set by the academic directors, and shared through the academic institutional boards and governance mechanisms.

This approach, while providing stability and coherence, often resulted in rigid structures that left little room for adaptation, innovation, or the integration of diverse perspectives. As the socio-technical landscape of design continues to evolve, educational institutions are increasingly recognizing the limitations of a top-down model in addressing contemporary challenges.

A paradigm shift towards institutional curatorship is emerging as a response to these challenges, positioning institutions not as sole authors but as facilitators of educational co-design. This shift acknowledges the need for distributed agency, fostering dialogue among multiple stakeholders—including faculty, students, industry representatives, and administrative staff—to collectively shape educational trajectories. In this model, institutions act as intermediaries, cultivating ecosystems where knowledge is co-created, curricula are continuously refined, and emerging trends are critically assessed (Ashton & Couzins, 2015; Ruitenbergh, 2015). The distinction between authorship and curatorship in educational governance reflects broader transformations in leadership and institutional roles. Traditional authorial models of curriculum planning tend to centralize expertise, reinforcing a structured and controlled learning pathway. In contrast, the curatorial model embraces participatory design, enabling the integration of bottom-up contributions into strategic planning and curricular development (Oak & Lloyd, 2015). This shift is not about relinquishing institutional responsibility but rather about repositioning it: from a prescriptive approach to an adaptive and responsive one. This transformation aligns with the designerly ways of thinking proposed by Cross (2007, 2011), which emphasize iterative problem-solving, stakeholder engagement, and reflective practice. By embedding co-design approaches (Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Iversen et al., 2012), institutions can navigate complexity while ensuring that design education remains relevant, inclusive, and attuned to real-world needs.

One of the key assumptions underpinning this transition is the recognition of co-design as a means for researching future contextual scenarios in education. The participatory nature of co-design allows institutions to explore, test, and

refine educational models through engagement with those directly involved in learning and teaching. This raises critical research questions:

- *How can community engagement and co-design practices reshape design education to move beyond traditional models?*
- *What is the role of institutions in curating and enabling this transformation?*
- *How might we transition from authorship to curatorship within complex educational communities to foster consensus, generate ideas, and shape strategic directions?*

By shifting towards a situated and iterative approach to curriculum innovation, institutions can move away from static educational frameworks and instead adopt an adaptive learning ecosystem—one that remains responsive to emerging technologies, pedagogical methods, and societal needs. The transition from authorship to curatorship also calls for a reconsideration of leadership styles and institutional roles. Curatorship implies an active engagement in knowledge mediation, requiring institutions to listen, interpret, and facilitate rather than dictate (Meroni et al 2018). This entails cultivating an institutional culture of reflexivity, where decision-making processes are informed by continuous dialogue and evaluation.

This transformation is evident in initiatives such as School Day, which exemplifies how co-design methodologies can be leveraged to inform institutional strategies. By providing a structured yet open-ended platform for discussing educational challenges and opportunities, such initiatives reinforce the importance of collective intelligence and shared ownership in shaping the future of design education.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, leveraging the School Day initiative as both a research intervention and a site of inquiry. As a method that bridges research and practice (Baum et al., 2006), PAR actively involves stakeholders in co-designing solutions, reflecting on shared experiences, and iteratively refining actions based on emerging insights. In this context, the research focuses on the School Day 2022 edition, the first organized after the COVID-19 pandemic, a moment in which there was a heightened institutional need for reflection and innovation. By analyzing the outcomes of this initiative three years later, this study explores the long-term impact of participatory co-design approaches on curriculum development and institutional strategy.

3.1 Participatory Action Research as the guiding methodology

The choice of applying Participatory Action Research (PAR) lies in the fact that it is collaborative, iterative, and contextually embedded, making it particularly suited for studying curricular transformation through co-design. It aligns with the shift from institutional authorship to curatorship, as it actively engages educators, students, and staff in shaping design education rather than positioning them as

passive recipients of predefined policies. The School Day initiative serves as both a research intervention and a means for institutional transformation. This participatory setting enabled an inclusive process of educational co-design, where faculty, students, and administrative staff collectively explored, debated, and proposed innovations for the design curriculum. As a structured moment of reflection and future-oriented thinking, the initiative functioned as a living lab, facilitating the generation, discussion, and evaluation of ideas in real time.

The School Day 2022 edition was particularly significant as it marked the first opportunity for institutional dialogue and reconfiguration after the disruptions of the pandemic. This edition provided a unique research opportunity to analyze how co-design methodologies could be implemented within governance structures and how they could inform strategic decision-making. Through PAR and co-design, the methodology was structured around three key principles:

- **Participatory Engagement:** Ensuring that faculty, students, and administrative staff were active participants in shaping the future of design education.
- **Iterative Reflection and Action:** Using feedback loops to refine and iterate proposals, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and community needs.
- **Long-Term Impact and Institutional Integration:** Tracing the follow-up actions that emerged from the School Day discussions to assess their influence on the university's curricular and pedagogical strategies.

3.2 Data collection

To capture the depth and complexity of the co-design process, a multi-method approach was employed, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of both the participatory experience and its institutional follow-up. The data collection methods included:

- **Documentation of Co-Design Outputs:**
 - Completed workshop templates, brainstorming materials, and session summaries were collected to trace the discussions and conceptual pathways that emerged.
 - Annotated session agendas and co-design artifacts (e.g., maps, post-its, synthesis boards) provided tangible records of stakeholder contributions.
- **Plenary Session Transcripts and Observational Notes:**
 - The final plenary session, where each thematic group presented and discussed its findings, was recorded and transcribed.
 - Observational notes captured group dynamics, discussion patterns, and key points of debate among participants.
- **Photographic and Video Documentation:**
 - Images and video recordings of the co-design sessions documented interactions, spatial configurations, and engagement levels.
- **Institutional Follow-Up Data (2022-2025):**

- Internal reports and meeting minutes from subsequent faculty discussions and institutional planning were analyzed to trace the impact of the School Day 2022 outcomes.
- Interviews with key stakeholders (e.g., program coordinators, faculty members) were conducted to assess how the proposals from the initiative influenced curricula, teaching models, and governance practices over time.

3.3 Data analysis

By integrating real-time data from the 2022 event with longitudinal follow-up evidence, this methodology ensures that the analysis captures not only the participatory experience but also its lasting effects on institutional decision-making. A thematic and comparative analysis was conducted to uncover the key themes and insights from the collected data. The analytical process involved the following steps:

1. **Thematic Coding:**

- The collected artefacts and transcripts were coded to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights.
- Key themes included innovation in teaching formats, inclusivity in educational practices, and the integration of emerging societal needs into curriculum design.

2. **Comparative Analysis:**

- Outputs from different thematic tables were compared to identify areas of convergence and divergence, offering insights into collective priorities and unique perspectives.

3. **Traceability of Impact:**

- The follow-up actions and long-term impacts of the proposals were traced over a three-year period. This analysis highlighted the effectiveness of the co-design process in influencing institutional strategies and demonstrated how participant voices were translated into action.

By integrating thematic and textual analysis, the study provided a nuanced understanding of the School Day initiative's outcomes and their broader implications for design education.

4. Case Study: The School Day 2022

The School Day 2022 has been the first structured attempt to experiment with a novel governance model for the School of Design reflecting a new leadership style, emphasizing collaborative governance and participatory decision-making (Fig. 1).

Community Engagement in Co-designing Design Education: insights from the "School Day" initiatives and the shifting curatorship role of institutions in educational transformation.

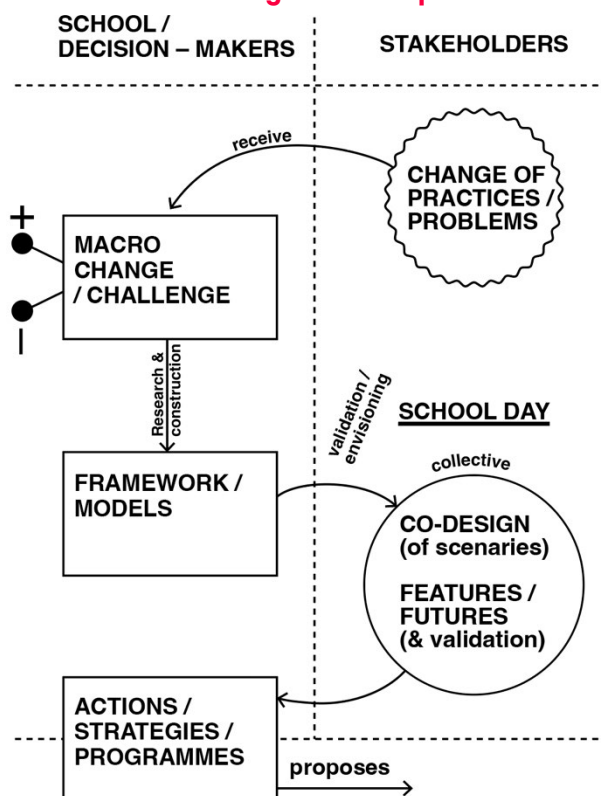


Figure 1. Diagram showing the workflow and involvement of different stakeholders that led to the establishment of the School Day.

Rather than imposing top-down reforms, the institution engages in a dialogical and iterative process that unfolds through a structured methodology. Its purpose is to envision the evolution of the School together with its community, co-define the next steps to take and create engagement around them. The model at the basis of this initiative follows these key phases:

1. **Finding a theme:** Identifying what is relevant, urgent, and a priority for the school's strategy. The process starts by recognizing the most pressing challenges and transformation needs, whether they emerge from within the academy or from its broader ecosystem of stakeholders.
2. **Mobilizing a mixed group of co-organizers:** Engaging faculty, staff, and students who are directly concerned with the theme, have relevant expertise, and are interested in contributing. This ensures that discussions are informed, inclusive, and capable of addressing different perspectives.
3. **Finding experts:** Involving both internal university experts and external contributors who can provide valuable knowledge and stimuli, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and expanding the horizon of the discussion.
4. **Designing the co-design workshop and training facilitators:** Structuring the event to enable meaningful and generative discussions. This phase focuses on designing the co-design methodologies, ensuring that they encourage participants to think beyond conventional approaches and imagine innovative solutions. Dedicated training for facilitators ensures smooth moderation of conversations.
5. **Gathering the whole school's community for one day:** Creating a space for collective participation, where stakeholders work together, share meals, and engage in cultural initiatives in a convivial setting. The event fosters an

atmosphere of collaboration and informal exchange, reinforcing social cohesion and institutional belonging.

The School Day initiative exemplifies the application of co-design principles within a higher education setting. It serves as an experimental space where facilitated workshops, brainstorming sessions, and reflective exercises capture the complexities of contemporary educational challenges. The tools employed—ranging from participatory mapping to visual storytelling—enable active engagement from all participants, fostering a sense of ownership over the outcomes. Beyond serving as a forum for dialogue, the initiative has demonstrated its potential to drive tangible institutional change: the various editions have influenced curricular innovation, contributed to new academic programs, and strengthened relationships within the educational ecosystem. By embedding participatory design methodologies into the institution's governance model, School Day highlights the transformative potential of curatorial leadership in education, positioning the institution as a facilitator of collective intelligence rather than a prescriptive authority.

4.1 Goals, participants, and structure

The School Day is annually organised at the end of July, coinciding with the conclusion of the academic year. This strategic timing ensures maximum participation from a diverse range of stakeholders, including academic staff, students, professional, administrative and technical staff and external collaborators. Doing so, it embraces a horizontal, inclusive approach, inviting diverse voices to contribute to the evolution of teaching and learning practices. It runs for the whole day, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Figure 2. Photo taken on School Day 2022, during the workshop and thematic table activity.

Each School Day begins with a plenary session, which includes:

- **State of the Art and Achievements:** Sharing results and key milestones from the past academic year.
- **Expert Talks:** Featuring external speakers who provide fresh perspectives on education, design, and innovation.
- **Workshops:** Facilitated sessions focusing on specific themes, structured into thematic tables for in-depth discussions and collaborative ideation.
- **Plenary:** Final moment of sharing of all thematic tables by their facilitators.

The workshops form the central component of the day, lasting approximately four hours, interspersed with breaks for lunch and refreshments. These sessions culminate in a plenary, where participants present and discuss their findings, ensuring a collective synthesis of ideas and insights.



Figure 3. Detail photo of one of the thematic tables during the School Day 2022 workshop.

For this paper, we focus specifically on the School Day 2022 as it offers a unique vantage point. The 2022 edition provides the opportunity to analyse its follow-up impacts over three subsequent years, a timeframe that allows us to evaluate the sustained influence of the initiatives proposed during the event. Subsequent editions, while valuable, do not yet offer a comparable longitudinal perspective. The theme for the School Day 2022, "**Innovating the Formats and Contents of Design Didactics at the School of Design,**" sought to address urgent questions about how design education could evolve to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. The workshops were divided into two macro groups:

1. **Future Didactics:** Six tables focused on reimagining teaching methods, tools, and environments to align with contemporary needs.
2. **Future Curricula:** Six tables dedicated to envisioning innovative curriculum structures and pedagogical strategies.

The event attracted **140 participants**, representing diverse perspectives:

Table 1. Number of participants in the School Day 2022

Participants	N.
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Teachers	Structured teachers, researchers, and contract teachers (a portion of these participants were professionals from outside the academic sphere).	121
Students	Student representatives and doctoral candidates.	7
Administrative & Technical Staff	Technicians, administrators, laboratory managers, librarians, and other key personnel involved in academic and operational functions.	12

4.2 Co-design activities and tools

The process was structured into thematic workshops centered around two main topics: "**Future Didactics**" and "**Future Curricula**". Each topic was further divided into smaller tables, each assigned specific goals and equipped with tailored tools and protocols to guide the discussions.



Figure 4. Photo of one of the thematic tables during the School Day 2022 workshop.

The workshops were based on clear agendas and narratives designed to engage participants creatively while maintaining focus on the objectives. The key goals were to:

- Support collective awareness of the directions being explored by the School of Design.
- Facilitate the creation of implementation scenarios for innovative educational formats and content.

- Encourage the exchange of experiences among participants to enrich the design process.

The activities relied on a combination of structured methodologies and creative exercises to achieve these outcomes.

• **The "Future Didactics" Workshop**

“CUCINA” DELLA SCUOLA DEL DESIGN

LA CUCINA DELLA SCUOLA DEL DESIGN si dà il lemmato? Come già saprete, siamo una rinomata cucina italiana e oggi compiamo 100 anni in una nuova sfida che ci stiamo prendendo: la progettazione dei piatti della didattica del futuro! Voi, che siete un gruppo di famose e famosi chef sarete un prezioso aiuto per definire la nuova ricetta che vorremmo sviluppare. Sulla scorta dell'esperienza degli ultimi anni, la Cucina della Scuola del Design ha individuato:

6 piatti che vorremmo sviluppare
I piatti sono sei modalità di erogazione della didattica futura con diverse percentuali e combinazioni di presenza e distanza. I sei piatti sono: **PRESENZA ALTA**, **PRESENZA BASSA**, **PRESENZA COORDINATA**, **SOLO ONLINE**, **SEMPRE IBRIDO**. Sarà necessario sapere i dettagli di ogni piatto, poiché il vostro tavolo si concentrerà solo su uno, quello descritto in questo foglio.

4 accompagnamenti
Gli accompagnamenti sono variabili: dalla didattica, ad esempio numero di studenti, interazione/connessione e interdisciplinarietà della classe che è necessario definire per poter contestualizzare la vostra proposta di ricetta.

12 ingredienti
Gli ingredienti sono elementi della progettazione didattica emersi come particolarmente importanti da considerare nell'ideare questi piatti. Trovate la descrizione degli ingredienti nell'altro foglio presente sul vostro tavolo.

PRESENZA

Insegnamento laboratoriale con frequenza obbligatoria.
100% delle lezioni in presenza: lo studente è tenuto a frequentare in presenza almeno per l'80% delle lezioni (come da regolamento).
Non è prevista la possibilità di frequentare in remoto.
Il docente è libero di decidere se usare lo streaming e registrare le lezioni per poi metterle a disposizione.

INGREDIENTE SOCIALE

- INTERATTIVITÀ E PARTECIPAZIONE**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone un coinvolgimento attivo della classe.
- SOCIALIZZAZIONE E COLLABORAZIONE**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la relazione tra studenti che si sostengono nel compito di apprendimento e che favorisce la nascita di gruppi di lavoro.
- APPRENDIMENTO TRAI PARI**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone il processo di apprendimento di un gruppo di pari, all'interno di un gruppo che si sostiene tra pari.
- INCLUSIVITÀ**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la partecipazione di tutti gli studenti e la possibilità di esprimere le proprie opinioni e idee.

INGREDIENTE AMBIENTALE

- FLESSIBILITÀ**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la possibilità di adattare la lezione alle esigenze della classe.
- COMFORT**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone un ambiente di apprendimento confortevole e sicuro.
- TECNOLOGIE**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone l'uso di strumenti tecnologici per facilitare l'apprendimento.
- DECENTRALIZZAZIONE**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la partecipazione attiva di tutti gli studenti e la possibilità di esprimere le proprie opinioni e idee.

INGREDIENTE GESTIONALE

- ON DEMAND**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la possibilità di erogare la lezione in base alle esigenze della classe.
- PERSONALIZZAZIONE**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la possibilità di adattare la lezione alle esigenze della classe.
- ASINCRONITÀ**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la possibilità di erogare la lezione in base alle esigenze della classe.
- GESTIONE DEL TEMPO**: Ingrediente della progettazione didattica che presuppone la possibilità di erogare la lezione in base alle esigenze della classe.

Figure 5. Templates created ad hoc and used for the brainstorming session and discussion within the thematic tables on Future Didactics at School Day 2022.

- **Narrative Approach:** Participants were welcomed into "The Kitchen of Design Education," where they were metaphorically tasked with creating "recipes" for new formats of design education. This playful metaphor provided a creative entry point into discussions.
- **Activity Flow:**
 - Icebreaking and introductions to establish a collaborative atmosphere.
 - Reviewing foundational materials, including "ingredient cards" (Fig. 5) describing key components of teaching methodologies (e.g., flexibility, interactivity, inclusivity).
 - Supporting participants to draft specific "recipes" for teaching methods.

“CUCINA” DELLA SCUOLA DEL DESIGN

LISTA INGREDIENTI & QUANTITÀ:

ACCOMPAGNAMENTO:

DESCRIZIONE DELLA RICETTA:

NOME RICETTA:

VALORE

“CUCINA” DELLA SCUOLA DEL DESIGN

LISTA INGREDIENTI & QUANTITÀ:

ACCOMPAGNAMENTO:

DESCRIZIONE DELLA RICETTA:

NOME RICETTA:

VALORE

Figure 6. Material and a scan of a completed template at the end of the workshop for the thematic tables on Future Didactics at School Day 2022.

Community Engagement in Co-designing Design Education: insights from the "School Day" initiatives and the shifting curatorship role of institutions in educational transformation.

- **Outcome:** Each table produced one or two well-defined proposals for implementing future didactic approaches. These included specifying key "ingredients," their proportional use, and the added value of their combination (Fig 6).

• **The "Future Curricula" Workshop**

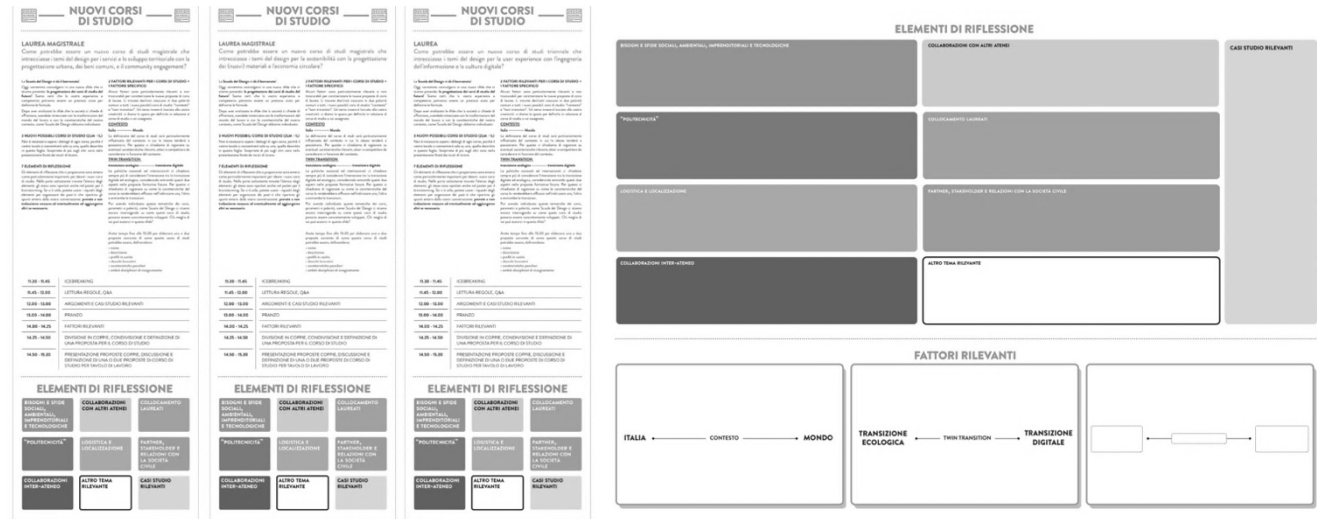


Figure 7. Templates created ad hoc and used for the brainstorming session and discussion within the thematic tables on Future Curricula at School Day 2022.

- **Guided Brainstorming:** The activity started with an open discussion to gather ideas about emerging educational trends and societal needs.
- **Key Tools:**
 - **Poster Brainstorming Sheets:** Facilitators used these to structure the initial discussions, focusing on key themes like ecological and digital transitions (Fig 7).
 - **Course Design Templates:** Each group completed templates outlining the proposed course's name, description, outcomes, and potential career paths (Fig 8).

NOME: [_____]

SI FOCALIZZA SU

PER FORMARE FIGURE CHE SAPPIANO _____

E CHE POSSANO LAVORARE COME _____

PRESSO _____

LA SUA UNICITÀ RISIEDE NEL _____

ED È REALIZZATO INSIEME A _____

MATERIE INSEGNATE: _____

NOME: [**BE A TROUBLE MAKER T.T.G.T.**]

SI FOCALIZZA SU

L'analisi, la rappresentazione e l'intervento su sistemi complessi

PER FORMARE FIGURE CHE SAPPIANO **individuare i nodi critici degli ecosistemi complessi definendo approcci e strumenti di intervento (multidisciplinari)**

E CHE POSSANO LAVORARE COME **profili professionali freelance + istituzionali around ricerca + pubblico (scale EU) + grandi imprese / multinazionali**

PRESSO **ESPERTI di cambiamento sistemico e organizzativo**

LA SUA UNICITÀ RISIEDE NEL **guardare alle sfide con strumenti e approcci di trasformazione nuovi: molto da sperimentare e iterazione - sperimentazione LABORATORIALE su realtà tangibili e non.**

ED È REALIZZATO INSIEME A **TRC, EU, Società, consumatori, KIC, EIT**

ATTIVAMENTE EFFECTIVE COURSES (nazionali + esterne)

MATERIE INSEGNATE: **systems oriented design, gigamapping, speculative foresight, cultural science della complessità, teoria della sistemi, design ethics, social public data literacy, business for good, contemporary anthropology, anthropocene studies data journalism, activism approaches/tenets, STI, algorithmic literacy**

Figure 8. Course Design Template and its scan completed at the end of the workshop for the thematic tables on Future Curricula at School Day 2022.

- **Outcome:** The groups collaboratively finalised one or two course proposals per table, aligning them with the identified educational priorities.

N. Results & Discussion

The findings from the School Day 2022 initiative highlight both the opportunities and challenges of transitioning from an authorship to a curatorship model in design education. By engaging a diverse group of stakeholders—including faculty, students, and administrative staff—this co-design process facilitated a shared reflection on the evolution of didactic methodologies and curricular structures. The results of the initiative reveal key insights into three primary areas: 1) innovative future didactic models, 2) future-oriented curricula, and 3) institutional transformation through participatory processes.



Figure 9. Detail photo of one of the thematic tables during the School Day 2022 workshop.

5.1 Key insights from the “Future Didactics” plenary

The Future Didactics discussions underscored the importance of developing adaptive, inclusive, and experiential learning models that respond to the rapidly changing landscape of higher education (Table 2).

Table 2. Insights emerged from the Future Didactics tables.

Future Didactics

Key Models/Proposals	Key Features
Presence-Based Models (Team 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small, diverse, and international classrooms. - Peer learning and interdisciplinary collaboration. - Flexible, technology-enhanced labs. - External professional contributions.
High Presence Hybrid Models (Team 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Student-Centric Metamorphosis": 70% in-person, 30% online. - Personalised learning via shared digital platforms. - "Extended Learning": Decentralised spaces (e.g., museums) for autonomous group work.
Low Presence Models (Team 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Caponata Blended": Online theory, in-person collaborative sessions. - "Hyper-Cocktail": Decentralised, real-world project-focused learning.
Coordinated Flexibility Models (Team 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Frutta di Stagione" (Seasonal fruit): Modular, adaptable teaching across academic years. - "Hippocampus": Combines on-campus and off-campus learning using urban resources.
Fully Online Models (Team 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International accessibility and "knowledge addiction" through engaging formats (e.g., podcasts). - On-demand foundational content with collaborative, peer-to-peer learning.
Always Hybrid Models (Team 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Controlled Hybrid": Precise planning of in-person and online elements. - Personalised, on-demand learning supported by adaptable spaces.

Across the various thematic tables, a common theme emerged: the need for greater flexibility in teaching methods to accommodate different learning preferences and contexts. Presence-based models emphasized the value of small, interdisciplinary, and international classrooms that encourage peer learning, hands-on experiences, and collaboration in technology-enhanced environments. These models highlighted the significance of external professional contributions, reinforcing the idea that learning must extend beyond the academic sphere and into real-world applications. The hybrid models proposed by different teams explored a structured blend of in-person and online learning, with varying degrees of physical engagement. Proposals such as "Student-Centric Metamorphosis" suggested a 70% in-person and 30% online structure, allowing for personalized learning through digital platforms while maintaining strong social and collaborative elements in physical spaces. Similarly, models like "Controlled Hybrid" introduced precise planning of online and in-person components, enabling students to engage in adaptable, self-paced learning while ensuring structured face-to-face interactions. On the other hand, low-

presence and decentralized models pushed the boundaries of distributed learning environments, envisioning education as something that happens beyond the traditional campus. Concepts such as “Caponata Blended” and “Frutta di Stagione” suggested modular, adaptable teaching strategies that leverage urban spaces, museums, and other cultural institutions as sites for decentralized education. Fully online proposals introduced a different perspective, focusing on how digital learning can be restructured to maintain engagement and foster deep learning. A notable example was the “Knowledge Addiction” model, which proposed engaging, on-demand formats such as podcasts and interactive media to create a continuous, self-directed learning experience that extends beyond structured university programs. These findings provide a direct response to our first research question on how participatory and co-design methods can reshape educational models. They illustrate a concrete shift from rigid, top-down approaches to more dynamic, student-centered, and technologically integrated formats. This transformation is not only evident in the new didactic proposals but also in the ways the community was engaged in defining them.

5.2 Key insights from the “Future Curricula” plenary

The Future Curricula plenary discussions revealed how design education must evolve to address contemporary societal, technological, and environmental transformations (Table 3).

Table 3. Insights emerged from the Future Curricula tables.

Future Curricula	
Key Models/Proposals	Key Ideas
Digital (Teams 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable Digital Design: Focused on creating ethical professionals capable of designing sustainable digital systems and managing their environmental and social impacts. - Digital and Interactive Ecosystems: Trains hybrid professionals integrating technology, design, and social sciences for human-centered digital systems.
Digital (Team 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design for Technology-Based Innovation: A hands-on bachelor program bridging design, coding, and engineering for technological creativity and experimentation.
City (Team 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FLU (Future, Places, Humanity): Blends urban design and community engagement to train strategic and ethical system makers. - Smart Spaces and Communities Design: Focuses on systemic design for inclusive, sustainable urban environments leveraging advanced technologies.
City (Team 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design for Ecosystems: Communities, Places, and Policies: Trains designers to mediate complex ecosystems and develop strategic solutions for urban sustainability.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- MSC for Radical Thinkers: Prepares systemic changemakers with tools for analyzing and intervening in complex systems at local and global scales.
Materials (Team 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Digital Ecological Sustainable Materials: Focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to sustainable material science and production processes.- Design for Circular Materiality: Emphasizes circular economy principles and sustainability in material design.- Material Sustainability Systems: Targets system-level innovations linking materials, production, and sustainability.
Materials (Team 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Materials Design for Sustainable Transition: Prepares designers to integrate sustainability and material innovation, emphasizing hands-on learning and adaptability to technological and regulatory changes.

Across the thematic tables, participants co-designed new interdisciplinary and systemic educational frameworks, emphasizing the integration of technology, urban innovation, and sustainable material research. The emerging proposals reflected a growing awareness that future curricula must transcend disciplinary boundaries and equip students with holistic, systems-thinking approaches. One of the dominant themes was the intersection of design and digital innovation, with proposals highlighting the need to integrate sustainability and ethics into digital systems. The Sustainable Digital Design program was conceived as a way to train ethically responsible digital practitioners, focusing on the environmental and social implications of digital infrastructures. Similarly, the Digital & Interactive Ecosystems curriculum aimed to create hybrid professionals who merge design, coding, and social sciences, ensuring that technology remains human-centered and socially responsive. These curricula proposed a stronger focus on AI, data ethics, and systemic digital transformation, reflecting the evolving demands of both industry and society.

Another key area of discussion centered around urban design and systemic thinking, emphasizing the role of designers in shaping sustainable and inclusive cities. The FLU (Future, Places, Humanity) curriculum blended urban planning, community engagement, and systemic innovation, preparing students to become strategic designers capable of addressing complex urban challenges. Meanwhile, the Smart Spaces & Communities Design proposal sought to integrate advanced technologies into urban systems, fostering the creation of digitally augmented, inclusive, and participatory public spaces. Expanding this systemic approach, the Design for Ecosystems program positioned designers as mediators of complex urban networks, helping to shape policy and strategic governance frameworks.

Material sustainability emerged as another pressing concern, with several proposals focusing on circular economy principles and the responsible development of new materials. The Digital Ecological Sustainable Materials curriculum emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of sustainable material science, production processes, and digital fabrication. Similarly, the Design for Circular Materiality program advocated for system-level innovation, encouraging

designers to rethink material flows and ecological impacts. The Materials Design for Sustainable Transition course introduced hands-on, experimental approaches to material research, preparing students for rapidly changing regulatory and technological landscapes.

These discussions collectively reflected a growing recognition that design education must move beyond isolated disciplines and instead embrace a systemic, transdisciplinary approach. By incorporating technology, urban resilience, and material innovation into design curricula, these proposals aligned with the broader goal of equipping future designers with the tools to navigate complex global challenges.

5.3 Summary of Key Findings and Implications

The findings from the School Day 2022, besides the specific outputs related to the topic of “Innovating the Formats and Contents of Design Didactics”, reveal how co-design practices can reshape design education through: 1) inclusive and adaptive pedagogies (RQ1), 2) institutional transformation from authorship to curatorship (RQ2), and 3) the activation of shared responsibility within educational communities (RQ3).

The initiative also offers broader implications: it contributes to theoretical discussions on participatory and systemic design in education by supporting a shift from hierarchical to distributed leadership and aligns with the emerging role of educational institutions as relational infrastructures; it informs policy by proposing a model for strategic educational planning enabling consensus-building and co-owned visioning; and it supports practice by offering a replicable framework for educational innovation through structured dialogue and community engagement.

6. Conclusions & Future Directions

The School Day initiative has demonstrated how participatory processes can serve as a catalyst for educational transformation, reinforcing the shift from authorship to curatorship within academic institutions. By fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and systemic engagement, this initiative has positioned the School of Design as a facilitator of co-created knowledge, rather than a prescriptive authority. Through structured participation sessions, the initiative enabled stakeholders—including faculty, students, and administrative staff—to collectively reflect on educational challenges and develop strategic proposals for curriculum innovation. This engagement can be seen as beneficial not only for the creation of knowledge, but also as precondition for the motivated participation in the transformation of the institution through the implementation of the co-designed actions.

Beyond the specific results achieved, one of the most valuable and enduring aspects of the School Day initiative is the way it has evolved into a recurring institutional practice. Each year, the School of Design convenes this important annual appointment, where emerging themes from previous editions become starting points for new discussions, reflections, and co-design processes.

This iterative approach has created a dynamic mechanism for continuous adaptation and institutional learning, ensuring that the voices of faculty, students, and staff remain integral to shaping educational strategies. This ongoing cycle of participatory dialogue and knowledge-building reinforces the School Day's role as more than just a singular event, but rather as a systemic tool for institutional evolution. It has become a structured opportunity to realign academic priorities, critically reassess past outcomes, and formulate new trajectories based on the collective intelligence of the School's community. While the most tangible and concrete results—such as curriculum reforms and new academic programs—are illustrated in Section 6.1, the broader impact of the initiative lies in its ability to sustain an open, evolving conversation about the future of design education.

6.1 Follow-up actions

One of the most significant outcomes of the School Day initiative has been its long-term impact on institutional decision-making. Among the various results is the launch of the new undergraduate program in Interaction Design (offered in English), which was directly influenced by discussions that emerged from the School Day 2022 edition. This new program represents a strategic move towards internationalization and interdisciplinary learning, reinforcing the School's commitment to expanding its global reach and adapting to evolving industry needs.

Beyond curriculum development, the School Day discussions also contributed to spatial and infrastructural transformations within the university. The creation of a new open design lab on Level -1 of Building B2 exemplifies how participatory methodologies can extend beyond educational formats to shape learning environments themselves. This dedicated space was conceived as a collaborative hub for interdisciplinary experimentation, fostering hands-on learning and participatory design research. Such infrastructural developments reflect a broader institutional shift towards flexible, student-centered learning spaces that align with the principles of systemic and relational design.



Figure 10. Detail photo of the Open Lab, the ‘open’ working area that provides students with free-access workstations for autonomous work.

Additionally, the School Day initiative has influenced institutional networks and international collaborations. One notable outcome has been the establishment of the Cumulus Working Group on Placemaking, an initiative that aligns with the School’s growing focus on urban and systemic design approaches. Furthermore, discussions emerging from the initiative have contributed to the intention to launch a master’s program in Design for Placemaking, as well as to further developments in the Master in Materials and Sustainability. These initiatives, however, require a long-term strategic investment and will likely take more than five years to fully develop and implement.

Finally, one year after the School Day 2022, the School of Design formalized and shared the “Compendium of Evolved Teaching Formats”, consolidating the innovative didactic models discussed during the event. This document serves as a guideline for evolving educational methodologies, ensuring that the principles of flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and student engagement remain central to the School’s pedagogical vision.

6.2 Limitations

While the School Day model has proven successful, several challenges remain in assessing its long-term impact. One of the primary limitations is the lack of a formalized impact evaluation framework that systematically tracks how co-design discussions translate into concrete institutional changes over time. Future research should develop methods to assess the effectiveness of participatory

design in shaping curricula and policy, ensuring that stakeholder engagement leads to measurable improvements in teaching quality, student experience, and institutional strategy.

Another challenge lies in the cross-disciplinary transferability of the School Day model. While the initiative has been highly effective within the design education framework, further exploration is needed to determine how co-design approaches can be adapted to other disciplines and institutional contexts. Research on participatory governance in higher education could provide valuable insights into how similar models could be integrated across faculties and universities, fostering a more inclusive and systemic approach to academic innovation.

The School Day initiative exemplifies a transformative approach to educational governance, marking a shift towards a more dynamic, co-created learning ecosystem. By embedding participatory design within academic decision-making, institutions can ensure that curricula remain responsive, adaptable, and reflective of contemporary societal needs. While challenges remain—particularly in terms of impact evaluation, scalability, and institutional integration—the initiative has laid the foundation for a more engaged, collaborative, and forward-thinking educational model.

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Eric Kolesnikoff
Mathieu Pignon
Alice Bonneau
Raphaël Mohammedi
Fatoumata Badio
Esteban Helissen

**Workshops and student work
exhibition**

Zoé Lacey
Florent Michel
Zélia Darnault
Xavier Drouaud
Flavien Conilleau

Maxime Zoffoli
Jean-Luc Barassard
Béranger Recoules
Suânly Pinson
Neil Carmichael
Claire Camisoli
Alix Berthelot
Victor Petit-Petit
Nicolas Poiroux

Invited speakers

Cynthia Fleury
Federico Casalegno
Gjoko Muratovski
Fabien Grégoire
Rohit Priyadarshi Sanatani
Antoinette Lemens
Sihem BenMahmoud-Jouini
Matthieu Aquino
Stéphanie Roland
Keynote Speakers

Clara Bove
Katie Cotellon
Nicolas Buche
Emmanuel Thouan
Srini Srinivasan
Joesph Press
Jerome Ferrari Fromager
Georgios-Alexandros Tsaltas
Anne Asensio

Quentin Le Pape
Christian Guellerin
Yongqi Lou
Fabienne Munch
Stéphane Gouret
Mathieu Lehanneur
Ionna Vautrin
Cumulus Design Conversation

Julie Mesmeur

Bassem Asseh

Philippe Caïla

Yrjö Sotamaa

Cecilia Salazar

Mariana Amatullo

Felix Dartey

Javier Sanz

Isabelle Vérilhac

Peter Llyod

Ezio Manzini

Emmanuel Thouan

Opening Ceremony

Student Ambassadors

Ayna Seddigh

Amritta Das

Cumulus Secretariat

Eija Salmi

Justyna Molik

Cumulus Board

Lorenzo Imbesi

Anne Pikkov

Archana Surana

Makoto Watanabe

Miaosen Gong

Monica Di Ruvo

Natacha Lallemand

Nicola Morelli

Roberto Iniguez

Satu Miettinen

Teresa Franqueira

Volunteers

Marie Ancousture-Lavie

Elisabete Afonso

Maxime Bahaud

Orianne Besnard

Soizic Boëffard

Renata Carquejo

Christine Chauvreau

Jennifer Dupeyrat

Juliana Freitas

Léa Gilbert

Frédéric Gondouin

Sophie Guilloux

Coline Letort

Céline Leroux

Pierre Magnan

Annabelle Monot

Ophélie Moreau

Émilie Pavec

Romain Raczka

Victor Spillemaecker

Agathe Le Bris

Alexis Murzeau

Alix Lherbier

Anaïs Camacho Rouiller

Armelle Leboeuf

Arthur Jammet

Arya Seddigh

Axelle Reppert

Baptiste Lemasson

Célestine Dagnaud

Célia Lammoglia

Chengjun Wen

Christophe Khalil

Clara Pasquier

Clémence Péneç

Edwina Sözkese

Emilie Dumont

Emma Ekalle Mbongo

Estelle Jacqmarcq

Eva Lavigne

Ewan Kerisit

Fiona Warner

Guillaume Lentini

Huile Wang

Kanishka Naresh Singh

Katell Prunier

Kérène-H Akpovi

Léa Deschaumes

Léonie Grellier

Liam Georges

Loïc Inassimoutou

Lola Jouve

Louane Boisteau

Louis Pontoizeau

Lucie Allard

Lucie Poirier

Maël André

Marine Prestat

Marie Duranton

Mezerette Clément

Méline Bellanger

Niamh Slevin

Pauline Gillet

Raphaël Chevet

Sarah Gregoire

Savannah Legain

Seya Druenne

Sébastien Porthault

Sylviane Davant

Tess Goyet

Timote Jacquot

Typhaine Droniou

Vanshika Aggarwal

Yaëlle Couturier

Yashvi Jain



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