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BUDDcamp 2014
THINKINGDOINGBRESCIA:
Six Memos to Interpret the City

FOREWORD

Agostino Zanotti & Maddalena Alberti 3

INTRODUCTION

Camillo Boano 4

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

BUDD 2013-14 Class 6

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The students and tutors of the MSc course Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD) would like to sincerely thank all the individuals at the Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici (LDA) for their generous hosting during this fourth BUDDcamp in Brescia. Their passion and experience as well as their willingness to share with all of us space and time, was certainly invaluable.

A very special **thank you** goes to Agostino Zanotti, head of LDA on initiating, developing, and coordinating the workshop programme again in collaboration with Maddalena, Lucia and Valeria, the Ciclofficina Mondo and the Gekkake Cooperative staff. Due to their consistent enthusiasm, passion and activism for a "good and inclusive city", we enjoyed a very successful BUDDcamp 2014. We also wish to thank the Municipality of Brescia and the architect Giorgio Moglia for the support and the encouragement. Finally, we would like to graciously acknowledge all the individuals we met in the streets, in the squares and in the different urban locations we visited and worked on, who shared their stories, their spaces and their desires so generously.

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Development Planning Unit, University College London
34 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9EZ, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 1111

Fax: +44 (0)20 7679 1112

Email: dpu@ucl.ac.uk

<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/postgraduate/msc-building-urban-design-in-development>

Foreword

Agostino Zanotti & Maddalena Alberti

The fourth edition of BUDD Camp has been characterized by some important innovations that have enriched the significance of the partnership between the Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici (LDA, Associazione "Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale a Zavidovici" O.N.L.U.S. Impresa Sociale) and the Development Planning Unit.

It is clear from the title of this publication that the approach of this workshop is characterized by two principles: that of 'pensare' (thinking) and that of 'fare' (making) all packaged in a very challenging plot with 5 sites of investigation. This action-oriented approach fits well into the ethics and the pedagogical praxis of the DPU.

In addition, in this year's edition of BUDDcamp it was possible to actively involve Brescia City Municipality, who helped in the identification of three "urban" case studies chosen as catalyst for citizen, civil society and spatial attention. The other two case studies were placed inside a work of creativity and social enterprise starring the refugees as primary actors in building a future of employment opportunities that challenge the precarious economic situation. These proposals were more closely related to the everyday activity of LDA.

All sites of investigation and cases were chosen as paradigmatic examples of the urban and social challenges that Brescia and its inhabitants are facing: the fact that the sustainability of a city is characterized by a pact, an alliance within citizenship that combines the values of solidarity, social justice, and accessibility of urban life, urban space and urban mobility.

The third new element of innovation was represented by the choice of working with a lesser known of Italo Calvino's texts: 'Six Memos for the Next Millennium' and use it to explore pathways and trajectories that were able to project urban imaginations into future perspectives, viewed through the lens of Italo Calvino's reflections on the challenges for a new millennium. On June 6 1984, Italo Calvino was invited by Harvard University to hold the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures on Poetry. It is a cycle of six conferences to take place over the course of the academic year 1985-1986 but was never delivered as Calvi-

no died before leaving Italy. Originally written in Italian and translated by Patrick Creagh the lectures were to be given in the fall of 1985. Instead the Memos were published in 1988. At the time of his death Calvino had finished all but the last lecture. The lectures were written on the values of literature which Calvino felt were important for the coming millennium; they were entitled Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility, Multiplicity and Consistency. Six proposals, that "should actually inform not only the work of the writers, but every gesture of our too sloppy, absent-minded existence".

The memos and all of Calvino's oeuvre have a strong connection to the urban debate and specifically in the BUDDcamp task. The city is not only the primary sphere in which our daily experience unfolds, it can also be understood as a complex text that makes individual and collective experiences legible. The city has a textual character and a discursive narrative; it is the place that welcomes multiple forms of living, life stories, sociability, but also has agency, capable of generating meaning, values and passions. As a Wittgenstein-ian city, language accumulates old and new houses, straight routes and others twisted, plazas and streets, to form a complex maze where the individual and the multitude mingle - often effectively, often frantically.

This year's large group of BUDD students has done a terrific job in reading the city and the assigned task and in transforming the stimuli in feasible, communicable and appropriate proposals certainly stimulating the debate at the municipal level and among the different civil society groups involved in rethinking Brescia and its urban future.

We want to thank each of them, and the DPU staff that accompanied them, for the care and generosity deployed in such a short time of the visit. A culture of care and attention was evident in all moments of engagement and produced very positive outcomes, avoiding trivializations or simplifications.

We also thank the Municipality of Brescia and in particular the Department of Urban Planning and the Environment Department for their cooperation and availability.

Introduction

Camillo Boano

Director of the MSc BUDD course at the Development Planning Unit, London.

BUDDCamp 2014 was, as usual, a big challenge for all of us. However it has some specific novelties to address. A very big cohort of fantastic and committed students, a new not-so-famous text from Italo Calvino and an intense year at DPU due to the fantastic opportunity of the 60th Anniversary of the Unit, along with the inclusion of the Municipality of Brescia in the partnership between DPU and LDA as key actor in the identification of urban sites to work on. Writing this introduction now, a few weeks after the experience and after having read all the design proposals that emerged after the three-day design workshop, I feel all the challenges were met and transformed into positive ingredients for very successful and profoundly inspiring collective, critical, catalytic and strategic interventions that highlighted, mobilized, and will possibly will transform existing social activity in that specific locale.

Two of the sites were illustrations of the impact of the PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) pollution the city is confronted with. The polluted park in **Via Livorno** is surrounded by high-rise developments and family houses and neither the local government, nor the inhabitants of the area really know how to deal with the existing pollution. On the second site of a former elementary school "Vito Dusi" on **Via Villa Glori**, students suggested to redevelop the building not only to house the new headquarters of LDA, but also as a venue for raising the awareness of the inhabitants of Brescia about the PCB pollution and its consequences. The location is of specific importance for this campaign as it is located in the middle of the abandoned area of the ex-Caffaro (the factory responsible for the pollution). A third group worked in the neighborhood of **San Polo**, a typical modernist development in the most populous sector of Brescia with nearly 20,000 inhabitants. Built during the 70's and designed by one of the most prominent Italian architects, Leonardo Benevolo, it follows the mantra of the "tower in the park". Two other groups worked with two initiatives of LDA that focus on the integration and training of immigrants. **Ciclofficina** is a social cooperative in the city centre that offers cycle repairs and sells bicycles. The second, a carwash on **Viale Venezia**, offers high quality services. A critical and creative reading of the 'Six Memos for the Next Millennium' by Italo Calvino created a lense and constructive provocation for the site work.

The collection of six lectures were written on the values of literature which Calvino felt were important for

the coming millennium. Entitled Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility, Multiplicity and Consistency, they represent a list of challenges that inspired topical design briefs. Students were asked to explore possible catalytic and strategic interventions that could highlight, mobilise and/or transform existing social activity in that specific locale with the aim to develop transformative potentials for an inclusive city.

In his entire productive literary career Calvino wrote tangible, considered stories, fictions rooted and grounded in the political and social backdrop of his own 1940s Italy – stories about realism and reality. Before long, he grew weary of such realism, finding it increasingly difficult to synchronise his instinctive impulse to write with the frantic spectacle of his surroundings. And so he began to remove the weight from his writing, and in doing so gained a lightness which in time produced masterworks like 'Invisible Cities' and 'If on a Winter's Night a Traveler', writings that speak to the universe, across place and time, here and there, imagination and reality.

He states, and for us in BUDD this is crucial; "[...] my working method has more often than not involved the subtraction of weight. I have tried to remove weight, sometimes from people, sometimes from heavenly bodies, sometimes from cities; above all I have tried to remove weight from the structure of stories and from language [...]" Writing in his case and design and design research for us, is a search for **lightness** as a reaction to the weight of living. Too often writers look to include every detail in their stories, and it ties them down. Choosing to remove the unnecessary ties and worldly weight can liberate the writing, thus allowing access to the realm of the combined consciousness, the shared magical. Design is about magic and about reality.

When Calvino speaks of **Quickness**, he is referring to the ability of a writer to control the speed of a story. A writer is a manipulator of time and wrestles with it, delays it or renders it motionless using rhythms, patterns and formulas. It alludes to the rapidity at which the written word can travel and the immediate connection that writing can establish between everything existent or possible. This is not about technology but about the fertility of the words and the idea of reflectivity, of germination. Certainly the short time, the "quickness" of the BUDDcamp in Brescia is very appropriate to this reflection. A quick flash of inspiration, students interpret and appropriate their own

methods and definitions for 'observation' and 'action'. There is no right or wrong answer as every place and time dictates its own character. Groups have identified certain key elements or phenomena of the sites that they chose to highlight and address with a catalytic, initial intervention. But as a rule the finished product involves a patient search for the sentence, the details and the framework in which every word is unalterable, the most effective marriage of sounds and concepts, image and form. Embrace quickness, but not over substance. Calvino's personal motto, from an old Latin phrase, is pertinent here: *Festina lente* - Hurry slowly.

Calvino's own musing on **Exactitude** is itself an illustration of the push-and-pull difficulty of how to use words to their best effect. His essay meanders and distends, filled both with specificities and generalizations, but it is always precise, and more importantly, always on the topic. For him "exactitude means three things above all: (1) a well-defined and well-calculated plan for the work in question; (2) an evocation of clear, incisive, memorable visual images; (3) a language as precise as possible both in choice of words and in expression of the subtleties of thought and imagination". This is good writing: avoiding language that is random, approximate or careless and this would apply for design research as well and especially in urban design where caring for the urbanity would become central.

Possibly, **Visibility** is the most evident challenge that Calvino truly anticipated at the time of writing. "If I have included visibility in my list of values to be saved, it is to give warning of the danger we run in losing a basic human faculty: the power of bringing visions into focus with our eyes shut, of bringing forth forms and colors from the lines of black letters on a white page, and in fact of thinking in terms of images". So if writers have the possibility to create new images, designing is certainly at the forefront of creating such imagination. Exceptional writing, as effective design, renders visible that which tends to be neglected in our everyday relationship to reality. It arouses awareness of what might superficially be overlooked; it draws our attention to the marginal, the forgotten. An authentic designer accomplishes this by paying unwavering attention to the world around and the world inside their head.

By claiming **Multiplicity** Calvino was claiming that writing has to aim high. It seeks to represent any and every area of knowledge – science, philosophy, politics – intertwining them all into a narrative and setting. Not only must it include the past and current thinking in these fields, but it must go further, higher and beyond. This is multiplicity: realizing the never-ending and labyrinthine variety of things, both in effect and in potentiality. So for us in the context of design it means: a broader conversation as design both interrogates and confirms the appreciativeness of the potential significance of our practice.

Acknowledging the complexity and the contradictions in each site of intervention we have to constantly negotiate meanings and positions including where we, as "experts", are located. In refusing a conventional, safer, expert-based, object-oriented, aesthetically pure design culture (architectural and urban) we affirm the power of design (latent, potential or explicit) to make substantial contributions to the messy vitality of everyday life in service of the promise of lives well lived, of just cities, of good places and equality.

The BUDDcamp as well as all the action oriented, engaged and relational and embedded research practices students and staffs are experiencing, opens the collective imagination to the potential of transformative action. The long standing partnership with LDA through the BUDDcamp (re)confirms the significance of our different practice(s) and the constant need to negotiate and reconfigure meanings and positions – including where we, as "experts", are located. By refusing a conventional, safe, expert-based, object-oriented culture, the experiences collected in this book illustrate that a different urban planning and architectural practice is possible. Here, design is conceived as a holistic practice aiming to imagine, make, strategise, build and inhabit urban spaces. This practice carries a twofold obligation: On the one hand, it seeks to facilitate a comprehensive imagination of transformation and change. On the other, it demands a practice that aligns itself with the collective will and voices of traditionally marginalized individuals. Within such practice there is no safe ground because no standpoint is free from interrogations by alternative constructions of power and of knowledge. Instead, it is required to go beyond one's personal and professional comfort zone, beyond safe areas of expertise, representation and culture; to cross boundaries, dance between worldviews and knowledge, and in that process to see the world differently.

If we are mindful of the five values of lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility and multiplicity in our practice we might just be able to cross borders and dance in between with the constituent of the everyday, the south, the marginal and locate our experience relationally as it connects to the inclusive, democratic, civic project of a new present. Calvino died before finishing his memo on **Consistency** and so it seems that it will be our task to add meaning and reflection to the sixths of his values.

What follows are 37 short pieces that represent the reflections of the MSc BUDD students' operational, emotional and spatial experience as they sought to navigate between the multiple meanings of design action and synthesis. This edition of the BUDDlab is to be understood as a gift to thank all the participants, LDA and the Brescia City Municipality for this valuable opportunity, as well as for their time and their energy to realise this experience.

Student Reflections

AFZAN MOHAMED (Malaysia)

Flying with 37 students and lecturers to Brescia for BUDD camp 2014 was a valuable experience in gaining knowledge through this BUDD course. It provided not only an academic perspective but also an overview of actual situations that could occur in any place in this world. Even though the time given was very short, I treated this as a challenge in performing a given task. It also provides great experience to the process of working in a group and I consider it as a part of the challenge too.

We started our day travelling by car to the 'tower' site and from there we walked for nearly an hour to the Carwash site. Despite my blistered feet, the group members arrived at our site and straight away started our interview session with one of the refugees who is a car wash trainer there. In a group project, segregation of tasks is essential to avoid duplication of work between group members and it should be done before starting or at the beginning of the project. I have to admit, it is not easy to get information in a foreign language that we do not understand, and I am grateful to Alberto and Lucia for their good translating thereby making the project more meaningful and giving a real understanding of what is happening.

Through observation, I personally felt that the Carwash is small and has limited operating space. There is only one washing bay and continuity within the working space is not properly ordered. The work sequence is as it should be but in conventional ways (open space). At first I was of the opinion that the creation of flexible space might be useful to cater for future demand. However, we were not authorized to make changes to the original carwash building and the shape of the building must be maintained. However I still feel that this weakness should be mentioned and consideration to improve this should be given in the future.

I have learned great lessons in this car wash project, about trust and public awareness to support the needy regardless of who they are. The Carwash project aims to help refugees who need space in the community to live a productive life. Carwash provides jobs to refugees, but what is the local community perception of this? What is needed is trust in the form of support by the local community using their service. To be clear, we cannot avoid racial exclusion as happens elsewhere in the world - much like the title of a Michael Jackson song 'black or white' that

describes a real situation creating unnecessary barriers in the community. A campaign to encourage customers to continue using the service from this carwash is essential to the inclusion of the refugees and it is a part of community participation to support the disadvantaged.

ALBERTO PICCIOLI (Italy)

The BUDD camp field trip to Brescia was a highly inter-Landing in Italy on a Friday evening, we had no idea of the complexity that we would face in the following days. With no particular preparation, we were being challenged to see the city as a text, overlapping Calvino's work with our background to critically read the city and its realities.

My group and I had to work on the new initiative of the GEKAKE cooperative, the carwash in Viale Venezia, which main objectives were increasing visibility, giving a new source of income to the refugees, and accept the challenge of integration and running a business in a well-off neighborhood of Brescia. A small case, but definitely a complex one. We faced numerous constraints throughout the work: lack of time, little knowledge on the context and no fieldwork experience. Our approach was to speak to the main actors of the carwash and the cooperative, as well as neighbors and clients to get a relatively thorough understanding of the case. This gave us sufficient elements to brainstorm on alternative solutions based on some key points that we defined.

We used Calvino's fourth memo, visibility, to shape our proposal, since it deals with the creation of images with the use of visual imagination. The major challenge for the carwash – in order to work as an enterprise and succeed in the inclusion of the refugees in the society – was for us that of building trust. Basically, to demonstrate through hard work and human relationships that this integration was possible, creating in the clients and the neighbors a mental image of acceptance that they could carry into the future.

On the day of the presentation, some concepts came up that are worth to mention here. Firstly the fact that in our works, instead of only seeing problems, we considered the opportunities when looking at the everyday life of people and their perceptions. "Unlocking the potential of people", this was the main result of all the interventions. Also, as a group in general, we found out that the complexity and multiplicity of the city cannot be seen case by case



or problem by problem, nor can be solved specifically and with targeted solutions, if one doesn't look at the wider picture, trying to link and involve in the proposals all the actors, possible approaches and scales.

As personal reflection on the Camp, I really appreciated immersing myself in the field and experiencing the contact with the people, the effort and commitment of ADL, its challenge in a city of diversities that not always merge smoothly, and the possibility of sharing thoughts and reflections with all the BUDD students. I also realized, when talking to people in the field, how important it is to always triangulate the information, because one voice or party can give a very subjective interpretation of a story.

Moreover, I experienced the personal challenge of leading a group with no previous plan and preparation. I had to face a big pressure and the issue of "unlocking people's potential" even within my own team. I realized how organization and establishing roles in a group are fundamental. In the end, the disappointment with the work was high but so were the lessons learned.

In conclusion, I believe that it is necessary to take a position in doing what we do. In the field, one might be diplomatic at first, try to hear all voices, but then his perception needs to come out explicitly, otherwise we would be just reproducing someone else's understanding and ideas. We should be able to read through our lenses and propose unbiased solutions that challenge the status quo and try to be imaginative and not limit themselves due to oppressive timeframes and constraints. In Brescia,

all these pressures really affected us, thus this reflection gives me great insights for the fieldwork to come.

CHEN LI (China)

Before landing, my initial understanding for Brescia is that Brescia is a rich industrial city between Lake Garda and the Valtrompia in the foothills of the alps, about 100 km east of Milan. It is less famous for its history and art than for its role as a primary manufacturing center. The large factories produce weapons (including the famous Beretta pistols) and cutlery/kitchen accessories. This industry has brought the city tremendous wealth and prestige in the past 50 years, also it has brought a lot of pollution problems.

After a short night, we start to go to the site place. For me, I am in the carwash group. To put it simply, it is a normal carwash which is ran by a local family. However, they have built a strong relationship to the refugee association. The property of the carwash will be shifted to the association in half a year. In this period, the family will train the refugees to gain the basic technique and teach them how to run the business. In a day, we saw the whole process of the carwash and we also put forward some questions. In our understanding, business is not only learning the technique, but also obtaining and building a stable relations to the clients. This is not that easy for the refugees since they don't even speak Italian. In addition, we know that the association also has relationship with a bike shop so we suggest that maybe they can do some small business like "tuk tuk" in the future to help more people.

About *Calvino – Six Memos for the New Millennium*, my favourite is the chapter for exactitude.

To my mind exactitude means three things above all:

- (1) a well-defined and well-calculated plan for the work in question;
- (2) an evocation of clear, incisive, memorable visual images; in Italian we have an adjective that doesn't exist in English, "icastico," from the Greek [eikastikos]; and
- (3) a language as precise as possible both in choice of words and in expression of the subtleties of thought and imagination.

Nevertheless, Calvino is not sure about vagueness; after all, "Italian is the only language in which the word *vago* (vague) also means 'lovely, attractive'." He starts to use the notebooks of Leopardi ("Zibaldone di pensieri") which praise vagueness, but finds it is not as simple as that:

Thus Leopardi, whom I had chosen as the ideal opponent of my argument in favor of exactitude, turns out to be a decisive witness in its favor....the poet of vagueness can only be the poet of exactitude, who is able to grasp the subtlest sensations with eyes and ears and quick, unerring hands....the search for the indefinite becomes the observation of all that is multiple, teeming, composed of countless particles.

What impressed me most was the old town of Brescia. The plan of the old town is rectangular, and the streets intersect at right angles, a peculiarity handed down from

Roman times. The area enclosed by the medieval walls is larger than that of the Roman town, which occupied the north-eastern quarter of the current "Centro storico" (the old town). This kind of style is quite different from other places, which interests and delights me so much.

ANGELA HSIEH (Taiwan)

This time, I was very interested and excited about our case – Ciclofficina Mondo – a social enterprise in terms of my personal background and experience. Since I used to study International Business and Industrial Engineering during my undergraduate, the case not only means my first practical fieldwork in BUDD course, but also provides me a best chance to contribute my business knowledge to analyze the case from different angles. The following is my personal reflection for Ciclofficina case.

From business perspective, lack of branding is the main problem for Ciclofficina (and for car wash case as well). To identify a higher vision and goal should be 'the first task' for branding the Ciclofficina in order to establish a consistent recognition for customers to know Ciclofficina. The most effective way is done the task in the very beginning before any other promotion strategy starting. For example, if Ciclofficina would like to create a new logo or any commercial icon, it must be identifiable to clarify the meaning and spirit of Ciclofficina, and be displayed on every product or promotion regarding to Ciclofficina. Otherwise incoherent promotion activities and advertisement



would waste more cost and cause costumers confuse what is the main value of Ciclofficina. For the vision in this case, I would suggest upgrading the brand to emphasize its social values – European Fund for refugee financed Ciclofficina to support it achieved the goal of operating the refugee and immigrant supportive enterprise independently – to give Ciclofficina broader sense to connect with other social organisation and resource in an international level. By this way, Ciclofficina could appropriately represent its unique identity that reveals the culture diversity context and the determination of improving social equity in and of Brescia.

Another advice for making branding promotion cost-effective is good to utilize various types of network. As above, the background of Ciclofficina provides the brand a strongly distinctive image compared with other bicycle shops. The motivation of founding Ciclofficina demonstrates its positive value in society. These images could be associated with or attached to other sectors. In addition to municipality, the transport mobile system, and the stakeholders in product supply chain, the network could be expanded to wider scale to connect with other horizontal industries and organisations. For instance, the former could use the bicycle as a decoration in coffee shop and also for sale and advertisement, or cooperating with different restaurant for providing clients different options when they need to wait for repairing (it also solve the problem of lack of space to serve costumers); the later should include school or community hub as partner to hold activities or workshops, which would directly target to the market of young students and the elderly.

After review our two days intense work and final presentation, I feel it was a wonderful experience to learn many different stories, diverse cultural background and complex urban context in Brescia from different cases. I am very glad to have this opportunity doing a short field research and group presentation in Italy. At the same time, it also challenged us to manage our group work with people and try to find ways to understand the case more deeply within the limited time.

ASKAR TAXIMOV (Kazakhstan)

Pre-field trip conducted in Brescia, Italy was one of the most important and decisive preparations before the main practice in Phnom Pehn, Cambodia. After landing in Brescia, we were immediately absorbed into the case studies. Total projects were 5, and 2 of them were complex and hot on its specifics. My group and I worked on one of them. It was Iqbal Masih Public Park, which was contaminated with PCB from the effects of industrial plant for the production of electricity.

Park problem is that people use this park since its inception. However, in June 2013, the local municipality suddenly, without warning closed the park for two months. In connection with what has caused the population of

many discontents. But after careful study of pollution and categorization (high, medium and low polluted) park reopened in August 2013. However, after such a rush pollution, many people are still afraid to use the park and the park is currently empty. People no longer believe in municipality, in their slogans. The local municipality has lost trust of the people.

Our task was to fix this problem, explain to people or to convey to them the need to continue to live with it and enjoy the park despite the invisible pollution.

In this issue, in my opinion, the municipality made a few mistakes. The first is the closing of the park without giving the notice. Second, according to the results of a survey of the people, it was clear that people are not well-informed and are not aware of the seriousness of the problem. People did not explain the seriousness of the pollution. Instead, the park was decorated with numerous banners prohibiting making any activities on the grass.

Therefore, we would like to solve this is not an easy task set before us by looking at the problem through the prism, and live with it. We did not work on the introduction and high cost investments and innovations, and how to deal with this problem. And it seems to me that the local municipality expected us another action. But we believed in his idea.

In my opinion, one of the best ways to understand the local problem is to conduct interviews with local people. As me and six other outstanding students we decided to start with the most important thing, from the communication with people and then with the local municipality.

During the negotiations, we realized that local people do not believe in pollution, furthermore, they believe that it is speculation of the local authorities. Many older people thinks that the local government playing with them. Interviews with representatives of the local municipality have shown that a number of studies, an acute problem, and pollution do have possibly contaminated not only the park but may be the whole city of Brescia.

I note that we spent only one day in the park, conducted more than 10 interviews and our solution is passed without the subtleties and unaccounted factors, which we were not aware or did not know. But I want to assure you that our decision, according to my group, is considered one of the suitable for work with this pollution at the moment.

Our solution was as follows: first, outreach, and conducting weekly meeting discussion; the second introduction in the park box for ideas and opening page in internet and social network; third, to create clean area in the park.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the above prac-

tice has shown that theory and practice are not always comparable. In real life to begin with, you need to understand the problem and then to draw conclusions, actions or solutions. Moreover, I want to say, I believe that in the future people of Brescia and a local municipality can together find a common language and face where they can live together in this difficult situation with pollution. Moreover, I believe that in the near future, the park will become crowded as in the old and good times.

CHEN YU (China)

In the beginning I want to thank every tutor who gave us the chance to attend this project. It was not only a professional project activity but also a aboard multitasking and team work training for me. It is lucky to be one of the Buddies who could conserve this traditional workshop in Italy.

The Workshop

The project itself is very interesting and corresponding to the course. The 5 sites contain different strength equally. It is a project with a good timing as a practice, which could help us understanding what we learnt during the first term. With interviews according to the city's migrant's character, it is a more authentic to feel their situation face to face. Therefore in in order to come up with more targeted intervention and strategy. This is also a chance that encourages the buddies to work as a team and use our knowledge to convince each other during the discussion.

Content

The project last three days in total and try to content the main parts of a proper investigation process. They are document briefing, site analyzing, group working (which content problem finding and strategy setting) and final presentation. The workshop literally imitates what we usually do in the university but with a slightly unpredictable schedule according to the situation. Even though, the most valuable experience for me is the casual walk in the city without any certain purposes of changing anything. Because that is the most pure impression you can have that reflecting a city's character. Walking along the city's context and talk to the seller as a foreigner helped me to comprehend this city better.

Outcome

In terms of outcome, there is of course the presentation with our strategy. Also, there are our understandings of the six memos of Italo Calvino for the next millennium. There is also one thing that you will always get from a field workshop, which is a multitasking skill. We learnt how to work with limited working places and computers. Finally, this trip brought me a ability to summary and abstract the important points that I want to say, therefore make the presentation easier to follow and avoid the boring of the audients.

Schedule

The long weekend seems a bit too short for such interesting project. Especially the time that leave for us to prepare the presentation is not quite reasonable according to the fact of sleepless night for every single group. The schedule during day time is very flexible and could be a little bit more strict on the time, since the group could be very not efficient and stuck on one point for the whole afternoon until they realize it was too late.

Facilities


The accommodation was great and better than expectation and as well as the food. But the limited Internet and study places made some problem for us. Also, the language different limits our communication and reduces the times of interview. Tutor seems not very helpful during the daytime in the city, neither pushing the work forwards nor giving knowledge support. We have to then spend lots of time on finding out the hint for every next step.

Over all, this was a valuable and significant experience in such a intensive year. I really enjoy it and hope it will be remain for the late buddies. Thank you to my lovely tutors again!

CONY CHANG (Taiwan)

Six memos for the next fieldwork

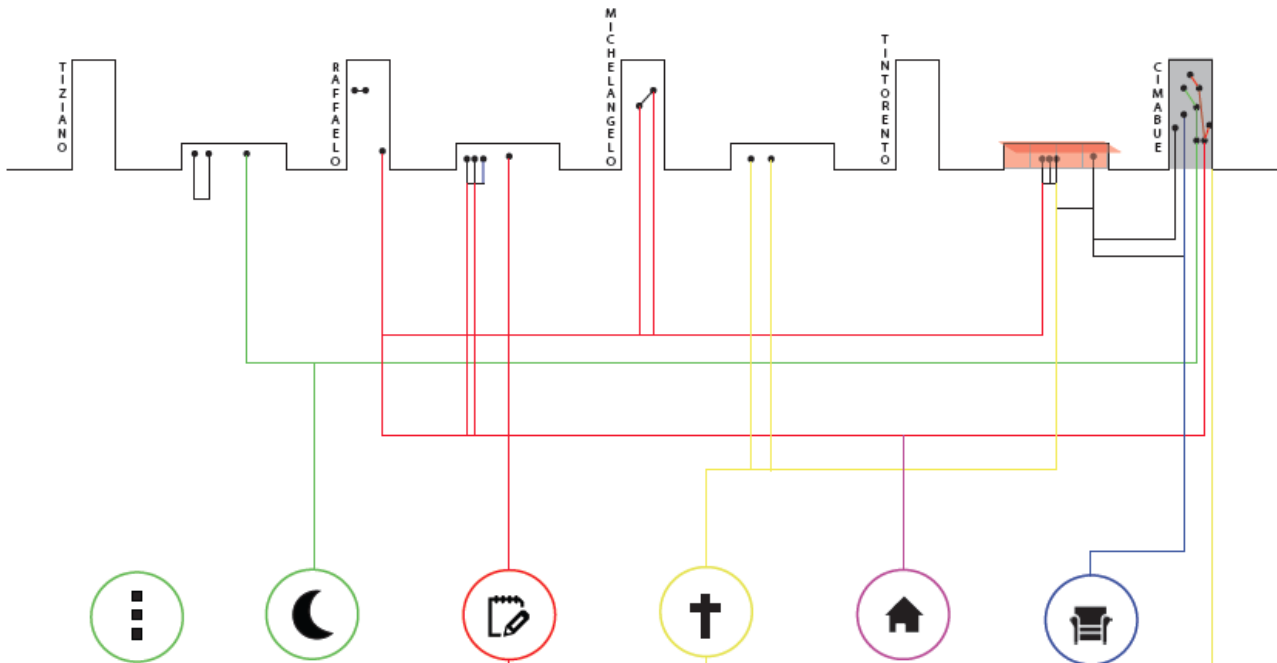
1. Arriving Brescia, before see the city in daytime, I was quite surprised this small city with two hundred thousand population have underground service. The second day I became more surprised since it just take 30 mins to walk from our site (ex-elementary school Vito Dusi, which located on the fringe of the city) to the city center. The reality is always beyond my imagination.
2. The task of our group was to propose possible redevelopment plan of the Vito Dusi, bringing local activities as a catalyst to reactivate the space. At the beginning I perceive it was a task with vague vision. However after we had a very impressive interview with a Pakistan who runs a restaurant with his family on via Milano, he and his friend are managing an organization to help his fellow immigrants to adapt to Italian society. For me that was truly a precious experience, you can never discover more without talking to people. Because of the valuable reality I can start to imaging the different future scenario of Vito Dusi.
3. Personally I really like the idea that our group proposed: use the flower pot to create a new image for Vito Dusi and deliver a message 'fighting against the pollution', the symbolic value will be quite present as our site location was extremely proximate to the Caffaro factory, also we hope it could be a trigger to integrate different social group (which we discovered during our interview) and explore and visualize more hidden network - from neighbor



"Whenever humanity seems condemned to heaviness, I think I should fly like Perseus into a different space. I don't mean escaping into dreams or into the irrational, I mean that I have to change my approach."

Encountering networks and narratives

[La scoperta dell'esistenza di reti]



scale around our site to city scale in Brescia. I reckon that this kind of trigger could be an explanation of ‘quickness’: a fusion of action (speed) and ponder (lightness) - “become bearers of meaning”.

4. When I was listening and viewing the presentation of other group, on the screen there were just one quote from the inhabitant and a picture of the site. I recalled the moment when I was producing the file of my group, I realized that the urban planning background makes me custom to ‘filter’ several information in the presentation (whether one slide or as a whole), arrange ample information into a rational sequence to deliver to audience, that moment I start ask myself is this kind of custom become my ‘weight’(response to Calvino’s memo ‘lightness’) while understanding the reality, when I choose a topic in each slide and put the information under certain topic, I already transfer the ‘part of the reality’ into a specific type of knowledge through my individual lens. Do I assume there were no conflict among those knowledge. With the awareness of being a practitioner I kept self-questioning how can I dare to say I choose the right(or proper) lens and, what is the true reality?

5. We are so fortunate since the trip was in Italy where the delightful food, wine and coffee make the trip become one unforgettable journey.

6. After a little searching, I know that the project Metro Brescia was newly opened on March 2013 and it was a policy over decades implementation with 935 million euros, which is second-cheapest in Italy with a total cost per

kilometre second only to the metro lines of Milan). I am not able to abstain from thinking the ADL’s commend on our proposal regarding the difficulty about funding. The reality is always beyond my imagination, but we are not able to build up our own understanding to the reality if we do not choose a lens and position. The reminder and reflection of lightness and quickness will accompany with me as the fieldwork is coming in the near future.

DEBORAH MAYAKI (United Kingdom)

The short but intense field work carried out in Brescia presented us with unique and complex cases of the realities faced by many migrants and refugees in the city of Brescia, and how this is relevant to the issues faced by the city as a whole. This was truly an amazing yet challenging experience!!

I found myself by the second day quite humbled, as I considered the role of the researcher/development professional in such situations. Situations that require these individuals to formulate a genuine response for change based on a possibly vague experience of the context. And so my reflections are not directly related to the work produced, but more towards to thought and process during this production.

When conducting interviews with the workers at the Ciclofficina, we found that two of the workers/members of the Gekake seemed a bit more reserved and simplistic in answers that would help us identify the nature of the situation. Later we met another member of the Gekake, who possessed a different countenance, seeming to be a

lot more confident and willing to share his experience and knowledge with us. When back at the office carrying out work, we found ourselves discussing these workers, the suggestions that came up suggested that maybe these workers were not motivated about the future of the shop and didn't possess the ambition and vision displayed by the 3rd man we spoke to (Justus). This was a thought that I couldn't fully align myself to, because I felt that our presence could have had an effect that was beyond our control and without intention.

Within this context, it always becomes possible that the professional could disregard the effect their presence has on the surroundings they have entered into, however I feel that this must be something that informs our understanding of the case. For me, it was impossible to make this evaluation about the men because I felt very aware of the fact they may have felt uncomfortable or out of place with having 8 English-speaking students that had to be interpreted in order for them to respond. This is something that in the future I hope will and should shape methodologies of research.

This remained within my consciousness throughout the process, however the conversations were crucial and useful in obtaining relevant data for the forming of a response and presentation, I reflect and conclude that maybe initially we went in with a level of naivety. As a group the forward steps we took beyond this first stage posed more strategic and well elaborated decisions, which I felt allowed us to produce potentially great ideas for development of the Ciclofficina and eco-sustainable mobility in Brescia.

My reflections on the role of the practitioner is one that will impact my position of thought for future practice, in my opinion if as 'practitioners' we are always aware but not focused solely on our presence as being an exception to the normality of the cases we seek to intervene in, then we will be able to make bold, well rationalised and informed observations of a reality, leading to coherent suggestions for change (I hope). Maybe it's as easy as remembering we're not invisible in this process, or maybe doing this, in itself, is not that easy.

EDUARDO MARTÍNEZ (Chile)

Group dynamic is quite different when you spend the whole day together, and when time is a major constraint. I would say it becomes far more intense. This intensity expands its "size". Let's say it makes it a key element in everyday life. As it becomes bigger, it allows also to "see" its details. To recalibrate its value.

After Brescia, group work became to me the most elemental, basic and near area we have (as practitioners) to start building the city we want. Like in the city, in group work social and personal differences, dynamics of power relations and exclusion, among other elements can be

found. Building a "presentation", tests our will, our conviction and also our competence, to build collectively an inclusive "place". It tests our ability to build a common space, a place where everyone can have a sense of belonging.

If we cannot do this properly, it's very unlikely we can build that kind of spaces for others.

EMANUELE FOIS (Italy)

Make visible what is in-visible

"If I have included visibility in my list of values to be saved, it is to give warning of the danger we run in losing a basic human faculty".

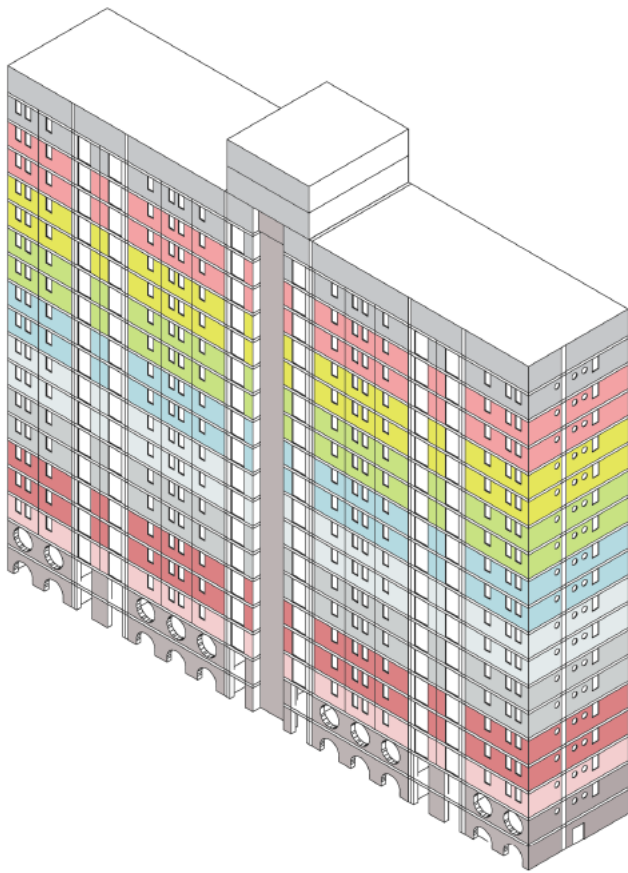
Italo Calvino in "Six memos for the next Millenium".

The experience in Brescia personally represented a really interesting experience into the field. Even though I am Italian, the area and the social-economic context of Brescia was completely unknown to me. Before coming in Brescia we received a synthetic brief about the area in which my group should focus on. The area is located in a neighbourhood in the south periphery of Brescia, particularly the park of Via Livorno where the districts Social Centre is located.

After first spending some time walking around the area and meeting people who live or work in the neighborhood, we had a more clear idea about the big question on which we should focus our attention. The park and the whole area around it, including the private land, are a few of the most polluted areas in Brescia. This is due to the fact that pollutants from the Caffaro factory entered into the groundwater (in particular PCB - polychlorinated biphenyls). Talking with the residents was a very powerful source of knowledge and reflection that helped us to understand and clarify the connections between the physical problem (the pollution) and the social problems manifested by the people after the sudden closure of the park last year.

What generally came out from our interviews (that included elderlies, mothers, men, workers, teenagers and children) was a general loss of trust in the local government, municipality and politics. Many mothers told us that they are worried about their children's health and, as a consequence of this, they prefer to keep their children in their houses rather than let them play in the park.

As we started to analyze the incredible amount of ambiguous signs scattered throughout the park, we realized that people feel confused about the real risks posed by the pollution. Nevertheless we also noticed that some people still use the park without paying attention to the invisible dangers, and others, for example some immigrants, show more difficulty in understanding the "invisible" problem of PCB.



From that findings and also inspired from Calvino, we realized that our proposal should make more visible what is still in-visible.

We decided to propose not a solution, but a strategy to deal with the problem. Cleaning up the polluted area is a solution that should be pursued by the local and central government in the long term. However at the same time, it is necessary to activate a process that tries to deal with the problem in the short to medium term with the aim of bringing the people back into the park. We suggested a strategic framework composed of various phases (visiting households to explain the problem to them, invite them to participate actively in a series of meeting organized in both the park and the social centre) in order to reignite the trust of people in institutions and to allow them to engage in the process of formulating solutions and physical interventions, hopefully improving the quality of everyday life.

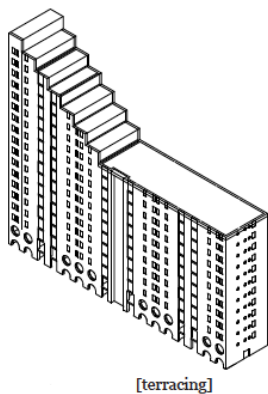
GIOVANNA ASTOLFO (Italy)

DID YOU SAY BABEL? I would like to tell 196 stories, one for each flat of the tower, and how each story is linked to the others in a multiplication of networks without any conclusion. Destini incrociati.

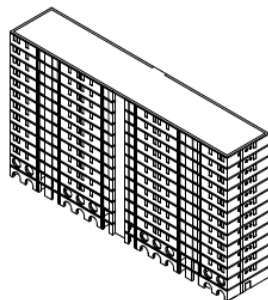
CHANGE YOUR POINT OF VIEW. Usually, I have a certain idea of a place before visiting it and the visit should just be able to confirm the idea following a previous agenda. When I arrived in Brescia, I knew that S.Polo was a ghetto and I expected to find a ghetto. I also knew that one of the five towers had an uncertain future, suspended between demolition and reuse, and I expected that my task was simply to suggest an alternative. But I had some surprises.

SURPRISE. The first day of the survey was so foggy that we could not see the top of the towers. Apparently, the fog was reducing the impact of the massive buildings on the surrounding landscape - and I thought that a “permanent fog condition” could be a good design solution for the open question I was addressing: demolish or convert? An atmospheric solution for an architectural problem could be the ultimate solution in the long list of camouflage proposals: topping, mirror cladding, terracing, sizing down and alteration of the inner section with bigger apartments or new functions. Alternatives that could be self constructed by the residents, enhancing the social capital that is present in the area; alternatives that attempt to amend the failure of the modernist dream of hygienization and standardization of lifes and behaviours, learning from the Ballard's nightmare of super-density; alternatives that were all excellent (why asking for a new one?) IF the problem was architectural. But maybe it is not only about architecture or verticality.

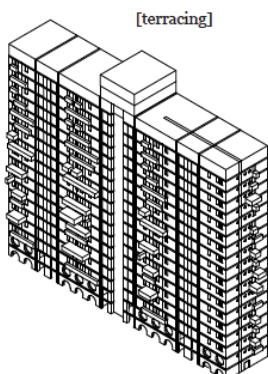
DISAPPOINTMENT. The ghetto is not a ghetto! As I un-



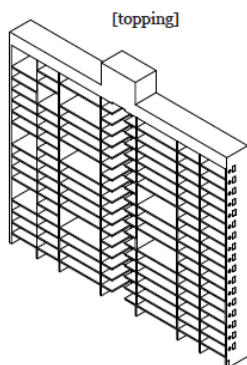
[terracing]



[topping]



[parasites]



[de-density]

derstood from the interviews, S.Polo was built with public funds as part of a PEEP (Piani Edilizia Economica Popolare) in the 80s and 90s, including high and low rise housing, parks and playgrounds, a permeable network of walkways, cycle-paths and other facilities. During the site survey I have been really surprised by the cleanness and apparent safety of the area and during the interviews even more surprised by the many residents that positively commented on the sense of belonging to the area. I was also pleased to discover the presence of networks between dwellers. Destini incrociati.

My initial idea of the place was wrong and I had to change my point of view or, better, I had to conclude that the problem was the point of view itself. S.Polo suffers of a bad reputation that began in 1985, when the residents of the Carmine neighborhood moved there bringing social problems. The negative image is still present, and it is perceived as a virtual barrier that isolates S.Polo from the rest of the city. A barrier that should be broken, because, despite the many still existing socio-spatial problems that nobody can deny (and anyway a two days survey is really not enough even for a general understanding of them) the area is really dynamic and multiple. While in the collective and static imagery S.Polo can still be considered the "Bronx", there are residents that deny this definition, and others that, with pride, decide explicitly to grow up their children there; there is an ongoing integration between young generations; there are solidarity and informal networks that rotate around young mothers; there is a large supply of housing, that of course, necessitates of many improvements. Somehow, it seems, there is a latent welfare state that still works.

JESSICA MAMO (Malta)

I left London with a certain reluctance, having the impression that my weekend would be better spent focusing on all the up coming deadlines rather than attempting to put together a project in 2 days in a city I had never visited and a context I knew nothing about. 60 hours of intense work and many bottles of wine later, each site group was ready to present a piece of work that would successfully encapsulate our personal understandings of such a versatile city. The experience of working in Brescia managed to validate the tools we learnt throughout the course, which at the time of learning occasionally seemed meaningless. Having two days to gather an understanding of the site and requirements, arrive at a critical analysis, and think up realistic and effective proposition, each moment had to be used efficiently to gather as much information as possible.

The site we were focusing on was the old elementary school "Vito Dusi", situated on Via Villa Glori, just off the controversial Via Milano. We were told that our aim was to explore the possibility of LDA moving their head-quarters to the school. When first visiting the site, the build-



ing and its interior spaces seemed to work just fine... we were told that the rooms were used for a number of activities such as yoga and prayer groups. With the building itself not in need of any particular intervention, I wondered how it could possibly contribute to improving the surrounding spaces.

As we delved a little deeper into our analysis, we could already begin to feel a certain segregation within such a small area. The imposing presence of the Caffaro factories truly manifested the city's main problems of pollution in such a visibly, spatial manner. Additional to this, the vast ethnic diversity of the area also featured as a contributing factor to this segregation.

The issue of migrants settling in the area seems to have given the area a bad reputation. We found that Via Milano is effectively divided into two parts; what defines this division is in fact the user typology. From the people we spoke to, there is a complete lack of community unity about the place. Communities are only formed between people of the same nationality. With the changing socio-economic groups that have re-appropriated the space, the area has lost its identity. The resistance to this reality may itself be an obstacle that must be overcome before any changes could be observed. In fact, if this diversity of nationalities and cultures was accepted, the place could start rebuilding a new identity that would reflect the changing character of the space.

Once we began to critically understand the context, I began to realize that strategically using the school as a central node of outreach, through the work of LDA, may in fact provide the attention that the area and its residents really need.

JING DU (China)

The experience of going somewhere beyond London can be seen as a piratical study of how the urban can be changed or transformed under a long time theoretical study. As an international student, traveling to Italy or anywhere else to have this kind of field trip will not make any differences in terms of learning. However, Brescia is looking forward to receive unique development proposals from high educational institutions and professional urban experts. Therefore, professors, lecturers and students from UCL as a system that merged into the system of Brescia LDA and then become another system of Brescia urban developing. This is the beginning of seeing one of the 'Six Memos', multiplicity, that is where my group introducing the literature into the project.

Multiplicity has a complex definition, as its variety understandings by different people. We were divided into sub groups and working on different projects, the different quotations under the idea of 'multiplicity' leads to a vibrant idea of proposals. The Via Villa Glori school is the site I was working on where located next to the legacies of factories and pollution. Although there are more than half of us are architects, we were not sitting down to measure the area or thinking about how to architecturally convert this building for LDA headquarter. As followed by the idea of 'system of systems', we walked down the streets and talked to different people we met around, who are mostly immigrants, and some of them can barely speak Italian. We see these immigrants around the area as an entry point to tackle the real need for our building, which according the requirements of the project is a social intervention that vibrates the site. Before we got to the 'flowers' idea, we were arguing how to solve the segregation between the immigrants and Italians on the street in north side of the site, as the segregation is the main issue as far as we could identify for that complex situation. As soon as we could bring the two community into one system, the ideal function of the building can be sustained. Thus, the 'flower' project was introduced to regenerate the physical environment, to promote the neighborhood culture and commerce and to redevelop the legacies. By placing flower pots aside the windows, flower planters over the streets and reuse of public spaces in order to improve the system of pollution, reduce the segregation in multi-ethnicity system and rouse the system of deficient recreational spaces. To place such amount of flowers and built up those public infrastructures requires loads of money to achieve the goal we set, and the proposal can never be easy while working with municipality, people in the community and the Caffaro. It is a vision and maybe a long term vision, however is a right and sustainable vision to benefit for community and future development in a city term.

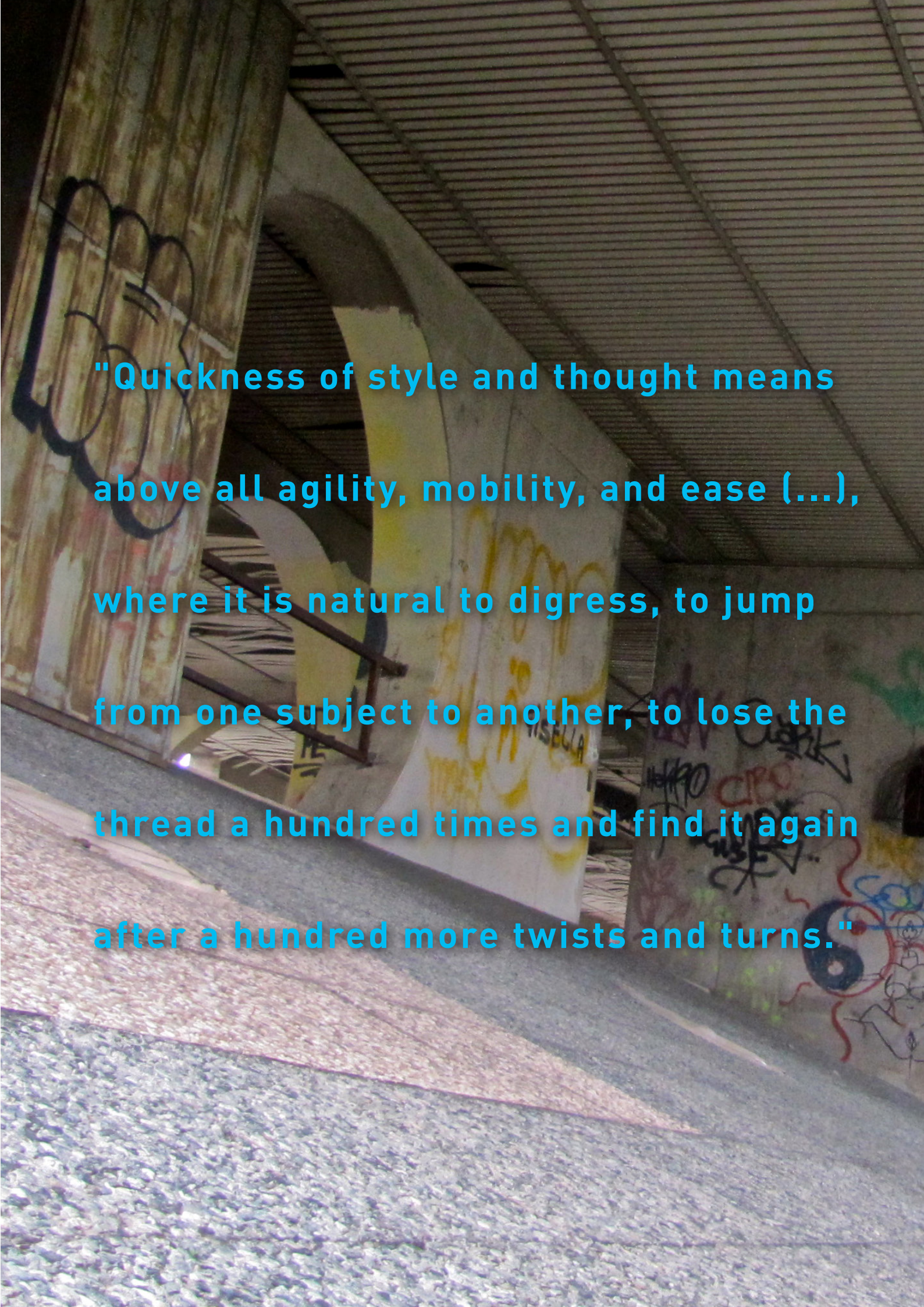
The complete work was finished in a very short time, with a group of students that have worked over a term. This

group work inspires an idea collision that requires an involvement of communication skills such as negotiation, selection and sufficient time management. Last but not least, it would never be fun if the Italian food was not good.

JING LI (China)

The four-day Brescia trip is really intense and challenging. In such short time, we need to find out the main issue of local people, the power relations and the interests of different stakeholders, and the strategy to address the situation.

From what I learned from this field trip, the part that impressed me most is the interview with local people and local governments. After talking to people, I find the residents have very different concerns due to their different living conditions. Our topic is about the contamination in Brescia which may cause a local park to be closed. People who have lived there for a long time are obviously more concerned about the issue. Out of our expectation, the park is a so important space for them as an outdoor living room to meet old friends, enjoy the sunshine, walk dogs and even recalls their soft memories. As for the immigrants, they do not know so much about the history of the park and even do not care about whether the park is open or closed, but they do care about the health of their children and themselves. So for them the contamination is a big problem actually. However, on the contrary, the permanent residents who have lived there for like 40 to 50 years are not so worried about the pollution. For them, it is too late to talk about the contamination because they have lived with it for such a long time. If it is a big problem they should have been very ill already and cannot be cured in such a short time, and if not, they don't have to scare about it. This caused some problems for us to identify the main issue to deal with such a situation. We have a heavy debate on we should address the future function of the park as priority or think about the issue of contamination first. After talking to more and more people we find the entry point should be neither of them. We cannot produce a strategy to address all the situations, and even we find out a brilliant intervention, after we left nothing will change in a long term. Fortunately, one day we got the opportunity to talk to the local governments, which give us some inspirations to find the entry point. They seem like really good guys who indeed want to do something good for the people, but the problem is they lack the experience to address such situation and they have no idea about what to do. They tried to make some big signs and even barriers to warn the people of the contamination out of the concerns about their health (or maybe other reasons like political election), but the obscure meaning of doing this caused distrust between local people. After day-and-night meetings, our group ends in the conclusion that we should build the bridge

A photograph of a graffiti-covered concrete structure, possibly a tunnel or underpass. The scene is dimly lit, with a textured concrete floor in the foreground and a ceiling with a grid pattern. A large, stylized black graffiti piece is on the left, and a large white graffiti piece with yellow and black markings is in the center. The background shows more graffiti and a dark opening. Overlaid on the image is a quote in cyan text.

"Quickness of style and thought means above all agility, mobility, and ease (...), where it is natural to digress, to jump from one subject to another, to lose the thread a hundred times and find it again after a hundred more twists and turns."



for local people and government which can play the role continuously and sustainably to help them to address this long term problem. And the park can take the role of such a bridge as the public space people use most in their daily lives.

This experience told me that we cannot truly understand the situation and identify the main issue unless we talk to the local people who know their situation and needs most. We can never imagine a strategy or intervention without the real condition. It sounds like a simple principle but is very important for us urban designers. On another hand, I find my role, an urban designer, is very important as a mediator between local people, governments and different stakeholders. And I am really happy that I can do something to make people's life better.

JIUNUO LI (China)

Discovering the prototype/ Brescia Filed Trip Reflection

Experiencing Brescia is an extremely valuable chance for us to testing the theory in real platform. The situation we faced was fairly particular. For most of us, the name of the place is 'unknown', even though we had a basic understanding through the workshop brief and guest introduction. Both of the time limitation and the barriers of understanding the context urged us make a critical decision to spend all day the first day walking around park and do interviews. Through this process, we map our study area- the Via Livorno Park- in mental, and try to catch the daily use of the park by observation and communication.

After the observation and interview, we quickly review what we have seen and have heard to define the main problem. Besides the physical frustration of soil pollution and the failed communication in campaign (observation), the trust loosen to municipality is another serve problematic. And from another interview with municipality staff, we realized that the current government is keen to build the trust bridge with people but without resort.

These are what we want to tackle: the pollution, the failed communication, the trust loosen. However, interventions for tackling pollution require technology and financial support, and it is impossible to deal with it immediately, at least impossible in a short term. So we ended the definition with a one-sentence mission for ourselves: "We want to design better ways of communicating and engaging with the residents to reduce risk, while not being completely deprived of their public space."

Communicating, here, became a very powerful tool of knowledge collection and reflection, even in an informal way. That is something we had never fulfilled in previous Bangkok study. Instead of making assumption of how people are thinking, we heard from them. The things we record in the process were especially helpful to bridge the physical problematic and social problematic and understanding their real needs. However, the limitation exists in what range of interviewers we select, in the practice, we covers the typology of elders, mothers, men, workers, teenagers and children.

Interestingly, I found several prototypes of the actions from our previous exercise in regard to Bangkok. For example, we were doing (mental) mapping when walk around, we were diagramming when we catch information from board and newspapers, we were social profiling when we do interviews, we were co-producing knowledge when we discussed.

JOANA DABAJ (Lebanon)

B-Russia, Brescia

Introducing the BUDD Camp 2014 I, among other colleagues, thought we were going to Russia. Filled with excitement and joy we then found out that we are actually going to Brescia, Italy. It was a city I haven't heard of before that day. Fortunately the disappointment of the news turned out to be a memorable and successful experience. The short stay of three days in Brescia has taught me a lot.

The working groups were formed and divided according to the five areas of study in Brescia. I was part of the group studying the case of the towers of San Polo neighborhood. We were introduced to the case before visiting the site, the perception I had of the site was negative and can

be summarized as follows: the towers were badly conceived socially and esthetically, two of them are in really bad conditions; they face major social problems including drug dealing and prostitution; should the towers face demolition or redevelopment?

The day of the site visit has arrived, I was expecting the worse. I imagined it to be congested, filled with garbage, not safe to walk around, scary...

It's really not that bad

The foggy weather added some charm to the first encounter with the area of study. I could not see clearly at a certain distance so the discovery of new elements as I walk further was exciting. I was completely fascinated by the beauty of the place. The combination of a high-rise tower, low-rise building and detached houses; the brutality of fair faced concrete; the expression of geometric shapes: circular openings, edgy pathways, triangular motifs; The abundance of greenery; the expression of Graffiti...

The preconceived ideas about that area started to break in my perception. For more understanding of the site, interviews were carried out with several people we encountered while walking around. From interviews at the pub, park, shopping center, streets to the houses of people we came to the realization that the area is really not that bad, yet it could become better by working on dissolving its solidity. A way to do that is focusing on breaking the barriers that shaped the area. Some barriers were physical like the highway, industrial area, the metro line, the fences and the dimensions of the towers. Others were virtual barriers formed by the land value and housing prices that created segregated groups: the "White/Italians" on one side and the "Colored/ Mixed" on the other. Also the mental perception of the tower as a space for corruption made it a barrier in the mind of locals.

Breaking the barriers could be achieved through catalytic interventions that would work on changing the perception of the towers rather than demolishing or redeveloping the whole area.

For next time, here are some tips:

- Interviewing
- Pet the dogs: the best way to start up a conversation
- Smile, people would feel comfortable talking to you
- Don't be afraid if you don't speak the same language, sign language works fine
- Photographing
- Access the rooftop of the buildings and take some photographs, this gives a good understanding of the site
- Kids and old people enjoy posing for you.
- Mapping
- While walking around the site, hold the map and note

down your findings, you might never go back to that spot again

- Make sure you can understand your hand writing

JOSÉ AHUMADA (Chile)

Working in Brescia was intense and tiring. We had three days to get to know the city plus its social and physical conflicts in order to get an idea of the kinds of needs that people have there.

I worked in the case of Former Elementary School "Vito Dusi" Via Villa Glori, an old building that is in a process of transformation and for which we should propose a new use.

Our work was guided by the Associazione "Ambasciata Locale della Democrazia to Zavidovi" (LDA) which was our host and partner at the workshop and whose participants also shared with us a human view about the city that particularly caught my attention.

During one of the evenings, Agostino Zanotti (founder of LDA) told us the history of the association, a story born of compassion towards the suffering of others. For me it was the most emotional moment our stay in Brescia, not only because of the breathtaking scenes experienced in war times, but also to hear firsthand an example of a vocation to the service of others. In the



words of Agostino, concepts that moved him against the facts that happened in the context of the war in Bosnia Herzegovina were HEART, IMPOTENCE AND HOPE. It can be said that the partnership is a response to injustice, hatred and human violence, helping war refugees cope with the suffering and difficulties of living away from their homeland, for reasons that are beyond their control.

The next morning, with the breathtaking story about the beginnings of LDA still fresh in memory, we continued to work with Case School Via Villa Glori. We interviewed some neighbors to recognize their needs and perceptions of the place we were studying. A neighbor was very clear about the largest drama the inhabitants of Brescia are currently facing. Because of the chemicals that have been emitted for more than 80 years by industries located in the vicinity of the school, the city land is contaminated with PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). For this reason several places in the sector are closed and inaccessible because direct contact between the contaminated soil and humans is known to be injurious to health. The neighbor described the harsh reality of having kids in the neighborhood who have to stay locked inside their homes, facing the inability to use their public spaces.

The thought of those children unable to enjoy open spaces made me reflect on the powerlessness that they and their parents must experience, as they are forced to inhabit limited spaces because of force majeure reasons, and over which they do not have any control.

Our project proposed an active and informative space about the dangers of PCB and a "pollution-free" plants campaign distribution in the city of Brescia. I believe that our proposal can be an opportunity for social inclusion against a major problem that the people of Brescia currently have to face.

[KRISTINA PAULAUSKAITE \(Lithuania\)](#)

Conceived

Can you imagine yourself being somewhere else? Choose the place. Any. How far it is? How different it is from the place you are in at the moment? Is it a busy city centre with all its markets and traffic jams? Is it sandy beaches in the middle of an uninhabited island? How many people can you see? How many of them you can interact with? Do they speak your language? Are you keen on getting to know each other? Do you feel safe? Do they feel safe? What are you thinking about? Do you stay silent? Do they keep asking you any questions? Do you interrogate them? Would you like to know them better? Would you go to their houses? They invite you. Are you coming? Are you ready to interact? They will explain

you the rules. It is their 'game'. You are 'the player'. You are a part of the process. You bet. You do believe in success.

Perceived

You are in Italy. Brescia. The bus arrives. It stops in front of Cascina Maggia. You are getting out. It is dark. It is raining. You have never felt so excited and eager at the same time. Now you do. Tomorrow you will feel even more thrilled. They introduce the sites. You are going to work on one of them tomorrow. You are a little bit worried. You do not know a lot. You do not even have enough time to do so. Your head is full of thoughts. It is a new place. There are many different people you have not met before. They have their opinions. They do have experience. You discuss. You listen. You learn. All together you are getting ready for tomorrow. It is going to be a long day. You still have not realised you are in a different country. People speak Italian. You are listening. You want to now. You are eager to learn. You are eager for knowledge. You intervene. You take part. You are experiencing their everyday life. They trust you. They tell you their story.

Lived

Her name is Valerie. She lives in the residential tower. It is social housing. She has five children. The little baby is sick. She cannot go to the hospital. Her baby is not registered with the doctor. She does not have any money to do so. The situation is getting worse. Valerie is not working at all. She is not even paying the rent. Others do not know. She wishes they will not to. All the furniture she has in the flat has been given for free. A woman from neighbourhood is taking care of Valerie and her children. We want to interview Valerie. She agrees if one of us will take care and play with the children. She is scared and insecure. She does not want to leave them on their own. We agree. We talk. We play. We listen. We think. We reflect. We immerse ourselves into the game...

[KYRA BESSA \(Greece\)](#)

The experience

The three days fieldtrip in Brescia can be characterised as a very interesting experience. After the last months working on different projects from above, the trip in Brescia was a very good opportunity to participate in a realistic environment and to understand the existing situation and issues the city faces in a more clear way.

Our interventions in five sites with different concept each one of them, featured the values that we had to take under consideration, such as identity, social integration, immigration and citizenship but also spatial transformation. Dealing with issues like pollution, refugees' assimilation or



culture in the society, we worked on building an efficient environment and to bring together the communities.

Intervention

More specific in our intervention, the focus was on a project that runs with the collaboration of LDA (Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici), which works for the integration of refugees and immigrants in the urban society and the GEKAKE (All together) cooperative association, the refugees' association. The two cooperative projects, the cycle shop and the latest one, the car wash, aimed to bring together the different ethnic groups and eradicate the social discrimination.

Our proposal targeted the visibility of the site by improving the image of the car wash, through GEKAKE's project, by labelling and signing, maintaining the existing high quality services and also by integrating the mobility of the activity through additional services. It became clear the need of the refugees to promote themselves through their action and to become more visible in the city, since this was something that is missing at the moment.

Catalytic was at that point the role of the team of LDA that provided us with all the necessary materials and information that probably in such a short time we wouldn't be able to find out. They informed us about their correlation with the GEKAKE and to which extent they help them in to the assimilation in the society but also to reinforce their idea. Also crucial was the chance that was given to us to interview both some of the members of the cooperative

association and the family that run the business at the present, in order to create a more clear idea about the situation that exists in the area from a more personal perspective. It was really interesting to learn about how the refugees and immigrants live and their personal opinion about the their acceptance in the society.

Having as a starting point the 'Six Memos' of Italo Calvino and only a general idea of the process and the concept of the trip, by arriving in Brescia and meeting with the LDA, we realised that there is future in the city of Brescia in order to form a liveable environment not only for the immigrants but also for the Italians of Brescia and also is possible through several actions to achieve new opportunities.

[LAURA ANTONA \(United Kingdom\)](#)

Demolition or Redevelopment?

When we were initially introduced to the San Polo site I imagined a brutal and modernist area with five huge towers that were in a serious state of decline. As a group we very quickly decided we needed to gain an understanding of how the people that lived, worked and used the space felt and what their opinions were on the potential for demolition or redevelopment.

Outside of tower four the first lady that we spoke to discussed her detest for the towers and the people that lived within them. Whilst discussing how the towers should be bombed, the lady also described the inhabitants as 'for-

eigners' that stared at her. The dichotomy of 'foreigner' and Italian became something we heard fairly consistently. This very initial encounter had illustrated just some of the racial tensions within the site but turned out to be one of the most negative conversations we had. After speaking to a few more people on the streets, and in the large shopping centre on site, it became clear that there had been a more recent shift in perceptions of safety and crime in the area. We heard people saying phrases such as "that was before..." or "it was much worse then..." with reference to the time before the closing and evictions of tower two.

We were fortunate enough to be introduced to a lady from the low rise housing who cared for two households in tower one. It was quickly arranged, on condition of baby-sitting and potato peeling, that we could meet a lady and her children in their flat. After having this conversation a network of people helping and caring for one another became visible to us. Some of the accounts we heard were highly emotive and distressing but made it clearer that the towers themselves were not the root cause of the inhabitants troubles. There was however, some concern highlighted over the safety of children on the higher floors, with a mother explaining that even when her flat is very hot she won't open the windows as a young child had previously fallen.

The verticality and density of the flats within the tower blocks may be a worsening factor in some of the inhabitants lives but the issues that arose such as unemployment, crime and racial barriers, I believe, would exist in many other spatial configurations. Whilst understanding the limitations of our own investigative work, as we were unable to speak to many residents in the time we had, my own perceptions were changed greatly in just two days. The network of people and small institutions (such as the school, church and mosque) that support one another illustrated the complexity of the lived reality in the site. The dichotomies of: inside or outside San Polo; the people in the towers or in the low rise; the 'foreigners' or the Italian's, proved to be far too simplistic. The heterogeneity of the people we met and the support systems in place are something we felt could be built upon to begin to improve the lives of San Polo's 20,000 residents.

LUCIA MAFFEI (Italy)

The Buddcamp responded positively to the expectations that I had before I left. Differently from the other programs, in BUDD we have one more chance to relate to a case in the field. It has been a bit like the inclusion of children in nursery school ... After many months spent studying from a book to another, I found it very interesting to be accompanied in the street again and into the project. Having the opportunity to experience first-hand the importance of cooperation, mutual support, the multiplicity of identities and their transformations.

Working in the field, with the additional restriction of hav-

ing a forced time at their disposal, I realized how important it is to work in the right way in a balance dictated by characters and conditions very different from each other.

The team-work:

This was the first form of cooperation and self-organization that involved me directly and that compared me with people with whom I had never worked. The short time available does not help to fully understand the characteristics of each of your colleagues, even forcing you to quickly distribute the roles to optimize the work. The work of the group should be a bit like the game of the raft: you move and react to changes in the way you never lose the overall balance, otherwise you fall. It 's very important to have a good awareness of team work and be focused and honest towards ourselves and the others.

The cooperative:

Gekaké was born quite recently with the aim to give job opportunities to immigrants and refugees in order to improve their skills and social inclusion. Forming a cooperative is an important step to receive an award in legal terms and constitute a subject, if I may say so , 'lawfully authorized' to work in the field .

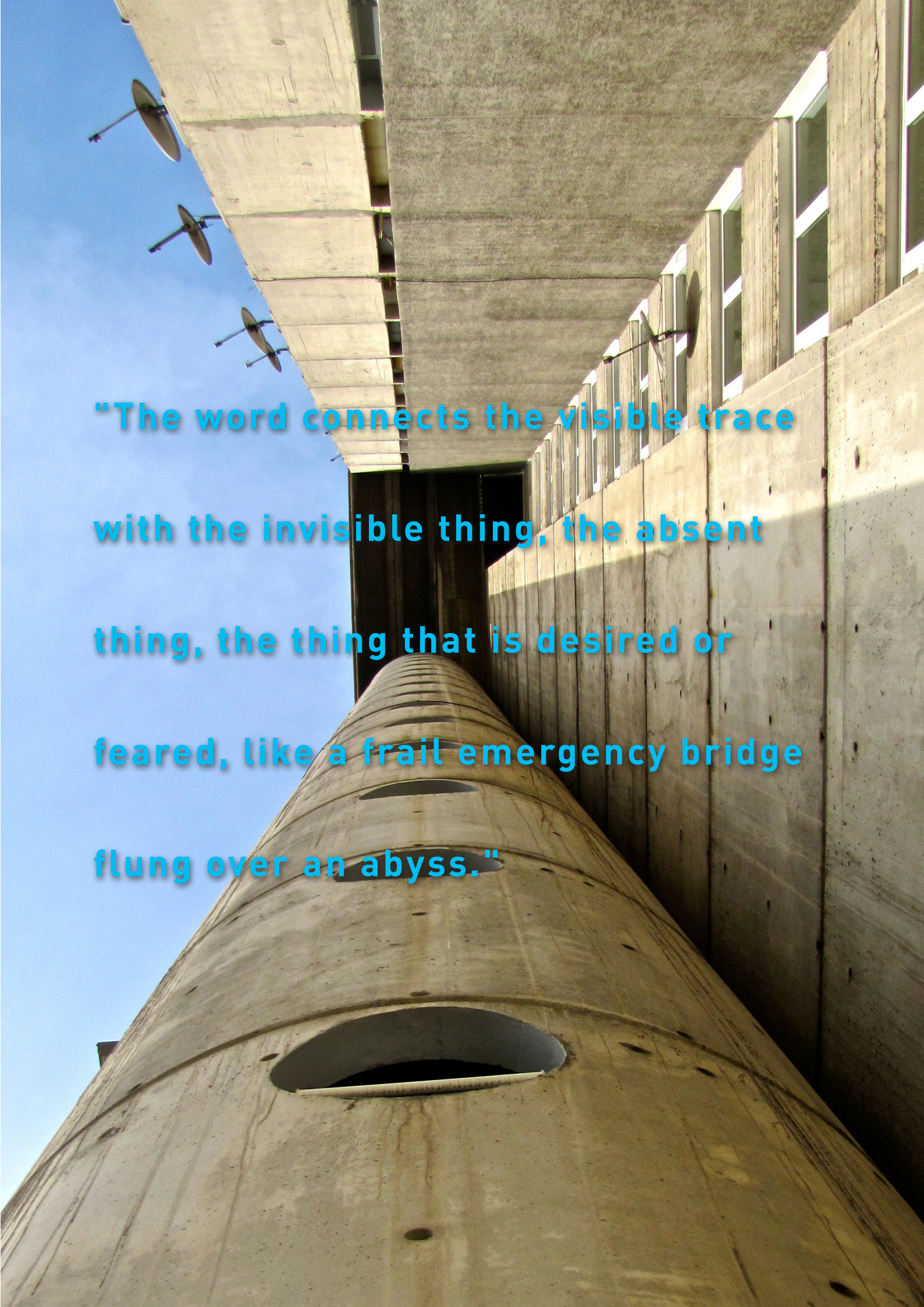
I like to think that the cooperative is a bit like marriage for the non-believers. That it is the legal marriage of a group of people who have a common project to build and carry on. And since Italy is not an anarchist country, we can find in a cooperative rather flexible form of social organization. Having legal recognition it is in fact a tool that, if used correctly, it contains a lot of potential especially for people who individually would be hard to get recognition . It seems trivial, but anyway I think that being aware this holds a large inciting to build a strong common identity.

The network:

Even within our small experience, the network has played a key role. From ADL' association, which supports Gekaké since its formation, up to the DPU of London that includes BUDD, or our great team. And finally, me and my team group. Through these steps, and perhaps others that I have not mentioned, we managed to get the project of the carwash in Viale Venezia in order to understand as much as possible the situation that was in front of us and try to offer our perspective on the opportunities that could promote its growth. In turn, we have proposed a strategy to strengthen the network of contacts between Gekaké and other neighboring realities in order to seek support, collaboration, compromise and new opportunities.

I still can not tell if the fact of being in Italy has helped me or not to properly relate to these issues. Indeed I am realizing that I have not been able to completely break away from some cultural preconceptions. But on the other hand, knowledge of the language and culture of my country has given me some more information that allowed me to better contextualize the case that we have studied.

This experience has strengthened even more my idea of



**"The word connects the visible trace
with the invisible thing, the absent
thing, the thing that is desired or
feared, like a frail emergency bridge
flung over an abyss."**

how much is critical the understanding of the diversities and how much work we need to transform these peculiarities in new opportunities. Working as a team helps a lot in the process and I hope that this experience will help me in a deeply understanding of the machinery of Collectivity.

'My working method has more often than not involved the subtraction of weight' ... Calvino says... 'I mean that I have to change my approach, look at the world from a different perspective, with a different logic and with fresh methods of cognition and verification'

(Calvino, 1988, pg 7-10)

LUISA CARRERA (Ecuador)

We are finally in Italy and after a long trip we are ready to face our first encounter with reality. In the way to the site I see the city through the window and try to take every detail of this short experience. I do not know if I am ready for this new exercise but there is not time to think, we have to start our work now.

My first impression of the site is shocking, I find this beautiful old building with a lot of space and light; this is definitely not the image that I have of an abandoned school. The ex-school "Vito Dusi" has a great potential to be the new office of ADL. While we walk into the building and heard the explanation of Maddalena I can imagine this place working as a new social and spatial centrality in the neighborhood.

In order to establish the possible relation between the building and the context we walk around the area documenting our impressions, taking pictures, making interviews and trying to understand the complex area of intervention. There is one specific issue that calls my attention: the school is surrounded by old factories and closed green spaces. The area is full of symbolic elements. The factories that years ago were the image of power and economic activity now are elements that represent the cause of high levels of pollution not only in this area but in the whole city. The parks and green areas usually identified as positive spaces now are closed and filled with signs that warn of the danger of using them because of the contaminated soil. Suddenly the school looks like one of the few safe spaces in the area.

In addition, in the group meeting, we discuss and share our impressions of the area and identify another fundamental aspect of the site: a large number of immigrants live in the area and there is not sense of community between them. In fact, we find many physic and socio-economic barriers that clearly divide Italians and immigrants. However, we also see some initiatives of building networks between immigrants in order to improve their quality of life and the conditions of their shops in via Milano, the main street of the area.

Finally, this is the moment to prepare our presentation. We do not have much time but the ideas in the group flow easily and after some negotiation we start to build a solid



propose. We create and strategy in order to make visible the problem of pollution in the area, plan the different functions of the building combining the existent activities with the work of ADL, link the commercial activity of the immigrant in via Milano with the organization and create an event in order to connect the school and its new function with the neighborhood. The presentation is full of new ideas. Some of them require big effort or budget and others are simpler and effective but in general they represent our understanding of the case. Suddenly, during the presentation I realize that I was ready for this project. The previous months of work gave the tools to face it and I am eager to start the next fieldwork.

LUISA MIRANDA (United Kingdom)

With two days to research a deeply socio-politically complex space and produce a set of strategic interventions in response, the Brescia experience was to say the least, highly emotional, impacting and unique. Our group studied 'the towers', more commonly known as Cimabue, Tintoretto, Michelangelo, Rafaello and Tiziano within the 'Quartiere San Polo' (San Polo Quarter).

My initial perception, having had a very short introduction on their historical context and from wandering in, out and around the towers was one of melancholy. This was a forgotten space where a set of functionalities had been grouped together to cater for a diverse group of people without having understood its social complexity. However, my perception had been tainted by the much wider external perception of 'ghetto-ness' that had been portrayed to us before the visit. This became very clear once we began looking deeper in to the problematic of 'the towers', which brings me to our second strategy, engaging with the space. Although more challenging, this was essential to begin understanding the 'lived' experience of those who know it best, the inhabitants. Through a series of interviews it became more and more evident that the perceived understanding of the 'towers' is very different to the 'lived' experience. Avoiding generalization, different visions demonstrated feelings of unhappiness, disconnection, struggle, disintegration but also pride, pleasure and deep attachment.

The 'towers in the park' are for me, a prime example of a motivation to follow Calvino's first, third and fifth memos for the new millennium (see image). On 'lightness', Calvino describes how knowledge may dissolve the 'solidity of the world'. My understanding of Calvino's 'multiplicity' is that everything is related despite the highly diverse nature of reality, there are always interconnections and multiple reasons for why things happen. Finally, for 'exactitude' Calvino identifies two pathways, one of which highlights the importance of words in conveying as precisely as possible a tangible reality. It is precisely the importance of words and description, detail, and "...respect for what things (present or absent) communicate without words"

(Ibid, p.77) that in the case of the towers has lacked. In a similar way, what was originally perceived as a major issue, that of 'the towers as the ghetto of Brescia' a single, heavy, solid, difficult-to-explain problem became much lighter, once we applied the knowledge we gathered allowing us to thread through the perceived 'big problem' bringing to light not a single, solid issue but rather a set of more specific issues, making this problem lighter as it was much easier to understand, identify and even imagine the potential to 'dissolve' it through a series of micro-interventions.

Calvino's lenses were central when situating the issues and understanding how they could be targeted. However, also central was the act of placing myself in the shoes of those with whom I engaged. Understanding those who live within the towers as 'the other', the way that the previously mentioned perception had done, was inhibiting me from seeing how and where opportunities of change were possible. It was when I began questioning, if it were me walking through these hallways every day; if it were me serving coffee to a young student whilst my five children ran around me tugging at my skirt asking for the strawberries from the fruit bowl; if it were I who had lived in the same block for four years, keeping to myself because I felt uncomfortable talking to any of the 30 other families living on my floor; How would I feel? What would I change? It is at this point that that I felt the most in touch (that I could have been in two days) with the reality of the towers in the park.

Recognizing the fact that within these towers there are family units that physically live two meters away from each other but mentally, worlds apart, yet are interlinked in many ways, was essential. Drawing on these nodes of relation became an important way to identify entry points for our proposed micro-scale interventions. For example, working on dissolving the physical solidity of the Tintoretto tower using already existing proposals (A.) or altering the connecting tunnels between the towers, which are known for their drug-encouraging, dark and hidden environment (B.). Furthermore, it became clear that people were already finding their own solutions, giving them a space to do so was central to building on an already existing social dynamics. For example, from the trade of second hand furniture we introduced a 'swap café'. Finally a crèche (C.), aimed at not only providing a space for child-care but also a space where women from different backgrounds could come together and form networks or rather build on already existing ones.

MANAF ABDULGHANI (Syria)

Mapping Brescia or not

My concern when I first arrived in Brescia of the famous five high-rise social housing towers was, how could we possibly, in two days, capture the "spatially complex real-



ity” in two dimensional cartographic mapping techniques and some narratives that would be built on mere short interviews with local residents of the towers. I greatly doubted the fact that a paper grid would help me to successfully capture the social activities that residents of the towers are practicing in their everyday life.

The dilemma was overcome by an active decision to analyse and map the territories from residents’ perspective because this “absolute space” would be eventually mapped by (others) anyway and there is an instant opportunity to assume the role of the practitioner and the scholar coming from UCL, London, UK. The unintended effect of mapping would be knowingly forming conclusions and “taking a stand” where we must decide whether or not a “vertical village” is a good model for people that would not find a sense of community in such building typology as extracted from various interviews with residents, neighbours and staff working in the tower buildings later on.

There were cogent reasons for me to depart from the urge to conceive or plan the alternative solution to these towers, to produce a solution which might offer better human-environment interaction in low-rise typologies as the example of San Torino. And find a better solution to the reality that tower families living just below the level of subsistence can barely afford to pay high utility bills to use the lifts added to a monthly rent even on employment giving the fact that post-industrial shrink in jobs affected Italians before migrants. There was a more pressing need in finding the right lens to see through the more complex reality of the towers with which one can actually engage in a more viable solution that is only actively initiated by the community and the world around it would ultimately have to adapt around it.

The slum clearance policy possibly practiced by the Brescia municipality and deregulation of land speculation would raise interest in the towers as a new business scheme to transform the towers into commercial high-rises. The presented inequalities and eviction from Tintoretto tower showed the intense struggle for space and the push to re-assert the power relations existing in the city despite the minor lobbying and presence of NGOs with little leverage and in support of many Italian neighbouring residents who perceived the towers as a source of multi-faceted social problems. I did not however, notice a struggle for bottom-up adaptation in response to apparent top-down urban strategies of commercialising the towers.

MARIANNE MAKAR (Egypt)

Ciclofficina Monda project was the one I was to work on. The question to answer was in relation to the integration of the bicycle shop and the eco sustainable mobility. The task was challenging in terms of understanding the context of Brescia, the immigrants’ status and how that would affect an enterprise working on bicycles locally and on a city scale in two days.

A practical experience makes all the difference after going through all the theory. It was about feeding in what was being taught in a live scene. I think the challenge was picking up where the gaps became evident after going through the whole Lab. The way we perceived Brescia as an Italian city changed and our perspective changed about the diversity of issues one could face especially in a context of refugees and immigrants. Having a clear vision of what the goal is, what the aim is and questioning the validity of the aim itself is a focus point. Maybe we did not have the chance to question the goal we were working on for the time shortage but it would have been interesting to question whether the question we were given is the right question in the first place.

Through the interviews, it became so evident it is about people’s lives and real experiences. So what we usually take as part of consensus or data gathering, on the micro level goes beyond being just pieces of information to be put together. The dynamics of interviews and data analysis in terms of knowing our audience, designing the questions and translating what we receive whether a physical or a verbal answer could be easily faultily done. Language was barrier, language does not necessarily mean the different pronunciation for words but it also means perspectives about words. Adding to this the difficulty of working with immigrants and refugees with another layer of different cultures to the picture. Power relations is a subject that will always frustrate me when it comes to development; what to be said what not to be said, what’s appropriate, what’s strategic, what causes change and who has the authority to influence and change.

In terms of the bicycle shop and on a micro scale, it was interesting to try to solve a business problem through an urban intervention. We attempted to look at it from a different perspective using the potentials we had with in the group. What ADL works on in terms of immigrants' empowerment through the shop is an initiative that is appreciated. The shop is faced with integration and visibility challenge. The visibility issue is not only in terms of physical visibility but also of social visibility and integration of an ethnic minority. The challenge was not only in terms of convincing Italians to use bicycles instead of cars in the area rather it also dealt with integrating a group of who are considered to be outsiders and strangers selling an alternative mean of commuting. On a macro scale, there might have been various types of solutions that would link physical urban and business intervention together but in all cases it would still be about a statement of visibility and integration.

MARTIN BONGOMIN (Uganda)

Indoctrination of a Shared Vision: Sustainability, through consistence and visibility

Our first task of this exercise which was to 'observe' and 'document' the urban and social phenomena, at a glance the Viale Venezia car wash, I was quick to identify that its greatest strength is its location along the high street, and with ease of visibility its spacial potential is great, needless to say the subtle visual support created due to the near by Giornale Du Brescia kiosk selling Publications. However for a number of social political aspects could determine the success of this sustainability programme supported by the Ciclofficina Mondo and financed by the European Fund for Refugees.

Having interacted with the Murgia family running the car wash, for the last 25 years, off the bart one can tell the dissatisfaction within the family, and the sensitivity with which we had to research the case was crucial; the question asked had to be well structured to get as much information to identify the cracks. it was a challenge to take in all the answers as truth given the family bias and that image is everything for the family to maintain its clientele and mostly Murgia name. Given their roles; elder brother(Massimo) in charge of customer relations, the sister(Anna) in accounting and the younger brother(Franco) in training the GEKAKE Cooperative members, prone to take over the business under different management. given that the family has different internal interests, a it would be hard to share their knowledge of how to maintain the car wash and more importantly keep the clientele and further grow. Rather for purposes i noticed that Massimo wanted to keep all the knowledge and power in the business which is as important as the actual carwash skills.

According to one of Calvino's memo's Visibility which is

about more than being seen, but the ability to communicate your image in your mind; this led me to realise that besides the three main challenges we thought GEKAKE would face as a group namely; maintaining the standards of services, improve the image of the car wash without losing clientele, and integration with the Ciclofficina Mondo's mobility solution, neglecting the idea of a shared vision and idea of the car wash is true purpose, which is services provision and should include consistency in all other social political aspects for success.

Finally we attempted to transform the space to include other activities and services, however i felt that the family next door, running the Giornale du Brescia, should have been passively included into the spatial transformation by proximity given that this relationship would also enhance the integration of the GEKAKE cooperation into the community and also welcome more clientele interested in buying the publications which creates a whole new level of social communication and interaction with the clients and general public.



MATHIAS ELLE (Denmark)

The Negative : The anti-story

"I would prefer not to".

This has turned into a catch phrase among the BUD-Dies, and perhaps we lost track of the origin, citing our philosophile lecturer Camillo Boano, citing in turn the philosopher and literati Giorgio Agamben, citing yet again the scrivener Bartleby in Herman Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street*.

This is not an act of laziness. It is an act of latent resistance. In this sense, embodying the lonely scrivener, if you should ask me if I would like to suggest a green mobility intervention for a manual carwash by a cooperative of refugees in Brescia, my answer would be:

"I would prefer not to".

At first I might continue my normal tasks and write blogs, but later even when you ask me to write about it:

"I would prefer not to"

--and you may have to move your business and let me stay in this lonely state of resistance.

I honestly believe that this project encompass complex problems which are hardly outweighed by its potentials -- and which are best kept invisible as they are. Allegedly this hints at racism. I have no intentions to walk around that. Yes, racism is a very real challenge for the project. There are other problems. I invite you to ask the lonely scrivener what they are.

This is not the image I want to communicate.

The story : The Image

Visibility is not in the Calvinese sense a question of signage. It is more than being seen. Visibility is the ability to communicate the image which is in your mind.

"As soon as the image has become sufficiently clear in my mind, I set about developing it into a story; or better yet, it is the images themselves that develop their own implicit potentialities, the story they carry within them."

In this sense we need to elucidate an image of the car wash which can carry a story to travel on with the customers. An image, first of the family tradition, secondly one of the *tuti unitu*.

This cannot be reduced to a semantic exercise in a couple of flyers, as Calvino write on Balzac's *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*: Balzac's story can be read as "a parable of literature, about the unbridgeable gulf between linguistic expression and sense experience"

With this lesson from Balzac, the key to visibility is the

experience at the car wash. The key for the first phase, is to create the image of the GEKAKE as new member of the family business. This is cannot solely be created in advertisement material. Rather, the key is the experience of it when you visit the car wash.

This is visibility.

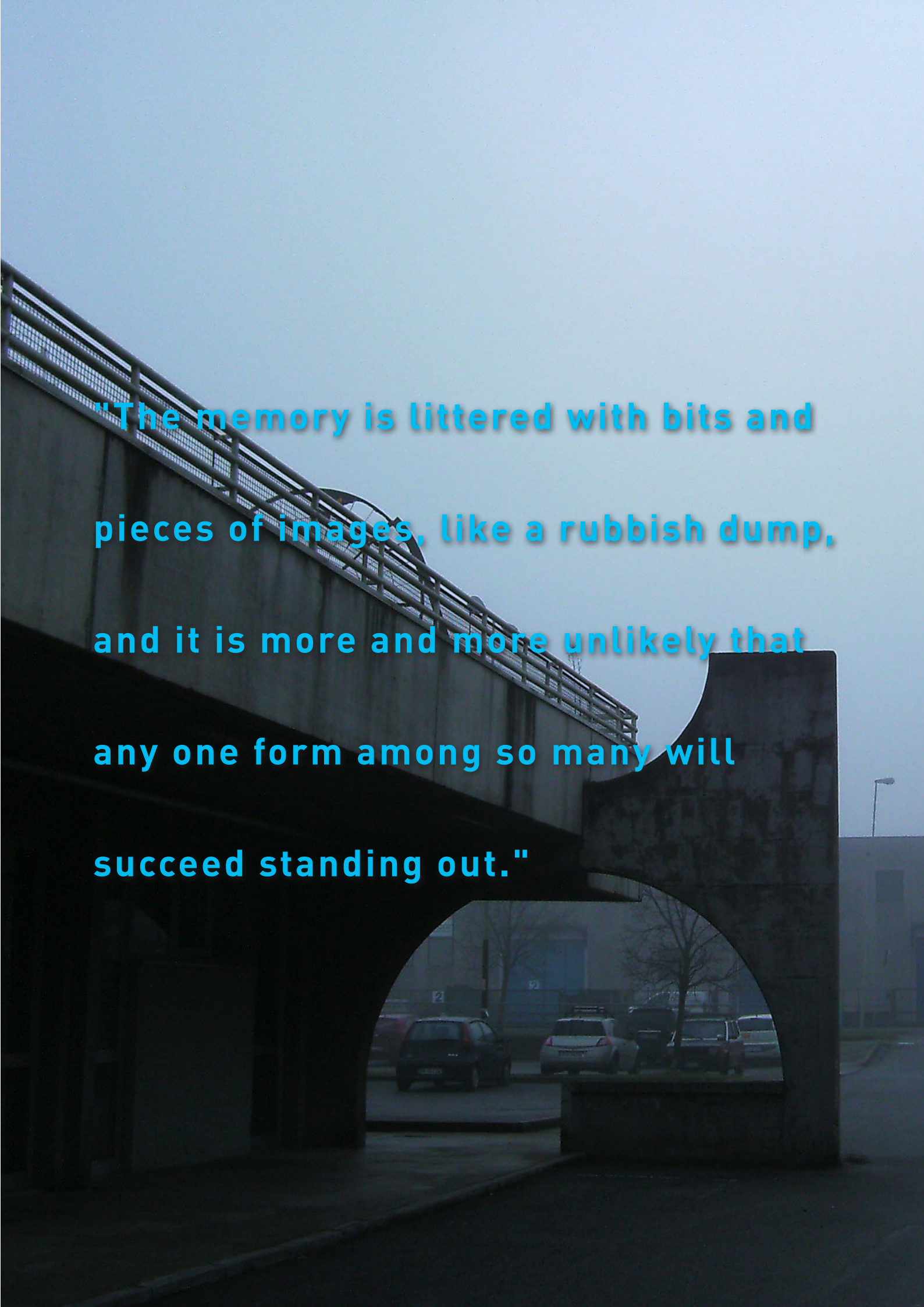
The project continues. It is not without potential. One may find options with a more favourable balance of opportunities and threats, but at this stage it is not constructive to highlight only the latter. I am not afraid to get my hands dirty, e.g. with acid, soap, and tyre polish.

This can work. There is a big potential in the legacy of the family business. There is a strong image. The challenge is how to get GEKAKE into that image, and create a positive story which can carry on. The story of the green carwash, e.g. with Justus on a custom build cargo bike with waterless car cleaning products, cannot be told without this prologue.

NAN LU (China)

Through the research on the Via Livorno City Park and home of the V district, I found that the predicament of redeveloping the community center and the park roots in the lacking of trust and communication between the government and the local residents. Our research was based on the interview with local residents and staff from municipality as well, which offer the direct thoughts and information of different positions. The municipality wants to redevelop the whole area, but the many people showed their distrust and dissatisfaction to the government. The re-use of the park and pollution and risk communication campaign come to a deadlock. Therefore, the effective two-way communication mechanism, which can be used to trigger the community participation, is necessary to break the ice.

Actually, the subsoil pollution in the park is invisible to some extent for the local residents. Although the municipality tried to transit the relevant information to the local people, we still found that the residents careless about the warnings of government, which means that the government did not find a visible way to deal with the problem. The lacking of two-way communication would result in distrust and misunderstandings between government and residents. Actually, the communication is a tool to build the community participation and to build up a mechanism to achieve the information transmission and feedback of demand, which would help the government to understand the residents' requirements and willingness readily and accurately. On one hand, the government can obtain the basic information that is required in the decision-making and residents can understand the purpose of government's decision. On the other hand, the inhabitants can have the opportunities to question



"The memory is littered with bits and pieces of images, like a rubbish dump, and it is more and more unlikely that any one form among so many will succeed standing out."



the government and efficiently complement the possible shortage of government's decision. Under this basis, the level of identity from people to government authority will have an increase, which can strengthen the cooperation between the citizen and government.

We found that the local people do not know about the risks of PCB pollution very much through the interview, so they cannot understand the prohibitions with regard to the park. Moreover, the actions that set fence around the park and amerced for walking the dog in the park several years ago really displeased the local residents. In a real good city, the urban space must be open, livable and sustainable, so our starting point to redevelop the city should not only consider the physical aspect, but also need to take the social aspect into account. The municipality tried to organize some meetings to acquire thoughts and get some feedback from the inhabitants to deal with the problem of pollution in the park. But the staff from municipality told us that it seems the local people do not care about the meeting, some of the attendant even fall asleep. I think this is because people do not believe the government can make some real changes to deal with the current problems. Therefore, the first step should be to re-build the trust between the authority and people.

NEYSAN ZÖLZER (Germany)

Arriving in the contaminated park at Via Livorno, we were confronted with the unknown. Though we had received a short and general brief on the issue of contamination in Brescia, the specificities of our mission were unclear. What had happened to the park over the last months? How had it been used, how was it now used? How did the local population relate to the park? How did the municipality communicate to the local population? We set out to answer these questions by diving straight into the reality on the ground. We understood that our time was extremely limited and therefore precious, so we made the critical choice of spending the entire first day outside defining and refining our understanding of the issue at hand.

By the end of the first day, we dared to craft a few sentences that reflected what we had seen: "PCB contamination is dangerously designed. Current levels, though a great health hazard, are invisible to the naked eye. Residents are confused and fearful of the effects, and the municipality agitated the situation by communicating poorly and without engaging with the residents of affected areas. Today, residents are either scared of using the park or oblivious of the hazard altogether. They live in fear or expose themselves to risk. A complete remediation of the contamination requires financial intervention from the national government, though it is not currently inclined to provide it." The approach of refining our own brief into a concrete problem definition allowed our interdisciplin-

any team to be incredibly focussed on what we wanted to tackle. We ended the definition with a one-sentence mission for ourselves: “We want to design better ways of communicating and engaging with the residents to reduce risk, while not being completely deprived of their public space.”

No doubt that informal conversations with inhabitants of the area have their limitations, but in the urgency of our project timeframe, the choice to speak to people who lived around the park proved to be the most efficient way to gain insight into the problem. And it was this experience of informal conversations that inspired us to devise our eventual recommendations to the municipality, namely that they too should form a deeper understanding of the reality on the ground through informal conversations with local inhabitants.

We realised from the get-go that this would be a difficult proposition, deemed not just uncommon, but perhaps completely outside the character for municipality staff. We continued to delineate the guidelines for the conversation, defined its goals and approaches, and finally, to make the concept more accessible, we developed a prototype conversation that municipality staff could experience first-hand. By following a loose script, two members of our team could present our approach within just a few minutes, capturing the nuanced values of the conversation through their words and expressions. Prototyping had also allowed our team to more thoroughly develop the concept. The next step would have been to test the conversation in the neighbourhood of the park, and see whether the population would be receptive to its goals.

NICOLA D'ADDABBO (Italy)

I perfectly remember when the BUDD staff communicated the destination for the BUDD camp 2014, presenting Brescia. I was worried for the risk of wasting an occasion to know a new culture and collect new experiences, because I thought that going back to Italy, the experience would have not been fully satisfactory.

Well, I was wrong. This experience was extraordinary for me. It is true that I was in my country but for the first time, after the beginning of the master, not in those places in which I used to live. Staying far from my home and those factors that unavoidably influence my perception, allowed me to reflect on the Italian condition related to many critical elements that I acquired during the BUDD course.

My group and I worked on the case of Ciclofficina Mondo, a workshop for bikes, very close to the main streets of the city center. We decided to take the advantage of our location, searching a typical Italian restaurant for lunch time. After 30 minutes of research, we realized that apart



from a very expensive one, there weren't traditional restaurants in the area, so we chose an Indian one. We were greeted by a Pakistani waiter and at a certain point we started talking in English because it was easier for him to understand. Around us a group of Romanian caregivers were relaxing during their day off and other three Italians were chatting. For the first time in my life I felt like a foreigner in my own country.

There were no boundaries, no place identity, all mixed at the same level. These details reinforced the thoughts based on viewings and interviews. Brescia is a city in which different phenomena are taking place with two elements that can't be ignored: at first the difficulties, and in some cases the refusal, of the inhabitants to accept new types of initiatives made by immigrants, at the second the big differences and isolation between several ethnic groups and activities. Into the restaurant as in many other places that we visited, parts worked divided, without creating a real integration.

With an in-depth analysis of the experience of the Ciclofficina, it was clear from the beginning that the main problem was related to this lack of networking. We were analyzing a commercial/social activity, managed by four immigrants supported by ADL, with a big potentiality that needs to find its position into a more complex system of relations. We had only two days to act and it was very interesting because we needed an action plan to optimize our time. Moreover, after each discovery we tried to carry on at the same time the analysis and the project, using a flexible approach in a context that we didn't know and we were defining step by step.

The most surprising and satisfying aspect was how all

Conceived**Perceived****Lived**

the work made in the previous months, helped us to create a clear strategy, understood and maybe even appreciated by the ADL members. We acted from the micro to macro scale, from re-laying out the internal space and the timetable to proposing new partnerships and reflections on infrastructures at the urban scale, always oriented as catalyst for new processes, in a holistic and rational approach for the improving plan of the Ciclofficina.

We used the “Six Memos for the next Millenium” as theoretical frame to define the entry point for the case studies. The last of Calvino’s memos, never finished, is consistency, seen as right balance between people and the world around them. I would like to think that this consistency should be the light that inspires all the future practitioners, both as a method to reflect and as a way to find solutions according to people, places and activities.

PAOLA VELASCO (Ecuador)

I came to Brescia with a very limited understanding of the city. Knowing little more than a brief description of the sites we were going to work on, for me Brescia was totally unknown. My narrow image of Italy mainly as a tourist destination, was transformed in a very short time into a far more rich, diverse, complex and vibrant picture.

These two days in Brescia were certainly a challenge. The importance to grasp the particularities and potentials of the case, discussing everyone’s opinions in our team and producing the final presentation all had

to be done with time in mind. The objective of producing something creative and useful was clear despite the pressure and the passionate debates.

I worked in the ciclofficina team. Our ideas focused on making the shop more visible in order to boost its potential. While analyzing the formation of GEKAKE and its message of “working together” and the city as a contested space, the ciclofficina is a clear call for dialogue with the brescian society. Run by refugees the shop can be seen as an instrument to challenge a rigid social structure which sometimes is silent to exclusion and discrimination.

I must say that Agostino’s story shocked and moved me very deeply. In my experience conflict seems like an awful ghost very far from my reality and I can’t even imagine the profound traces it can leave in one’s life. Knowing how ADL was created, its origin and its vision made me think of a wider meaning of its work. Suddenly I was thinking of ciclofficina, and the car wash, not only as shops but also as a political statement: a call for recognition but also as a message of personal fulfillment and empowerment. I understood how important it is to spread the message, to strengthen this dialogue by making visible both the issues of inequality and discrimination but also the abilities and resilience of those who have been displaced by conflict.

I remember Agostino’s citation of Calvino’s *Lightness* when introducing the cases to all of us: “...be like Perseus”. Looking back on this experience I found that the

possibility of becoming lighter (in the sense of getting rid of so many burdens and preconceptions) can be turned into a reality and transformed into valuable opportunities. I also found that by challenging the way we see things and by imagining more inclusive cities and societies, our roles as practitioners can be reinvented with a deeper meaning.

PEDRO MORA (Chile)

During the flight I couldn't stop thinking about what I didn't know about Brescia, this small city in northern Italy I've never heard anything about before. This invisible information that wasn't in the texts I read or the websites I visited or in Calvino's 'Six memos' was annoying me and made my 'practitioner' inside feel like I wasn't well prepared to convey any coherent thoughts towards a creative proposal for our group's assignment: the 'Ciclofficina Mondo', a cycle repair/recycling shop ran by the cooperative GEKAKE, supported by 'L'Associazione "Ambasciata della democrazia locale a Zavidovici" (ADL), which trains and gives job opportunities to immigrants and refugees in order to improve their skills and social inclusion within the city, along with promoting sustainable transportation (eco-mobility).

It was a short flight for a short stay (3 days). The inevitable mental struggle between the time frame and the depth of our proposals came to my mind in a very pessimistic shape, and I couldn't stop thinking about the added value of our final proposals. Would it be enough? Or at least a starting point? Would our proposal carry the catalyst capacity that was expected to have? What was our real role in all this? I hoped to get some answers by the end of the last day.

We went the next morning to the shop, guided by Elio from GEKAKE, and we met the staff working at that moment (two). None of them spoke English so our Italian group member was our bridge. I suddenly felt we were invading, moving from one corner to another and at the same time asking questions, waiting for answers and taking a billion photos. We were overwhelming and you could easily tell the staff wasn't comfortable at all. At the evening, we met Justus, who spoke English, and the conversation was held in an easier and more confident manner, which allowed us to get more from their perspective as immigrants, their sense of belonging, the ethnic and racial issues with some of the costumers and their aspirations and dreams, both personal and collective. This was the first moment of real engagement with the case of study. The ultimate motivational push we needed was delivered at dinner that day with Agostino (ADL Director) when he told us his personal experience and why he started this enterprise. Powerful, life-changing testimony.

During the second day many things were more clear, and by the end of the day we managed to understand and

identify the main problems and suggest proposals for improvement in all micro, meso and macro scales, from reshuffling the inner space of the shop to reinforce the location, promote new strategic associations and join the existing and potentially new networks at a regional scale.

We presented the proposals to our guides, the Council and ADL (GEKAKE) the next day and received a very positive feedback, what brought up the feeling to all of us that we were on the right path on finding the way 'all the pieces work together in harmony' for the Ciclofficina's future.

As a personal finding, this fieldwork rose awareness on me about the struggles we're going to face on our assignment in terms of language, communicational skills, flexible engagement strategy with the local dwellers and time constraints, as well as the insightful study of the case and quick response to the issues we'll have to tackle. The tool set we developed during the previous stages was absolutely crucial for the outcomes of this stage.

RICCARDO CONTI (Italy)

Our work in Brescia has been surely related with this idea of 'system of systems' in the sense that the complexity that we found on site was expressing this concept of intertwinement of various systems. We started the approach to the site doing interviews and immediately this complexity started to come up. We were in a relatively small city of Italy and most of the interviews we did were not in Italian.

The abandoned aesthetic conditions of via Milano gave us a pessimist vision of it. On the contrary we were pleased to see how shops' owners were enthusiastic and willing to improve via Milano with their activities. Nevertheless something was missing in order to realize what they wished that street to be. Having a pessimistic vision in the first place we experienced how aesthetic can influence the idea of a place and therefore of the people that live those spaces. Obviously we were the only ones thinking in that way and this phenomenon was creating segregation between foreign communities and Italians in particular. Furthermore I was surprised and in a way baffled by the fact that such banal elements were able to influence so hardly the image of the communities living in those places. We kept this reflection in mind for the intervention.

Our group was assigned to work on an unused building (Ex school Vito Dusi) and the main task was to think about how to reuse that space. For us it was immediately clear that now that building is only an empty space with no particular interests around it. This means that the building has no identity among the communities living in the area. Nevertheless during the interviews we found existing realities that were looking for a place to run their activities.

Acknowledging that we did a limited number of interviews and therefore we did not discover all the existing realities of the area we decided to move our intervention more on how to discover these realities. The idea was focused on a triggering event able to engage the communities and at the same time to give identity to the building. We thought at a very simple and low-cost intervention organized by ADL Onlus: distributing flowers in colored pots mainly along via Milano and via Villa Glori. The idea of flowers in pots came also by the fact that the soil in the area is polluted by Caffaro factory and this is another issue that the community is facing. Therefore the element of the pot is meant to create a symbolic message and at the same time it works on the aesthetic dimension mentioned before. This engagement around a common topic aims also to break the existing segregation borders. To conclude I found really interesting working on the dimension of triggering process rather than offering final solutions. The issue of unused spaces in cities is common and most of the time municipalities wonder how to use those spaces rather than thinking about how to trigger processes that then will certainly find a way to use those spaces.

SALMA ABOUELHOSSEIN (Egypt)

I learnt about Bangkok in Brescia. What we have been studying for the last few months in Bangkok became clearer when we were on site in Brescia. Although the trip was very limited in time, I got attached to the case I was working on very quickly. Working on the towers had a great impact on me on both the practical and personal levels. Like all other BUDD students, I went to Brescia with so many perceptions ahead. Step by step, things started to be clearer. You have really to forget all your prejudices and get fully immersed to untangle the solidity of what seemed at once to be the truth.

On our first day on site, we divided into two sub-groups of four. This helped us to approach people easier. With none of us speaking Italian, we managed to communicate with some Spanish, Arabic and very basic French. On our first day, we were invited to many people's houses, in both the towers and the low rise area. We were invited for coffee, lunch and snacks. We were also asked to babysit one of the interviewee's five kids. We didn't prepare interviews, we had very limited knowledge about the towers, and we wanted to know everything. The unstructured interviews strategy didn't work at first, but then it got better. We started to know what we needed to know from the people we interviewed and soon enough things became clearer.

IS IT REALLY THAT BAD? That is what we asked ourselves at first. We started to question what the main issues are. We couldn't access the towers at first, so we started to ask the people in the low-rise blocks and in the mall. We were interested at first in their perception about

the towers. "What do you think about the towers?" was our first question. We got a variety of answers; "it should be bombed" was a common one. Our entry point was meeting this lady, Rita, who helps two families in one of the towers. She arranged an interview with one of those families, and that was our first time to enter the towers. Our journey in the area was as complex as reality is. From the moment we met Rita everything started linking. We kept flowing in those networks of people from one person to the other; going back and forth between the towers and the low-rise. It was at this stage that we realized how complex the "lived experience" is, and how it proved our perceptions wrong.

There is certainly not a so-called one "community" for the people in the towers; however, there are existing networks that we were able to identify some of them. Trying to link 200+ families with something in common is almost impossible; even if they live in the same buildings. However, Existing networks are a potential that shouldn't be left without an intervention. Our approach was to build upon those networks, to deconstruct the barriers that hinder those networks. One of those barriers was the existence of the empty tower. The tower in itself turns out to be a stigma, re-using this tower became a necessity now.

And No; it's not that bad!

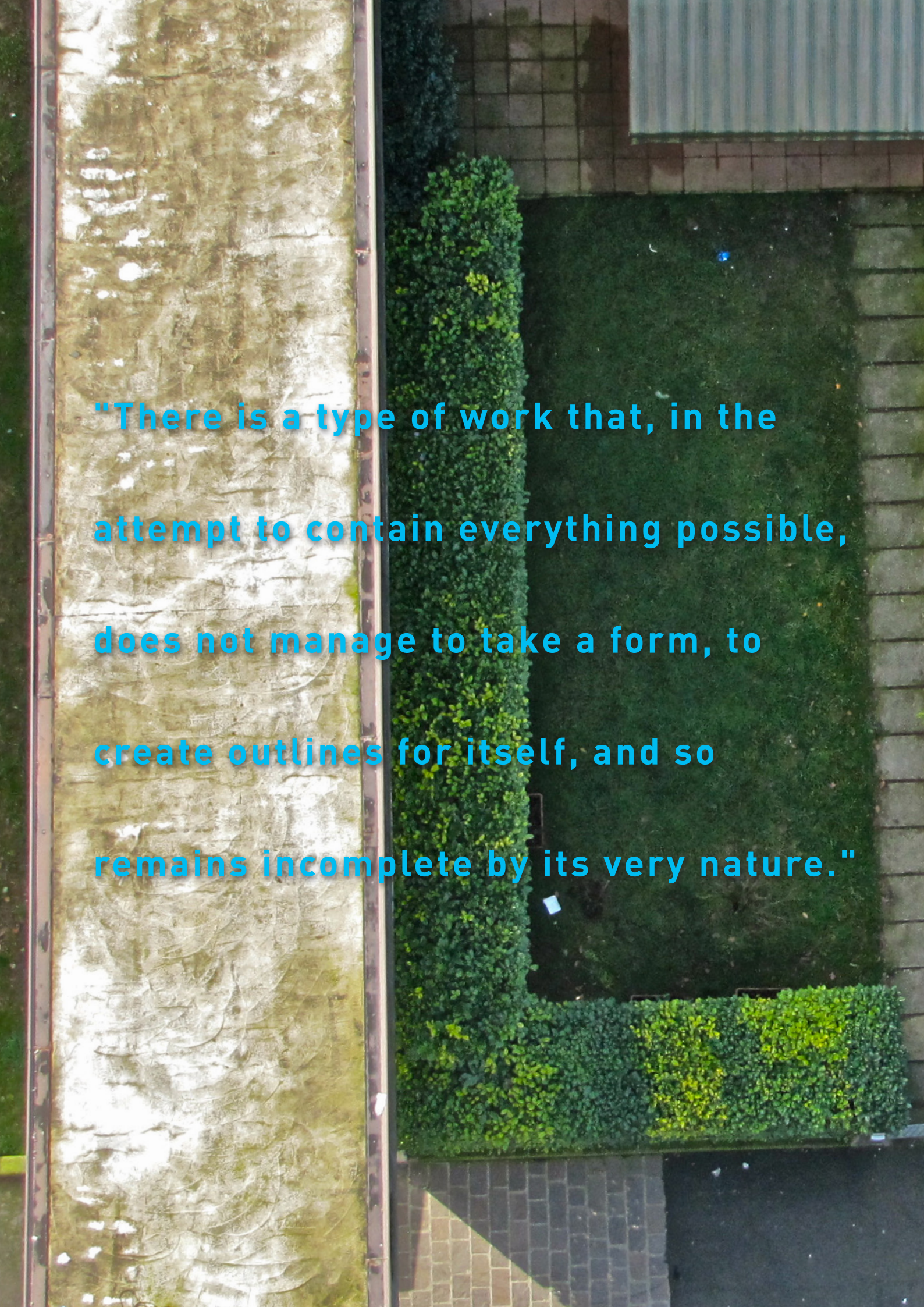
SEBASTIAN TRONCOSO (Chile)

Brescia In and Out.

After four days in Brescia, Italy: two of travel and two of intensive work, some very interesting proposals to address different problematic that are in the public agenda came out. Project and strategies of different scale and urgency were tackled in different angles.

In our case the entry point to the "reality" of Brescia was the problematic of a big area that is polluted with PC2, specifically the Park of Via Livorno. A green area of 32.800 m² within a neighbourhood of low middle class, strongly inhabited for immigrant but not very well integrated. Good accessibility and with basic infrastructure. Nine month ago this park was closed without clear information. After three month of protest of the community the park was opened again and the municipality begun a campaign to inform of the problem of the contamination. The result is that the neighbours are confused and angry with the authorities, and also the park shows low levels of use, even though some groups still using it ignoring the risk.

With a quick and partial understanding of the complexity and conflicts, there is some reflections that can be done about the process:



"There is a type of work that, in the attempt to contain everything possible, does not manage to take a form, to create outlines for itself, and so remains incomplete by its very nature."

1. Local and central government has a big problem. People in the community are aware of the pollution problem, but do not seem very concerned. Protests made due to the decision to close the park are not related to the risk they are facing every day but with the need for open spaces. The first steps the government took were unsuccessful so the next steps are crucial.

2. The new administration need to make a new approach and define a clear strategy with the community to deal with the problem. Is fundamental defining together how to re-use the park. The problem is not going to be solving in a short term, that why is fundamental set up the idea of the adjustment to the new reality. The public spaces can be used but with precaution of the risk.

3. This case is relevant because can be understood as an opportunity to elaborate strategies to approach the same kind of problematic in other places. Specifically in the way that the community is included in the decision making.

4. The idea of safety zones inside the park that deliver a secure use to the community, especially for the children's and also a place that could be used as a space of information, could be one of the starting point to get over the mistrust of the community and become a gathering point of the community to learn how to reuse the park.

The speed of the process in this case didn't limits the possibility of response. These kinds of project are part of the reality of the practitioner involved in urban planning. In that sense is extremely important sharpen the senses to be, increasingly more capable to develop in short time, strategies, interventions and project relevant to the needs of the users and also with the strong sense of reality. Experiences like this goes in that direction.

STEFANIA GYFTOPOULOU (Greece)

Is it really that bad?

"The five tall buildings – visible from any area within the district because of their height and unusual image..are called Titian, Raphael, Michelangelo, Tintoretto and Cimabue."

Saturday morning is cold and foggy. You only realize you reached the site when the Cimabue tower suddenly appears in front of you. It seems that the weather itself in a playful way is already trying to contest the perceived image of the towers. The walk is entirely driven by a map while the dominating towers appear one by one only by the time you can almost touch them.

The streets are not too busy while infrastructure is ruling the area. Most of the shops are closed. The massive social housing estate was conceived as a spatial

relationship between the inhabitant and the public services. Public parks and open spaces are affluent. An old man is riding his bike getting back home from the supermarket. In via Filippo Lippi, a street just in front of the Tintoretto tower, a man is walking his dog together with his two grandchildren. He lives in the townhouses in-between the two towers perceived as "ghettos".

- Rita! He shouts from the walkway.

His wife, a woman full of passion, comes out the window. She is helping two women from the Cimabue tower, one financially and the other psychologically over the phone. Vera, one of the two women, is struggling with the bills. She and her husband are both unemployed with four children. Living in Brescia is hard but Rita helps a lot. Her apartment's furniture is all obtained from a local charity. The windows are always shut. Some years ago a baby fell from the tower and lost its life.

Across the streets lives Lucia, Rita's neighbor.

- Come in for a coffee! She shouts from her window. Lucia goes to church and together with other residents they help out families by distributing food and clothes. Mothers at schools help low-income families from the towers with the payments for the school's visits and materials. At first she thought the buildings were big and ugly and should be demolished. Now she has realized that people live there. Things have changed but the stigma is still apparent. Fabio, their younger son, explains that in the past people used to see foreigners as strangers. Now they go to school together and they have friends from the towers with different nationalities. The outsiders know San Polo as the Bronx of Brescia, he says. Little do they know.

Walking and talking to people proved the complexity of the narrow perceived binaries (Italians-Immigrants, low rise-high rise). Surely the area is not one "community". Nevertheless, in such limited time we managed to identify existing inter-connections. The challenge now lies in breaking those barriers in order to reinforce the existing relationships and networks and consequently change the standing perception.

"Knowledge of the world means dis-solving the solidity of the world" (Calvino, 1985, p.9)

Well no, it is not so bad!

STEPHANOS THEODOTOU (Cyprus)

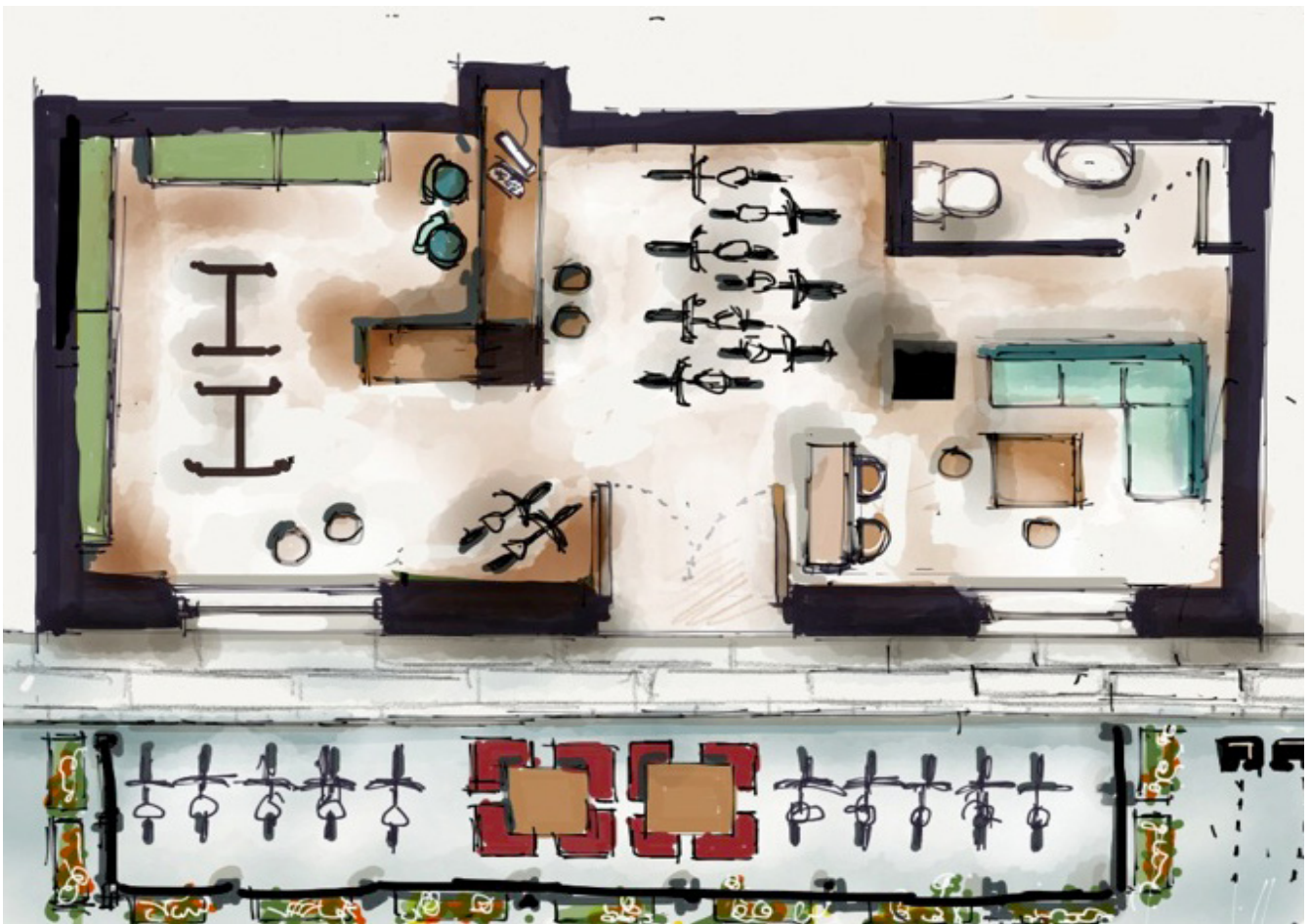
Re-Thinking Brescia

The flight to Verona airport was a short one; nevertheless, I could not stop thinking about the weekend ahead. The sites, the people... My group was investigating the current and future possibilities of a small shop called the "Ciclofficina Mondo", a shop run by refugees who were struggling not only with the day-to-day matters of the shop, but also with integrating into local society.

The next day would clear up a lot of the thoughts I had during the flight. Our first visit to the cycle-repair shop together with Elio was a day that I will always remember. We had a lot of questions to ask and we needed to learn a lot about the city and the shop and we needed to do it fast given that we only had a weekend in Brescia. Despite our intense research and reading before landing in Verona, that day we learned more about the city, the people and the GEKAKE cooperative than ever before.

Our methodology was simple, intuitive and effective. We spent hours, discussing with the staff of Ciclofficina, asking as many questions as possible and at the same time learning a lot about bicycles! Every now and then some of us would just wonder around the shop fiddling with the bicycles and the tools that were lying around. We were completely absorbed in the narratives that were emerging from the words of the incredibly helpful staff. It was indeed a very educational visit. I felt that I could really understand the both the difficulties that the staff had to deal with but most importantly, their passion for the shop and the importance of Ciclofficina in their lives.

If there is one thing I will never forget from Brescia is the contact with the people, the importance of individual and collective narratives and the significance that even a tiny project can have on people's lives. All these were reflected in Agostino's personal experience (the director of ADL), which he shared with us at dinner. I was truly amazed by the profound motivation of all people involved, their determination and patience.





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