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BUDDcamp 2012
The City of Euphemia 2
Brescia / Italy

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Planning for socially just
and sustainable development
in the global south

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Foreword

Camillo Boano & William Hunter

Since it's re-visioning with the first Brescia field workshop in March 2011, the BUDDcamp experience has been considered an attempt to offer the students a provocative, contemporary and instant, brief immersion into an urban reality, extracting a certain momentum of reflection on the design research challenges and methodologies for intervention as part of a broader attempt to recalibrate the discourse around urban design in development. The need for the (re)calibration of the urban design discourse emerges as a will to define an interpretative perspective over the contemporary challenges covered by the subject(s) of the MSc. By doing so, we are hoping to enrich the work of development practitioners dealing with spatial injustices, complex urban challenges and spatial transformations at the scale of building (architecture) and city (urban design). These two scales are not seen as isolated disciplines or fields of practice, but are embedded and infused within the wider complex arena of urban development and urbanism. The BUDDcamp therefore, using Latour's words, is an opportunity to get closer to the facts of renewed empiricisms and praxis in order to deconstruct the real apparatuses of urbanism's complex and conflictive nature at different scales. In a way though we are attempting to direct attention to the conditions that made them possible, which for Latour and us is a particular matter of concern. This and understanding the agency of design as the creative dimension of transformation beyond mere physical implications.

In this second incarnation of our Brescia BUDDcamp, we again turned to an adoption of Calvino's "Trading Cities 1" from *Invisible Cities* where he offers a richly illustrated narrative on the finer points of eclectic cultural exchange. Like those wandering trade merchants drawn around a shared identity and diverse stories of life and land, the migrant residents of Brescia find themselves in new territory, yet somehow bound together through the challenge of assimilation and inclusion in the everyday life of Brescia.

Students focused on four(4) "sites" in order to get a general overview of the situation in context. The Quartiere Centro Storico Nord near the main city centre square, with its relatively cheap housing for both immigrants and university students, is an interesting example of cultural proximity and vibrant urban multiplicity. The Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici (LDE), serving again as our collaborator, relocated its headquarters to the area,

spurring a slew of dynamic civil society synergic activities. The LDE's wish is to further leverage its presence towards more holistic development and such activities at a broader spatial area scale. In the Quartiere Lamarmora, derelict factories dot the landscape while social housing blocks represent a large portion of the migratory flux to Brescia, especially from China. Here the Catholic Youth Centre Oratorio managed by Father Fabio Corazzina is instigating a wealth of social activities meant to strengthen social and cultural integration. The Brescia Municipality is also considering different urban regeneration schemes which could trigger an inclusive vision of the city and the LDE is hoping to support spatial connections between smaller scale social integration activities and subsequent larger scale development.

Among the social and educational projects run in conjunction with immigrants, the LDE also controls different refugee shelters. One flat visited by the students is located in a central neighbourhood where the local community has united to preserve some green areas threatened by demolition. This mobilisation is connected to past exchange between local and transient residents during meetings in the streets. Sitting in opposite context to this, the second flat in Don Bosco is completely disconnected from the surrounding area, leaving the flat and its immigrant residents with very little interaction with the local community and lack of knowledge within the neighbourhood of LDE's initiative. In both cases, especially the latter, the LDE is imagining a heightened connection between the microcosm of the flat and its inherent complexity of being a "space of refuge."

Essentially for 2 days, the BUDD students immersed themselves into these neighbourhood contexts and refugee flats, investigating the duality of spatial and temporal exchange between immigrants and locals. Again focusing on how the LDE can move certain initiatives forward with greater ease and begin to consider the emergence of new initiatives, students engaged in methods including psycho-geographical mapping and one-on-one interviews, thus quickly developing a range of interventions meant to serve as catalysts for the promotion of immigrant identity and better integration into the community. With a new introduction by Agostino Zanotti, head of the LDE, BUDDLab Vol.4 represents the students' efforts and the reflections of another BUDDcamp Brescia experience.

Introduction

Agostino Zanotti

Towards Euphemia City

“This is exactly what happens to a foreigner. There isn’t a doubt that he takes a talent which is a significant part of our identity. It is important not to forget it: we can define our identity only in relation with the other, and the other is really the foreigner. However the foreigner is accompanied by a disturbing charge of threat.”

Umberto Curi, Foreign

The sense

From the 3rd to the 6th of February 2012, the second edition of BUDD CAMP took place. It was characterized by an important work of observation and interaction between students, local actors and different living spaces.

The four groups worked on two flats managed by the ADL association located in two districts of the city of Brescia, where territory social workers operate. In those flats, two groups of refugees live, one composed by men and the other by women with their children.

As last year, Italo Calvino's “Euphemia City” has been the referential text to elaborate ideas and to make proposals. People from different countries, who had heterogeneous and complex individual perspectives, met and faced with great simplicity and sincerity. Not only were the house doors opened, but there was also an interaction of profound individual experiences. During these days, bonds of reciprocity were born, and the admission into the home private space — the habitation — has been accompanied by a narrative of different experiences and stories.

The particularity of these two flats is what they represent for the beneficiaries who live there, the refugees. They represent places of a studied temporary welcome and a site where they can take care of themselves. Each beneficiary must share with his tenant not only the physical space, but also the commitment towards the building of a private future perspective based on the cultures’ interaction, both internal and external to the house.

These are places of a permeable living, reassuring and protective. Places where people who were expelled from other far localities, live their lives. These people are on the run from poverty and violence which have taken a toll on their bodies. Places full of signs and meanings which start from the bed, the kitchen and the yard into the square. Migratory and personal trajectories which intersect and cross the towns close to us. And also, they draw the territorial policies disturbing our daily life.

The survey on the two different places of the social commitment, which are located in two district of our town: “Lamarmora” and “Centro storico nord”, has been also important. In both situations, personal moments between the students, residents and local activists came true. During these occasions, the refugees’ presence represented a cultural and emotional element of great significance.

In this workshop, the process has been directed to enhance the usable aspect of the different socialization environments paying attention to the plurality of operating actors: associations, citizens, users of services. Spaces which are multipurpose, versatile and, at the same time, recognizable as occasions of meeting and cultural promotion. Moreover, they are sensible to the urban context where they are located and they are throbbing with purposes of comparison towards other cultures.

When I think to the experience of this year, I consider the social inclusion and its “menace” the aspect tackled connected to the theme of a shareable living. In the sets’ theory, the inclusion is a relation among the elements of two sets, therefore, the relation’s elements belong to the both sets; in this sense the set’s elements are always identical even if they are connected. It doesn’t concern only an inclusion, to take inside, but also a contribution, as Italo Calvino’s book evokes, to the building of a new alphabet or language of the relations; this, it is possible through the meeting with the foreigner and the perturbation which is originated from it. The care of the social connection, that we create with the other, breaks up enclosure of our daily life and it brings again the freedom desire which unites us.

Agostino Zanotti is the head of the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici in Brescia.

“Democracy does not guarantee that society will advance specific values such as recognition and celebration of difference or heterogeneity.”

Margaret Kohn

Student Reflections

ARIEL SHEPHERD (Canada)

Exploring the site: Strategies for a detective encounter

My site was the headquarters of our host association LDE, and the surrounding city centre. Through exploring the site it was immediately apparent that the space hosted a myriad of intersecting meanings, tensions and relations at multiple-scales and of multiple dimensions. It was unanimously decided that an intervention wasn't about providing anything new per se, but making visible and enabling the synergy which is already at play, and possibly promote it as a catalyst of transformation.

The headquarters is located in a building shared by three other associations, the Cooperativa Accoglienze Migranti (Migrants Association), Studenti per UDU associazione di studenti universitari (Students Association), and Associazione "forum marocchino per l'integrazione in Italia" (Moroccan association).

How to intervene?

I understood myself as a DETECTIVE who searches, listens, monitors, and only later considers how to stitch the data together towards an intervention, I felt I was arriving on the scene as a receiver, a receptor, with eyes and ears open wide to uncover clues. Augustino had kindly set up interviews with the main users of the space, however uncovering the complexity of the site wasn't straightforward as the space is more empty than used, and by diverse users at different times. Where archeologists use the tool of a pic to clear the surface and expose objects of interest, what is our tool, and what is our object? What strategies, or techniques can we use to expose the complexity of the site. Uncovering current (and potential!) 'beings' of the headquarters fell into two parts, the areas and the space itself

The Area

The headquarters is situated within the church complex of St. Faustine, known for his Liberal position, the building itself used to be a soup kitchen for the poor, so inherent in the space is an idea of provision to those in need. The surrounding area is Carminee, known for its high immigrant population and general liveliness, but also is held to be the culprit of drug problems in the city.

Strategy 1: Playing lost

We pretended to be lost and need directions to find LDE, as it turned out no one knew where the headquarters were, let alone what LDE did, but in a few cases the conversation sparked general discussion about migrant networks, and key actors.

In an interview with Mattieu, the representative of the students association I asked him to mark on the map what he felt ought to be included in a tour of social struggle in Brescia. He marked the Carminee area, a sports centre, the radio station, a squat.

Strategy 2: 'Map of social struggle'

Me: Are there no community centers?

Matthieu: No, the sports center for children possibly acts as one.

Me: So where do the migrant students socialize at night?

Matthieu: They just stay in their rooms because there's nothing else to do that doesn't cost money.

Strategy 1 and 2 uncovered deep overlapping networks of people, while at the same time exposing a deficiency in spaces for networks to manifest in.

The Space

The space is used by the associations in different ways. We monitored how the furniture changed over time in response to activities to understand the various uses of the spaces by various users at different times of day, and different days of the week.

Strategy 3: Tracing Furniture

The space performs very different functions depending on the association from education, to services, to fundraising, to events. Sometimes the way in which the furniture is left by the first group can influence the next, which seems to parallel how they the associations relate to each other.

Despite each association having similar values, they appear to work side by side in parallel, rather than in collab-

oration per se with events and activities held in isolation. We plotted a time analysis to visualize how the various associations beat together in time

Strategy 4: Collating uses

While the Muslim girls taking Italian lessons weren't aware there had been a screening of the film *Persepolis* put on by the student Association earlier that year, or aware the space was used for film screenings at all, the next film series is around the theme of migrants, so synergy exists, and will likely continue to feedback on itself in the future.

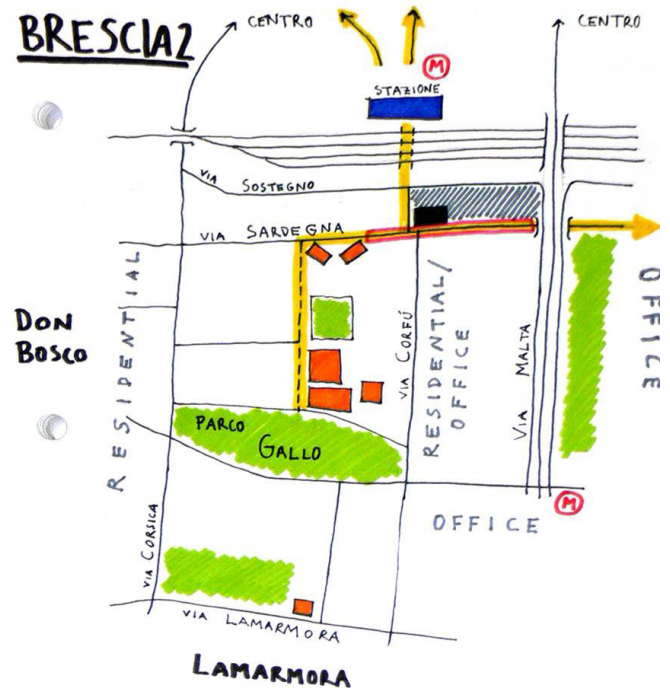
I understood the role of the practitioner to be essentially one of strategy, how to receive and structure information, and what to do with it, only out of that period of receiving and uncovering could a responsive programmatic and architectural intervention arise. Programmes targeted at already marginalized a group could possibly perpetuate exclusion, the potential of the space lies in making the margins porous, while striking a balance between exclusion and inclusion, openness and vulnerability.

ATIYEH ARDAKANIAN (Iran)

Adapting to refugees

In *Trading Cities 1*, Italo Calvino describes the city of Euphemia a place where "The merchant exchanges often amount to the sharing of second hand experiences of the world. The interactions of the merchants exchanging goods serve to connect them to a specific lifestyle, thereby giving Euphemia a distinct social identity."

Having this in mind, we arrived at Brescia, and settled in the Movimento Nonviolento Headquarters (MNH). The place I could say was located at the heart of the historical area of the city. We had a great time the next morning, visiting the several great monuments and churches, which preserved the beautiful historical identity of the old city. Though I could see no hints of the city of 'Euphemia' yet, even in the market place on a Saturday morning. The LDE headquarters (Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici) was where all the magic happened. It was a center, which worked on social and educational projects with the immigrants and refugees; mostly coming in from countries in conflict- countries where I assume the weapon industry of Brescia has trade with. We quickly formed four groups and each was assigned to investigate a particular place within the city. My group and I went for the flat of the refugee men, located in via Longhi 10. It was a quiet neighborhood and the building did not outstand its neighbors. Augustine (our host at the LDE), pointed out that this was part of their intentions of blending the refugees within the society.



He briefly introduced us to the residents of the refugee flat and we quickly engaged ourselves in talking with them. It was a first time experience for us, Rachel, Chris, Stefano and me as we struggled to approach not as solid interviewers, yet to get the answers we needed in order to establish an intervention. At some point we gave up pursuing our initial intention, as we came to better understand them and their priorities. What I learned from this experience was that in similar situations, at first, you must introduce yourself as clearly as possible in order to prevent a misunderstanding that you are some international agency that has powers to help them out, and secondly, there is no need press yourself in asking the questions in the favor of your intentions, you can always reflect on what you learn from people and what they prefer to talk to you about.

The next day we wandered off in the snowy neighborhood, in search for neighbors and permanent residents of the area. From those interviews we understood that some were ignorant to the presence of the refugees and some suggested that the refugees should take the first steps in encouraging communication with the neighborhood. The refugees with the help of LDE had been seeking jobs and taking Italian lessons as soon as they arrived. LDE in my opinion had already magnificently enabled all possible methods of quick integration within the society. One possible intervention we came up with which seemed agreeable to Augustine as we presented it on the last day was a way to create a sense of continuity in the integration process by implanting a framework of retaining memories, a community mural to record incrementally the presence of the refugees over time.

BETHANY RITTER (United States)

The Brescia I encountered during our trip was a city of opposites. Every single person we encountered and interacted with was incredibly nice and accommodating. Yet the city, and its Italian residents, is frequently distant and inhospitable to the migrants, refugees who reside there. The city is split between old and new, north of the railway tracks and south, Italian and foreign, prosperous and impoverished. These ingrained counterpoints became clearer when we set off to explore Quartiere Lamamora, the predominantly migrant neighbourhood just south of the main train station named Brescia Due.

Once a neighbourhood dominated by the many factories that previously employed the migrants coming to Brescia, the area has fallen into a state of decline over the past ten to fifteen years. A state that has been heightened by the financial crisis. Recently, there has been a spate of speculative construction of office blocks and high-end residential towers, which remain isolated and only partially occupied, anticipating the new business zone that will (theoretically) emerge upon the completion of the new underground metro system and the direct connection from the city centre to the neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, these new development plans leave little room for the migrant population that has historically called this site home. At least, home for short spurts of time. For in addition to the divide between the migrants and the locals, there are also divides and disconnections within the migrant population. Very few stay

for very long, especially with the current lack of jobs, and those that are residents have few interactions with each other. This stems from differences in cultural background as well as a lack of motivation to mobilise to take ownership over their community. There is also a sense of discomfort and mistrust of the surrounding city and its residents, due to the previously mentioned divides and a series of violent acts against the migrants as little as 5 years ago.

Within this setting a progressive priest, Don Fabio Corazzina, and his church, the Oratorio, are reaching out in an attempt to alter this unsympathetic reality. Programs, with the entry-point of children and headed by the church's youth worker Archangela, have been implemented with the goals of bringing residents together, raising the positive profile of the migrants in the city, and reducing the obstacles to integration, such the language barrier.

As the youth approach was already well established, our group (Francesco, Camila, Ojama, Liz and myself) proposed the idea of a market, occurring 2 or 3 times a week, which would be a catalyst for both integration of the neighbourhood with the rest of the city of Brescia, and within the neighbourhood itself. In addition, the mobilisation of a market would instigate income generation opportunities for those who had not yet found steady work, and would possibly provide an opportunity for groups who did not normally get out of the flats, like women, to socialise and insert themselves into a larger community.



We concluded that even within this fractured environment, the possibilities of amalgamation and community were great. Building on the excellent work already pioneered by Don Fabio, Archangela, and the Oratorio, the establishment of an additional catalyst (the market) to promote connectivity between Quartiere Lamamora and the city of Brescia (as well as between the migrant groups within the neighbourhood) could result in reduced tensions and a higher degree of integration for the refugees and migrants who find themselves living in this particular City of Euphemia.

BUDOOR BUKHARI (Sudan)

“Traveling, you realize that differences are lost: each city takes to resembling all cities, places exchange their form, order, distances, a shapeless dust cloud invades the continents” - Italo Calvino

I always questioned to what extent globalization has really turned the world into a small village, but a 4-day visit to the city of Brescia in northern Italy is sufficient to make one yield to this fact. Nestled at the base of the alps, and the second capital of the region of Lombardy after Milan, Brescia is an amalgamation of multiple layers of history and of being, which although granting it an element of difference, still do not serve to mask over the many manifestations of modernity that make it resemble almost all other cities across the world.

Indeed, Roman and medieval monuments, cathedrals, industrial zones, arms factories and modern skyscrapers, cranes and construction sites, all co-exist within the fabric of the same city. This intermixing and complexity transcends the physical to characterize the social as well. Although we were warned pre-departure that we were embarking on a journey to a radically right city that marginalized immigrants, my personal experience of the city revealed unique signs of co-existence similar to those one would find in the majority of contemporary global cities. African, Moroccan, Filipino, Chinese and other ethnic shops and businesses are dotted throughout the city, but more prominently within the city centre, where their distinct signs and symbols stand in stark contrast to the many monuments around the locale.

The study area of the group I worked with was the Quartiere Centro Storico Nord. Invited by the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici (LDE), our task within the 3-day charette was to investigate how the new LDE headquarters (Via Della Rocca, 14) could potentially serve as a better catalyst and platform for improved urban and social integration and exchange between immigrants and locals.

The group approached the exercise by beginning to record both the changes in the use of the space within the

building, as well as links and connections with the neighborhood. To map internal spatial use, a series of panoramic photos at different timings across 2 days were taken, revealing how different individuals and groups moved furniture and appropriated the space for different uses. We also interviewed a student representing *Studenti Per*, as well as the head of the *Forum Marocchino per L'Integrazione In Italia* (Moroccans Forum for Integration in Italy). Through those interviews, we unpacked the various uses of the space by its users. LDE uses the space for training activities and exhibitions for various immigrant groups, and the *Moroccans Forum* uses it to offer Arabic and Italian language classes to children and adults, and was interestingly using the space to celebrate the *Mawlid* during the time of our visit. On the other hand, the students were using the space to hold movie screening nights at the time, with the theme of the next movie focusing on issues of migration. Thus, we realised that the LDE headquarters building was already serving as a platform for its users, resembling in the constant shifting of its internal use the same ephemeral quality characterising the *Piazza della Loggia*.

To map external links and the awareness of immigrants and locals around the area of where LDE is and what they do, my colleague Laura and myself went into role-playing and pretended we were lost. We went around asking: *Escuze, Stoe cercando un posto? (Excuse me, can I ask you for directions to a place?)*.

Surprisingly, out of all the people we asked, no one knew where LDE is or what they do, perhaps because of LDE's recent relocation into the neighborhood. Nevertheless, the exercise revealed other community organisations and networks interested and active in the cause of immigrant integration. To the group, the LDE headquarters building represented a space that was multi-purpose, both visible and invisible, a space that recognizes marginality, and a space of both convergence and divergence.

Indeed, we realized that the space was already serving as a platform and catalyst, and all it needed was recognition and visibility. Those observations, coupled with insight from the organisations using the space, as well as the community within the locale, inspired potential ideas for the transformation of the space. Lost for a better name, we chose to call it 'The Place', and agreed on a number of propositions for place-making, and shared those with LDE through our final presentations.

While the intense BUDD Camp was a rich experience in a variety of ways, to me, the preeminent aspect of the charrette was the chance to interact with people. I enjoy socializing with people and it was not the first time I conduct fieldwork. However, the difference and challenge this time was the compounded understanding of the complexity of the issues under question and the problems being contested.

How do we approach people, and what are the most ethical methods to conduct field research work? How do we break cultural and language barriers to best approach people and acquire a better understanding of issues being studied, without appearing to have a concealed agenda, and without patronizing those we speak to? How do we choose who we ask questions to, and what are the ethical and culturally acceptable ways of doing so? And according to whose values do we answer the above questions?

It was equally stimulating to meet and speak to Agostino Zanotti, head of the LDE, and his colleagues. In spite of their hectic schedule and overwhelming responsibility, they greeted, hosted and mentored us with utmost hospitality. Through our short-lived yet intense opportunity to interact with them, we were exposed to the challenges and frustrations and cumbersome realities of development work. Their optimism in spite of the odds was a source of inspiration. Just as many of the practitioners who offered talks to us through DPU did, Agostino and his colleagues highlighted how one can find room for optimism even within the daunting task of being a development practitioner.

Italo Calvino's City of Euphemia was a place of trade and exchange, not only of goods, but also of stories and identities. Visiting Brescia was not merely an opportunity to explore, document and react to such exchange, but rather an opportunity to actively partake in it, as we exchanged knowledge, and attempted to unpack the complexities of what the City of Euphemia can mean, and who we can become within it.

CAMILA COCIÑA (Chile)

Integration in Brescia: Trains, Train Station and Railroads

Trains

Circulations are on the base of contemporary cities. People movement, cars movement, information, capital, waste, water, trains movement. Migrants' bodies also circulate. The motor of these movements are diverse, and the consequences on the space also vary. In a globalized world, immigrants and refugees are part of these flows that shape the city, with the particular condition that their homes are both travelling with them, and staying in the origin as part of their history. Walking, browsing, driving or in a train, immigrants and refugees move looking for security, safety, work and a new home.

Train station

Thousands of immigrants and refugees arrive to Brescia. The train station acts as a gateway to the city, as a con-

nection with the rest of Italy and, direct or indirectly, with the hundreds of original hometowns of its new inhabitants. Looking for the construction of an appropriate environment in order to achieve a better quality of life, people with diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds enter to Brescia. During the insertion of these bodies in the city ecology, these differences act sometimes as barriers in terms of economic, social and cultural integration. In this scenario, the role of organizations as the Local Democracy Embassy is key, through the construction of links that fill gaps in terms of language, household, and cultural barriers.

Railroads

However, there are barriers that are more difficult to skip. In an at times conservative society, in a post-industrial city and in the middle of a big economic crisis, the path to achieve the integration of foreign population can be hard. Even in a small city as Brescia, segregation patterns can be observed. Curiously, one of the most explicit barriers that build exclusion is the gap produced by the railroads. The same infrastructure that connects and receives immigrants fragments and divides the city in two. South of the station (and the railroads) is the neighbourhood "Brescia due" (Brescia two). Its name, as a presage of its condition, speaks about the distance and differences with the rest of Brescia.

In Brescia due, 60% of the population are immigrants. Some of them are refugees, others just looking for opportunities, but almost all of them are just passing, staying no more than two years in the neighbourhood. Exclusion is a problem in all big cities, but a small city as Brescia, given its heterogenic composition, faces the same challenges of integration. How to ensure economic activities and community integration, in order to consolidate the neighbourhood? How to shape a neighbourhood based on its residents' heterogeneity, able to dialogue with the rest of the city, to be source of opportunities? How to skip the railroads? Main challenges that it is necessary to face understanding the complexity of the networks involved, and that citizens are trying to address through different actions. Be part of that challenges and actions was the main opportunity of visit Brescia during 4 days, working with people that are currently facing the problems of Brescia due and being part of this debate.

CHRISTOPHER MONTGOMERY (Jamaica)

Italy, here I come

First Impressions

The trip to Italy provided a unique opportunity to get an appreciation for the ongoing work being undertaken by the Embassy for Local Democracy (ELD) in aid of

“The projecting of an inferior or demeaning image on another can actually distort and oppress, to the extent that it is interiorized.”

Charles Taylor



immigrants and refugees that come to Brescia. On arrival to Brescia it became apparent that the visible reality was somewhat in keeping with the imagined reality I had constructed during the preparation phase. I imagined an area reminiscent of its multicultural history where there is a melting pot of different cultures and various points of exchange. I also expected that this history would be preserved in its architecture and urban configuration. These and other characteristics became evident during a group tour of the city centre where we (BUDD) got a glimpse of various cultural and Historic elements which defined the build environment, circulation patterns and movement and the everyday life interwoven with commerce and recreation. The tour was a very effective in allowing us to gain vital insights into the inner workings of the city in a relatively short period of time.

The IED's role

Notwithstanding the warm welcome we received from the ELD and friends prior to our initial contact with the city, our main focus was to analyse the crucial work of the ELD. Their work not only caters to the immediate needs of the refugees, in terms of providing a place to stay but also addresses areas of deficiency through language and vocational training and general coping skills in order to enable them to make smooth transition into Italian society.

My specific group assignment allowed for the opportunity to interview five male refugees living in an apartment which is located within the defined study called Lamar-

mora. We were accompanied by the head of the ELD, Mr Agostino Zanotti who shared some very insightful information regarding the approach of the organisation in providing accommodation for the refugees. He noted that the flat is owned by the organisation and provides temporary accommodation for the refugees not exceeding one year. Agostino also emphasized that his organisation serves as a facilitator and provides a start for the refugees towards their independence. The ELD encourages a multicultural atmosphere within the living arrangement in order to prevent clustering of various national and ethnic backgrounds, which they believe would stagnate the process of integration. Agostino further notes that housing individuals from various backgrounds is a challenge and that they have been times where conflicts have arisen and have caused alarm within the community. However, his organisation has been working on ways to sensitise the community as to issues surrounding the refugees presence in the area.

Proposals and Reflection

For lack of a better terminology, I refer to the guys we have interviewed as refugees. I don't particularly like the term because of the label associated with it and the image that it conjures up in one's mind due to years of discriminatory media portrayal. While talking to them, I was able to deconstruct the label "refugee" and see beyond the stereotype as they were just five regular guys like myself. The only difference is that they were victims to a particular circumstance in their respective countries, over which they had had no control. The discussion

highlighted that they were very much individuals (though labelled as a group “refugees”) with distinct needs, aspirations and varied points of view as to how they see the community and how the community perceives them.

They also saw the work being done by Agostino as having a positive impact on their lives because they were a part of a framework, which enabled them to obtain employment and provides them with a stable living environment. Interacting with them on a personal level had a profound effect in appreciating the human element embedded within Agostino's work. Our proposal was in keeping with this renewed understanding of what it is to be a refugee and building on the LED's approach of trying to increase the level of awareness of the community we proposed an intervention that would create a sense of permanence, even after the individual refugees have moved on.

This was in the form of a visible memory where each refugee would be permanently represented both at the level of the dwelling (pictures, post cards, souvenirs etc.) and on the urban scale (murals, insignia on trees, side-walks etc.). This would also demonstrate to incoming refugees that they are a part of a permanent, on-going process. The Brescia experience has enabled me as a development practitioner to confront different realities and made me cognisant of the fact that we are all vulnerable to the same forces at play that brought about the refugees current situation.

DIOGO MARTINS (Portugal)

Making Place

We arrived in Brescia late night. Our host association ‘Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici’ (LDE), lead by Agustino, welcomed us and we had the chance to meet some of the key actors that would be engaging with us and with our work during this three day workshop. Right after, we heard Agustino presenting LDE and the work they developed - “peacebuilding, protection of human rights, interethnic dialogues, conflict prevention and humanitarian aid in favor of war victims”.

He also explaining his main motivations for hosting the event and expectations on our work, to be a catalyst for much needed ideas, that they, because of the day-to-day demanding of their work, did not have the ‘mental space’ to come up with.

At the very beginning the group was divided into 4 smaller groups that were appointed 4 different sites to study in Brescia. All sites were of LDE's activities and represented, in some manner, the spectrum of social-cultural intervention of LDE, and also exposed the problematics and the potentialities in the different natures of each site.

How could LDE take advantage of the existing socio-economic structures present inside the headquarters and in its immediate surroundings, to promote and make more visible the activities that are already happening and explore others potential to expand its action and better serve its objectives of tolerance and social cohesion?

First we observed! (A blessing granted to us by the fact that there was no access to the internet - commonly the first ‘window’ to be opened.) And then we walked.

Based on transect walks, data collection by interviews and photography, socio- physical maps were constructed on our minds as the perception of space and social relations, inside and around the headquarters, revealed itself. From these the existing potentialities of the site were made visible and proposals more pragmatic started to take shape in our discussions.

LDE shares the same building with 3 other associations, so in reality the headquarters is already a hub for organizations that share similar socio-cultural orientations. But on the other hand, most of the interviews with members of the associations revealed systematically their own concerns and expectations towards the management and use of the shared space inside the headquarters, but only expressed curiosity and a certain interest in a joint project of collaboration with LDE, when directly question about this. The reason for this, we found that each association was profoundly unaware of the objectives and activities of the others - This showed that on this matter there were many opportunities for joint work to be developed and we integrated this in our final observations.

Expanding from this very particular ‘micro-cosmos’ of the headquarters, to the external open space, exploring the immediate surroundings, we found several social and cultural entities that could have a potential play in LDE's expanded network. Making use of the broad open space inside the block there is a sports centre that supports local football teams and has a small coffee place. Also inside de block, there is a centre that supports university studies and is a socio-culture centre on another floor and also has a children's playground outside - So also here, plenty of structures and actors for LDE to explore interactions and build with.

Finally around the block there are other situations from which LDE could take advantage and build its local network, namely: Theatres, Italian Red Cross, Universities, Bookstores, local Youth Information Centre, Other activist associations fighting for similar goals and finally LDE's own network of shelter apartments for asylum seekers in the city and community centers that support it.

In the end we understood the need to structure the headquarters image and pass it as a reference for the whole city. Elaborated on ways to manifest its activities

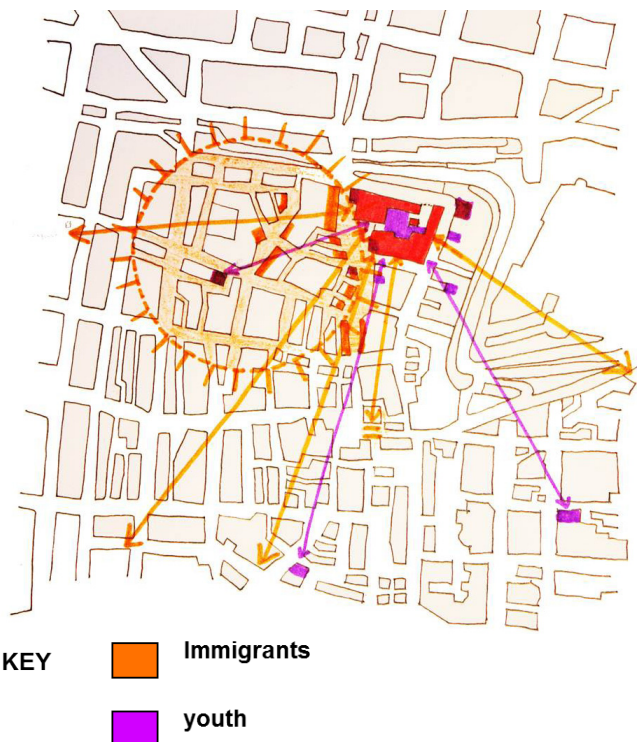
to the public eye, the idea was to promote, not expose, LDE and the other associations activities, turning the headquarters even more into an ‘open house’ for socio-cultural activities.

Because no one had a name for the centre... one suggestion was name it ‘THE PLACE’ which seemed to be the most common name gave by the people who used it - And we felt it fitted in the sense that the plural nature of the centre, of so diverse socio-cultural dimensions, would not be labeled in a constraining way.

This workshop i found particularly motivating the fact that we were working in a ‘real case scenario’ where our ideas will be seriously taken into consideration and help Agostino and his staff in their arduous task.

From the very beginning, I was very curious about the BUUD camp and how it would relate to our role as practitioners working in development, in countries of the south. In the end I understood that the core parallel was made to the way the practitioner should always ‘unpack sites’ and propose ‘catalytic interventions’ that build upon existing realities. To the way you position yourself relative to a certain brief with your own culture and then confront that with the ‘otherness’ and fight from there to work for a just and balanced outcome. To the way that ‘people’ are our main subject.

Here I have to admit, those have been the most fulfilling work experiences I have had, working both outside and inside developing countries - Working with people, (re) building their social, cultural and livelihood structures.



ELISABETTA BRICCHETTO (Italy)

At our arrival in Brescia we have had a welcome evening at the Headquarter of the LDE association in Via Della Rocca 14, focus, along with the surrounding quartiere centro storico nord, of mine and my work group research.

Through our presence on the spot, the occasion has mainly been the one of exchanging ways of perceiving the existing socio-spatial mechanisms of interaction so as to create a diverse interpretation of them for Agostino Zanotti, the LDE association’s chief, and his colleagues.

The Via Della Rocca centre has recently become the LDE Headquarter and the management of the space is shared with other three local associations: ‘Cooperativa Accoglienza Migranti’, focused on migrants, the Associazione Studenti Universitari UDU, student association and the ‘Forum Marocchino per l’integrazione in Italia’, Moroccans forum for the integration in Italy.

The analysis has been implemented through walks around the immediate surrounding of the association’s office and in the historic Centre quarter, taking pictures, drawing sketches and interviewing people in order to outline the spatial and social networks in which LDE is embedded.

Meanwhile we have tried to depict how the interior of the centre is lived throughout the day and the week by the four associations. The integration among them is not strong and intertwined yet, as they are still exclusively sharing the space. Even though few common events are implemented in synergy, more can be achieved in terms of collaboration as there are shared principles and goals like those of boosting integration and hope for the migrants and refugees living in the city.

Various training activities are carried on for both the members of the associations, Brescia’s citizens, and the beneficiaries.

In drafting the proposal we made a jump of scale and compared the richness of the exchange of knowledge, personal stories, support and experiences that happens in Via Della Rocca 14 with the one that takes place in Piazza Della Loggia where different trading activities occur during the Sundays’ market.

In both cases the space hosts completely diverse manners of use and ever changing arrangements overtime, depending on the actors involved at each particular stage. Indoor, this interchangeability can be eased and encouraged by movable walls installations through which diverse contemporaneous uses are allowed. In this way activities supposed to be implemented independently can occur at the same time, though avoiding overlapping

and encouraging chances of encounter.

More events of common interest, such as food festivals, movie projections and photography courses are wished to be promoted at agreed terms throughout the year so as to increase the pleasure of sharing time in valuable and enriching ways.

These occasions are seen as important moments for increasing awareness over certain topics but also for generating ground of communication.

We gave the centre a name: 'the Place', recognising in this way its capacity of hosting social diversity but also variety of activities and chances of exchange. At 'the Place' anyone can gather, even those who are or not directly connected with the associations and their purposes, but who may simply wonder of knowing more about a reality settled in their home city centre.

ELSBET ALEN (Belgium)

Brescia: A city of many stories

Brescia: at first sight a typical Northern Italian city with its Roman churches and piazzas filled with medieval monuments, trattorias, cafes and the occasional markets. But once we left the tourist inside of us behind and started looking deeper into the city's socio-economic structure another Brescia was revealed: a city of cultural mix, of Italians and immigrants, a city filled with stories, stories of those who left their countries, their homes and often their families in hopes of a better future.

One of the organisations working on creating opportunities to slowly start paving the way to this future is the LDE (Local Democracy Embassy). During the three days in Brescia we had the honour of being guests of and working with the organisation.

I, together with Lina, Luz and Paola (who did an amazing job as interpreter), had the opportunity to meet four women sharing a flat a few minutes outside the ancient walls of the historical city centre. Four women coming from four different cultural backgrounds (Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia and Togo) each with their own story and history.

Before visiting the flat there were several questions I asked myself: how do four women with five children live together in 1 flat? Do they help each other out in the household? Do all of them have jobs and if some don't, do they ask/get (financial) support from those who do? How do you set up a household with four different cultures? How do you not only connect them and those four cultures, but also connect them with the neighbourhood, especially within the temporary context in which they live in Brescia?



The general and also my first idea was that four women living together would in some way try to create a shared household and assist each other in this household. When visiting the flat however it became clear all four of them lived very separate lives: the empty and un-homely living room stood in stark contrast with each of their bedrooms in which they seemed to live in their own worlds separate from each other and from the neighbourhood; the children, even if they went to the same or nearby schools, were brought to school by their own mother; and financially each took care of themselves, making finding a job and income one of their priorities.

After visiting the flat there were two main issues we wanted to address: integrating them on both the neighbourhood scale and at the level of the flat, connecting them more with each other and with their surroundings, and 'tackling' the ignorance towards refugees and immigrants which surprisingly runs very strongly among the younger generation. Our group suggested starting with smaller projects, such as taking part in a food or exchange market in the local community centre, thus generating an income for the women (as it became clear during the interviews their main concern was to obtain a job) for which they can work together but aren't forced to strongly depend on each other.

In this short exercise it became clear LDE has to work in very complex situations: contexts of temporality and a large number of stories and backgrounds. In their search for strategies for integration the LDE has managed to create many opportunities but many challenges remain on the way to integration and creating a home in Brescia.

FRANCESCO PASTA (Italy)

When William, our American teacher, announced us that we were going to Brescia, I first understood “Russia”; but it soon became clear that it was Brescia, Lombardy, Italy. In my personal imaginary Brescia was pretty much close to representing the Evil. I had a shocking first visit to the city in 2007, as I accepted the invitation of Domenica (“sunday”), my Brescian classmate in Milan. She proposed me to visit her family for a Sunday lunch and then go to the old town to visit an exhibition, and I inconsiderately accepted. I found myself in a detached house decorated with flags of the Lega Nord (a racist party), Alleanza Nazionale (a post-fascist party) and even a Berlusconi pencil box from which Silvio himself was smiling. During the lunch the conversation was in a local dialect and I was kind of cut off: sometimes Domenica would translate me some sentences.

Now I joke about it, and maybe I exaggerate, but to me Brescia exemplified a strange, uncanny side of my country. Indeed, I think the city embodies many of the questions and contradictions that Italy is facing in this confused moment of its history, and even more so the area I had to observe with my group: Brescia 2. A disorienting landscape of skyscrapers, smoking chimneys, empty factories, social housing estates now populated with immigrants, and a catholic centre in wood and bricks that claimed to have the shape of an open book. We visited it on a snowy Sunday morning, in which it was particularly surrealistic. An impression accentuated by the proximity to the old town of Brescia, just a ten-minute walk across the railway. Walking around the neighbourhood we were told very different stories – by the people we met, by the places we walked through.

The Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale a Zavidovici asked us to think of an intervention tackling the problems of the neighbourhood: its lack of visibility, marginalization from the rest of the city, and internal fragmentation. We talked a lot with Arcangela, a volunteer in the catholic centre working with children and their families: she told us about the lack of jobs and income sources, the difficulties of integration and communication between Italians and immigrants and among communities of immigrants, and the scarce commitment of the administration, in an area that saw the percentage of foreign population rise to 60% in twenty years. On the following day we walked around Brescia 2 with a subtle sense of despair: the issues that Arcangela mentioned seemed impossible to be handled at the small scale we could work, and the empty streets of the area didn’t offer any handhold. Eventually, sitting in a bar packed with immigrants, run by Chinese who mastered cappuccino-making but weren’t very fluent in Italian, we thought of a street-market in via Sardegna, very near to the train station and to the church. The Municipality wants to build office blocks there, whereas the locals demands green space. When we exposed our

idea, we were told that the Ambasciata had the same idea for the same location, fifteen years ago. In fact, the concept of trade as a way to enhance trans-cultural communication seemed a natural, almost spontaneous response to many of the issues we noticed in Brescia 2.

Walking through this city with my classmates I heard questions that seemed so bizarre to me and others that I never asked to myself and to which I couldn’t answer. To me, this weekend has been not only an interesting sample of the issues related to fieldwork (including very adverse climate conditions, an absolute lack of time, and even if we were in Italy, problems of communication), but also a moment to think about my own country, the reality I come from, with new eyes; it was often quite revealing!

HAN ZHU (China)

I the city


The thing that fascinates me most of urban planning/design is although what has been built is cold, dead objects (ex. building, streets, open space), but people’s involvements could always entitle the “place” a different meaning. And this charming characteristic once again showed its charm during the time I was in Brescia.

My first impression of Brescia is very good as I am deeply impressed by its peace and grace and the elegant manner the city shows the characteristics, and this is partly because it’s the first time I have been to a European city that out of Britain. Though Brescia is only home to no more than 200,000 people, but the 2,000-year history leaves so many great pieces of arts that it owns the 2nd largest artist relics in Italy. Meanwhile, numerous architectures which were built during Rome period also add to the fortunes of the city. Meanwhile, it is very intriguing that owing to the nation’s policy of immigrants and refugees, now there are many foreigners living in the city and most of them come from Asian and African countries.

II the task

Our group was asked to analyse the LDE headquarters. At first we did not realize that it is the place that LDE worked that we would go to work on (as in our invagination, it should be some place in the city centre but out door), but after we finished the exercise, when I looked back, I understand better as this headquarter is not only the physical centre of all the activities that LDE focuses, but also has the potential to become more important in the life regarding to the immigrants of the city. Therefore, working out how this place would become more efficient in using is quite significant.

At present, LDE shares the place with 3 other organizations. It is very interesting to me that all these four orga-



Social power is concerned with access to certain 'bases' of household production, such as information, knowledge and skills, participation in social organizations, and financial resources. When a household economy increases its access to these bases, its ability to set and attain objectives also increases."

John Friedmann



nizations are arranged in the same place based on the arrangement of a local office. On the surface, these 4 organizations are not quite related to each other (introductions of the other 3 organizations could be found in other team members' blogs). But after we met and talked to people from different organizations, the relationships between them become quite evident—they all do some things for raising the living standard of immigrants (such as providing shelters, organizing entertaining activities, arranging regular meetings, providing language courses).

However, as they share the public rooms that in the middle of the place, the way they organize and use the space is obvious different based on their needs. Thus based on the differences, we could depict a map that shows the change of furniture with the time going. But this is more fascinating when considering about the similar phenomenon that in the city square, owing to the daily markets, the scene would also change during the day time.

III Conclusion

The function of area is all the time related to people's need and activities hence sometimes it becomes intangible (just like human natures), but after careful survey, rules could always be concluded and then the "place" could be more efficient in being utilized. In this case, we suggest that more communications would be needed within the four organizations hence it is probable that some activities that are beneficial to all the organizations could be held. This is my reflection to the exercise itself. But apart from this, I also find this Camp meaningful in examining what we have learnt in the past terms. It is to my surprise

that we have successfully turned the exercises we took in the BUDD studio into guidelines of working and then into instincts in solving problems. But I would also want to show my grateful thanks to LDE, which is the host of this Camp— it is because of you that this camp could be possible, and your generous host really leave me a great impression on warm-welcomed Italian people. I believe that having this kindness in mind, they sure have the ability to guide the refugees a better future..

LAURA PINZÓN (Colombia)

A place for many - everyone's place

The BUDD camp 2012 was a positive and stimulating experience. Since the arrival to Brescia we knew 3 days would not be enough to understand in deep the main complexities of the city, and we knew we would be focusing on a specific site and subject. However, we did manage to catch a glimpse of the diverse faces of the city and some tensions among these. The Brescia we knew could have been one or all of these: the historical Brescia, the uncommon white and desolated city in winter, the remains of a fascist Brescia, the open city - the city of hope for those refugees and migrants living their lives there, and finally the welcoming and friendly city – thanks to LDE (Local Democracy Embassy), their people and refugees, and the house of the Nonviolenza movement which hosted us.

For the exercise, I was part of the group studying the historical city centre and the headquarters building for LDE and three other organisations – a student association, the Moroccan Association and the Migrants Cooperative. During our stay we attempted to observe and interpret the different uses and meanings for the common space in the building and its relation with the surroundings. The aim was to understand the dynamics of the space in order to be able to propose ideas that could benefit the 4 organisations sharing the house and the many visitors and users of the space. We noticed how the arrangement of the furniture and the meaning of that common space were changing and adapting to each of the activities happening in there: from a welcoming dinner with pizza and drinks, from PowerPoint presentations, passing by a Muslim celebration with kids and families from the Moroccan Association. This space with multiple identities was fascinating to discover, and it is precisely that, the many identities' feature what could make it unique and special. We started calling it 'the place' when we needed to make reference to the building.

Intrinsically, we made the first important reflection as 'the place' does not need to define one identity; having many is its strength. Perhaps the space flexibility and character of openness – welcoming to different users – could be exploded in a positive way, and attract more

activities, if the organisations decide it could bring them more benefits than difficulties.

The immediate surroundings of the place and the possible relations with the neighbourhood – the city centre – were also studied in the exercise. Apart from a basic mapping and observation exercise around the area, we approached random people in the street and some shop owners trying to find out if they knew about LDE headquarters or the other associations working in there. The answer was negative but somehow expected due to the short time the house has been operating. However, these informal conversations led us to identify some other networks that act around students and migrants in the area and in the city. We concluded that these existing networks could be used as an advantage in case 'the place' wanted to extend some of their activities or get more visible to those that can be future users, guests or possible partners for any of the organisations.

For me the whole exercise was a very valuable experience. It was challenging to be exposed to an intense and short practice that went beyond an academic exercise. The responsibility of knowing that our observations on this real case could have impacts on the perception and uses of the space, and eventually affect some people's lives, made us take the exercise seriously enough, but without stop enjoying that unique situation and the great company from the people we met.

LINA GONZALEZ (Colombia)

Brescia: Inside a refugee's life

The opportunity to gain the experience of having direct contact with the daily lives of the refugees and the community around them, gave me an understanding of the difficult situation they face and the long term process and commitment required to help these people to re-start their lives in a different culture, climate and environment.

When we analyze the situation from the outside, we attempt to generalize and survey their problems and present solutions based on our perception of what the problem is. However, this experience reassures me the importance of confronting the reality and therefore the need to interact directly with the people.

Our team was in charge of observing the current situation on the women's flat and give suggestions to improve the residents' integration: between themselves, their neighbours and the neighbourhood.

This flat was occupied by 4 single mothers with 5 children. LDE's aim was to create a home environment where these women could support each other. They provided the ideal conditions for this to happen: a spacious and

comfortable flat located in a quiet and central neighbourhood, with a community centre and parks and schools accessible for their children. However, things were not evolving in this direction, due to their economic instability and their apathy to socialize and to form ties of support between them.

We noticed that each mother constructed their home in each room and the common space was void of social interaction and warmth. There are some co-existence norms, but each one confronts their problems alone. Also, they have a minimal integration with the neighbourhood and despite their living habits have been modified to avoid conflict; there is not any initiative to be part of this new environment.

Furthermore, during our interaction with them we detected a high anxiety for securing a job to support their children. Certainly people's well being requires a balance in all the components that structure their life: housing, employment, economic stability, good social relations and cultural identity. Unfortunately this concern inundated their minds leaving little space for them to gain stability in other aspects.

Therefore, our suggestions to LDE, was to open new spaces for them outside of their housing, rather than focus solely on re-establishing their relations. We felt that this measure of improving their overall surroundings would enable them to become a more integrated unit.

Firstly the foundation could foster new activities and routines, where they can meet other people with similar



interests and have some leisure time with their children and other parents (similar to what LDE is doing with the Libyan refugees). Secondly the foundation could create new spaces for income generation, such as: informal markets, fairs, spaces for marketing their skills, creation of a cooperative; so be it a symbolic strategy to raise their self-esteem, create an entrepreneurial vision, and strengthen their confidence. Maybe, these suggestions were too vague but we could not find other solutions that would generate real change.

Undoubtedly, this experience gave us hours of contemplation that ultimately resulted in ourselves gaining more insight into their lives than actual solutions. This experience gave me a new insight into the situation of displaced people in my country. It has inspired me to contribute more actively in supporting social programs that are created in order to re-balance the social injustice produced by war.

Finally, I want to say thanks to Augustino, Maria and all the foundation's team, for being such good hosts and for sharing their work with us. We found this Foundation to be inspiring, well organized and extremely gracious. In all aspects of their work, they are willing to share their work with others and are open to input, in order to develop ideas and gain opinions / suggestions from all forms of society. This open minded spirit and conscious work ethic had a marked affect on me, that have inspired me to be committed in this cause in the future.

LISA HANKING (Great Britain)

Traded Stories and Tall Tales

Having heard comparisons drawn between Brescia (Lombardy, Italy) and Italo Calvino's famous 'City of Euphemia'; I imagined arriving into a bustling epicentre where people flock from far and wide to trade during daylight and gather around fires at night time to exchange stories. I envisioned the trader's, upon their return journey, repeatedly recalling the countless stories told until the tales became altered, swapped and merged in places with other tales, memories traded.

On the dark and wintery evening of our arrival, snow dusted the untrodden paths and road sidings. The city was cold, empty and silent as we took our first walk through the streets at midnight. I wondered where all the life was, where was the City of Euphemia?

The next day, speaking over coffee with a local resident, (a migrant from Pakistan) I realised that this place was indeed filled with stories. Complex layers of meaning, biographies of oppression, freedom, marginalisation, poverty and hope.

Later that day, our group explored a southern province, south of the railway that divides Brescia from Brescia 2. Speaking to our guide, Arcangela from the nearby Catholic Youth Centre (Oratorio), we were told that in the last few years, the area has been home to an increasingly large, migratory flux of a diverse and multi-cultural population. Relations between many local Italians and migrants are fraught; exclusion and marginalisation is widespread and integration between the diverse multi-cultural groups within Brescia 2 is also minimal.

The region was partially derelict with a number of soviet-style apartment blocks hosting overcrowded single-room apartments neighbouring a characterless, grey, vehicle orientated "business district". Littered with political graffiti on one hand and a plethora of signs on the other, warning; keep out, no entry, do not park, do not walk on the grass, we observed that the meaning and nature of anti-social behaviour varies, dependant on the perceiver. Without a sole around, a feeling of tension and struggle was powerfully laid bare in semiotics and space for us to read (even without command of the Italian language). At the same time, however these polarised symbols of resistance and oppression served to expose the limitations of the practitioner, the ever-changing, underlying complexity of power and identity in a place that one will never truly know. For me, the struggle to make sense of the place and its people was enhanced by the team work, speaking to local people and in turn seeing the place through other conceptual lens'.

The spatial outcome of the study in our group looked toward the poverty and unemployment in the area as an underlying source of changes to the space. This manifested itself in the form of a proposed market. A vibrant space where diverse cultures can come together, to eat, trade and work; bridging a physical and conceptual gap between Brescia and Brescia 2 as well as facilitating communication and integration between all cultures, toward a better understanding; toward the traded stories and tall tales of Euphemia.

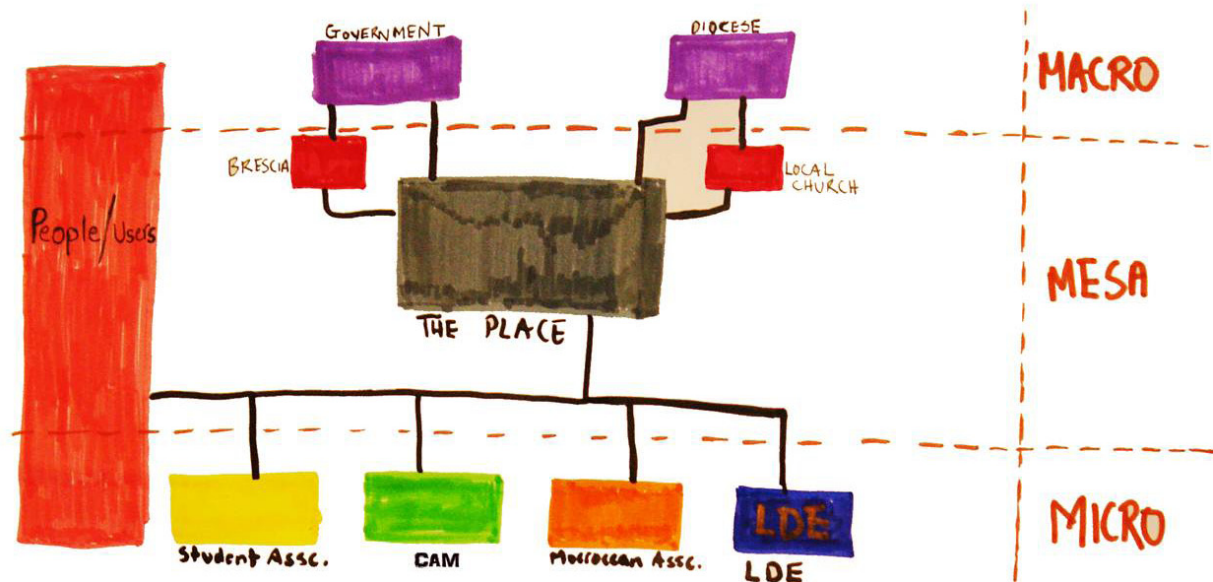
LIZ PRICE (Great Britain)

Second Place - Brescia 2

If there was one place in Brescia you could see residents/visitors of all nationalities and cultures mixing - it is the marketplace.

The coldest winter for 27 years sometimes gave Brescia the feeling of an abandoned Eastern Bloc wilderness, the only signs of life were bird prints in the new snow. People were thin on the ground, making it difficult to imagine the city as 'normal' - which made arrival in the marketplace centre a little more disorientating, but there we found the mixture of goods, people and languages

ACTORS + SCALES



you'd expect to find in any European city.

Outside of the immediate historic centre, our group looked at the area "Brescia 2" – apparently a formal industrial area, it had clearly been an area handed from developer to developer for a number of years. Definitely not designed for people but for business brochures, it is fractured between a business district of look good on paper towers, under used dual carriageway and the city centre killer – the railway line, and a compacted residential area of mixed use. The result is an area characteristic for short term rental, low maintenance with the only aspiration being to leave - for the Italian and newer immigrant population. What a shame!! For a city with such a walkable centre area, the contrast between the 'city centre' and Brescia 2 was like that of walking into a completely different city! At its shortest point the distance between the two couldn't have been more than 200 metres, but over the years it has been treated as a 'different' place. We had to try and present some ideas to bring the two together.

The most interesting part of our research into the area for me was speaking to Archangela, a project leader from the Oratorio, Catholic Youth Centre. Her knowledge of the area may not have been perfect from a spatial perspective, we found when using maps of the area – but her knowledge of the background, attitudes and interaction of the community probably would have taken months of research to rival. The current work of the Oratorio to engage the community frequently takes the children as a starting point, and the lack of fund-

ing from central government for childrens activities has provided an opportunity for the centre to try and bring people together through events and programmes for the children; such as events centred around food, sport or even learning a new language.

It became clear that whilst we were looking at the problems of integration with Brescia 2, another larger problem was the interaction with the area with the rest of the city. Our suggestion in the final stages was the creation of a weekly market on a deserted site very close to the station but one that could be used as a starting point for other events and exploration of the area.

As a starting point, a marketplace epitomises the City of Euphemia; but realistically it fulfils the purpose of an informal, temporary intervention that would bring communities together and help increase interaction between them.

[LUZ NAVARRO ESLAVA \(Spain\)](#)

Reconfiguration of a normal day...small changes that make a difference

I didn't feel like going to Brescia. We expected a really intense week after the trip and I thought it was not the time to have a break, especially during my weekend, the only non-BUDD sphere in my life. However, this feeling disappeared when I arrived to Victoria Station– 15 minutes late, not too bad. Everyone was waiting with a shy smile that reflected the excitement of going to an-

other country, but not really knowing what for. My attitude towards the BUDD camp changed radically, the same smile was drawn in my face. What I did not know then was how this experience was about to change the lens through which I saw a reality we hear everyday, but we don't know in depth. The reality of four women, immigrants, refugees, who live not only their condition as such, but also try to live a normal life in a foreign city, a completely unknown culture and environment and even share their most private realm of the domestic space with complete strangers. In this context I have to say, that these women, even being completely disconnected and not integrated at all at any scale, they were, at the same time, grateful to the city that has taken them.

In the bus to Brescia, we formed the groups and I was assigned to the women's flat. I found this assignment utterly challenging as it shifted my mind from the problematic of an urban wider context I am used to, to a specific problematic of 4 women with a very difficult situation that reflected on to their spatial integration in the neighbourhood where the flat was located. The four refugees came from four different countries: Somalia, Eritrea, Togo and Nigeria, and lived together with their children, five in total. At a first glimpse, when Agostino and Maria introduced the case to our team, we supposed that sharing a similar traumatic history and a present uncertainty and transient situation, would bring them to collaborate together and help each other in their every day life's; that they would organise themselves to live in some kind of coalition between them, and that this could be the main entry point in our strategy to enable a real spatial and social integration with the neighbourhood. A high-middle class neighbourhood that was completely residential, with little social, economic or cultural activities and that because of this, made the integration of these four women and their children even more difficult to achieve.


When we went to the flat to visit them, we had a very warm welcome and were offered different kinds of foods and drinks. This greeting reaffirmed our first assumptions. However, as the evening passed by and we were talking to them and trying to find how they lived, how a normal day in their lives was, how they interacted between themselves and between their close environments, we found out our assumption was completely wrong. Comparing it to the text of *Trading Cities*, the situation here was completely opposite to what happened in the city of Eufemia: these women did not go to Eufemia, but were taken there by a non desired situation, and they were not sharing stories and exchanging experiences, they were living together as isolated micro-families with little real interaction between them. This was clearly reflected on the atmosphere different between the common spaces that were kind of empty and cold and each of their rooms, which for them were clearly their real homes. However, for me, the most striking thing was the fact that they did not help each other

at all when someone was in need; they all managed their problems on their own, problems that all of them shared and that if they could organize and collaborate with each other would be less of a problem.

We realised that the first step to improve their integration in the neighbourhood was to try to create a real integration inside the flat. These four women had the same needs and aspirations, as well as the same fears and anxieties that wouldn't leave their minds for one second. Their mayor concern was the unemployment and the lack of income and how this restrained their independence and autonomy and the wider implications that lack of income had for them. We had to think of ways in which they could work in some kind coalition to achieve these goals and overcome their concerns. Studying how they moved and interacted between each other and the rest of the world outside the flat during the day we saw that everything turned around their children and the jobs; there was nothing else in this life diagram. We had to start at a micro scale and then try to scale up their integration-both physical and social- to a meso and macro scale with different feasible strategies, building up on real assets that LDE had or could facilitate, and engaging these four women in this process through their children.

Our strategy moved around the idea that if we made them participate in different activities outside the flat, this would reinforce their relation and make this cooperation between them real. At the micro level, using LDE as a mediator to talk to schools in the neighbourhood, the idea was that they could offer care services there to other parents in the school. This income would give them the independence, autonomy and dignity they craved for. At a meso scale, the aim was to use the Oratorio which is related as well to LDE to foster cultural exchange between them, other immigrants and brescians, something that is currently happening there facilitated by LDE. The expansion of their social network could also bring them new opportunities for income generation, and would also provide them with moments of leisure, and the recognition of themselves as normal individuals part of a community. When talking to the neighbours we found out that there was a growing problem of xenophobia amongst the young people of Brescia, so we thought that the real challenge was to integrate them at a macro scale with the young people, to create social links with them that would make them understand other realities and would make them feel that these women, the immigrants are also part of the Brescia, that they have to be recognised as equal citizens. We proposed some strategies to involve youth, but also other institutions-with the mediation of LDE- in social activities with the immigrants and that also benefited them from this interaction.

The fact that these women were not integrated in the neighbourhood was not the real problem behind the situation. The challenge was how to make that integration



The objective is to integrate what has been fragmented - to bring home and (potentially) work together, to overcome wide spatial divides, to reduce segregation in racial and perhaps other social-spatial senses."

A. Mabin

behind the walls of the flat. Finding ways through which these women could collaborate inside and outside the flat, and using the children to initiate this gradual process was the only way to achieve the integration that would lead to the recognition of these women as equal citizens of Brescia, and would help them achieve their main goals, which were all shared between them. Our main aim was to find ways to introduce small changes in their life diagram that would reconfigure a normal day in their lives, and how this reconfiguration of a normal day would result in an overall integration.

OJAMA AKAGWU (Nigeria/Great Britain)

Under Brescia

The 3days visit to Brescia was truly an inspiring experience, to see efforts of the community based organisation enabling integration of the marginalised communities such as the refugees and immigrants to integrate into Brescia.

Context

The city of Brescia is one with a multiplicity of ethnic groups, comprising of both internal migrants (southern Italy) and transnational migrants (North African, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe, and China, India & Bangladesh). Brescia has highest migrant population in Italy and is estimated to be 60%.

Intervention

Our task was to encourage social cohesion among all the communities within Brescia. The existing tensions within Brescia are quite complex. While some stem from the global economic crisis, leading to unemployment, and poverty. Some are caused by cultural barriers, which is quite taxing when it comes to encouraging social cohesion, as cultures provide people with ways of thinking, ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the world.

Our intervention sought to bring together the various segregated communities and the Bresciani's together by the introducing an event as a means to encourage community participation, and social cohesion. Our way of encouraging community participation and social cohesion, would be through a weekly market event, where the various communities would bring goods, craft and traditional food to sell. This would serve as an attraction not just to the people within Brescia, but our aim was to connect Brescia with other neighbouring towns.

The assumptions made were that all communities would attend and be willing to participate. But from the interviews we had conducted, we realised within certain marginalised communities groups, some members remained oppressed, such as the women, who were discouraged from attending social gatherings, or interacting with other people. Our intervention although inclusive didn't explore ways to reach out to those members within those communities.



The reflections

As much as we like to promote interventions in order to create better community cohesions, and stimulate team working, from this field trip I have come to an understanding that in some cases, these interventions are more difficult to implement, especially when working within an urban context and dealing with a heterogeneous population with diverse ethnic groups, which bringing about variety of cultural norms and social barriers. Consensus building proves to be more difficult.

The Chinese and Bangladeshi were more organised and could afford to remain isolated from the community at large in Brescia. They found it easier to adapt economically, as they were more entrepreneurial and were able sustain their livelihoods. Although many saw this closed community network as an obstacle towards social cohesion, I do find that this could serve as a potential opportunity area, unpacking, how and how these communities operate, how they support themselves, why they are adaptable, could assist those other marginalised communities to be better organised to support themselves.

Our short visit didn't allow for us to meet with more of the Bresciani's locals, as this would have giving us an insight to understanding Brescia from their perspective. For our intervention to be sustainable the participation of the local population must also be considered. From the interviews we conducted, I could understand why the current tensions existed, the needs local Bresciani's communities weren't been met by the government due to a number of socio-political economic factors, and have being now being faced with a large migrant population. I also learn the importance of community based organisations and what roles they served the community. From the few migrants I met and spoke with, they were pleased with the support and guidance that had been offered to them through the church as it gave them hope and optimism about their future.

Brescia is has a vast amount of development potential in the near future. With the multiplicity of cultures that currently exist, if tourism is to be incorporated into the strategies for development, it could easily market itself as the multicultural city of Italy. However the government needs to work alongside the various communities that exist in Brescia to unpack this potential. Planning with the communities, realising their obstacles and building up the capacity of these communities would aid in the overall development of Brescia.

How integrate the immigrants in all senses? How can we design a city where we have "fires around the market" to sit and trade life's story? The "extra-comunitari", how the immigrants are called in Italian received the prefix 'extra' referring to outside but 'extra' really means: 'one plus', or 'a bonus' or could also have the meaning of 'a high qual-

ity. Italy transforms the refugee that could be a resource in a problem. They are not seen as a plus in which Italians can learn from and share their costumes and traditions.

What is the role of design and urban space to contribute to integrate the immigrants? The presence of immigrants is changing the urban fabric of the city and is interfering in the city plan.

What is peace? What is democracy? Peace is the well being of a society, peace is a relationship without conflicts. The refugees commonly leave a conflict zone searching for peace. The place that received them should be peaceful.

War, conflicts and refuges make part of the same cycle, a cycle that need to be brake at some point. The society need a high level of transformation to perceived that we are all the same, no matter where we where born and where we come from. "Siamo sulla stessa barca" As it was written in the monumental cemetery: "at the end of the days the last true from life will emerge in light". At the end of the days we are all the same. But do immigrant can be buried in the same cemetery as Italians?

The weekend was a very intense and interesting experience. We where not there just to work but to share our histories. As a preparation for the field trip we could notice what is real life and what is your sometimes naïve minds. The most important was to think the design in all its expansion and not just a drawing delivery to a city council. And how apply the different forms of design or anti-design in different occasions.

I am not sure if all the design dimensions were achieved by the group. Perhaps floating from a parachuting in two days I would say is not so easy to understand the live context. I am sure we didn't surprise our host and most of what was presented they had thought already but anyway was a very good exercise, for us! The only thing that bothered me was Desireé's bed. Non-expected things happen and this is out of our control, but how to solve is or should be under our control. The fact that in the last night after we finished the work she didn't have where to sleep made me think why we were in Brescia, to discuss society, how to integrate society, how to make a better society? Boo...I wished this wouldn't happen.

PAOLA FUENTES (Chile)

Reflections of a city from an interior

We can observe socio spatial relations of the city from a large scale like neighbourhoods, infrastructures, transport; to smaller interactions as a house, a playground or a local shop. A different reality is to observe the city from the other way around.

The city of Brescia has appeared to me from a flat. During the three days in this city, almost two of them we spent in an interior of a flat; the time was very different from the time we spent on the street. It was slower and delicate. We had the opportunity to meet four refugees women coming from different countries and their five kids that had the openness of receiving us and shared some parts of their lives. We knew that the flat was isolated from the neighbourhood and new ideas of integration were needed.

This experience would not been possible without the generosity of the 'Associazione Ambasciata Democrazia Locale Zavidovici' ADL who received and shared their work with us during our three days in Brescia.

Women and time

We wanted to focus in their daily routine trying to unpack the relation between them and also with the neighbourhood and the city. We discovered that each women was very independent from the other and despite they were alone with their kids they did not have any support from each other. Life was around their kids and schools. Jobs had to fix around their timetable. Finding a job was not easy for them and this was their main concern to be able to start an independent life with their own families.

The interior

Every woman had their own room that they shared with their child. Each room was a different world, pictures and objects that talk about memories, a far but present story. They were building their homes here, in each room; these were very different compared with the common areas, much more empty, without any appropriation.

This reality showed us the difficulties of share the living space and the necessity to create processes of confidence that can open gates in their independent routines and maybe, in a future, creates mutual support.

We proposed some strategies oriented to expand their social relations in order to increase their contacts and possibilities to find jobs. This expansion can be created also through moments of leisure in the existent community centres or in the schools. These 'moments of share' can bring later some proximity inside the flat and develop, maybe through games, this confidence.

From the flat to the neighbourhood

We observed that it was a distance to the city. Despite that some spaces are open to these women in the neighbourhood, they did not participate. Brescia appeared to me from an interior as a city that gives services; education, health and some community activities are provided in order to support all their citizens. But there is still a long way for the integration of immigrants and refugees. We can see an example of this reality in the continuous searching for jobs of these women.

Integration can happen with a process of recognition of the 'local citizens' (old and specially new generations) of the realities and necessities of the immigrants and refugees. A process where both sides shows what they can offer to each other creating points of interaction based on support and mutual confidence.

RACHEL (Indonesia)

Brescia: a city of refugees

My first impression when arrived in Brescia, it is a very classical Italian city: narrow streets, square plaza, lovely old historical buildings, cafes, beautiful Roman churches and street markets. I knew it before that Brescia is a place where weapons are produced and the place for refugees starting their new life. However, I never realized there is a complexity inside there.

My group had an opportunity to meet 5 refugees, who are living together in one flat, accommodated by LED. The flat is located in a centrally positioned neighborhood in the city. Three refugees, we have a chance to interview with, are from Eritrean, Somali and Afghan. When thinking about refugees and socially- urban spatial, I am asking myself a few questions: What are they doing to start their new life? How is their new life now? Is it easier or even worse? What are their difficulties? How do they connect with the new society or community? Do they feel 'home' in the new place? What are their hopes and aspirations in the new place?



Honestly, it is not easy to make a conversation in asking their opinion about living in the new place, especially when each of them is still struggling with his past bad memory, which he is rejected and 'alone' (nobody cares) in several countries before Italy because his status as a refugee and because he feels that the flat is only a temporary settlement. However, after the interview, it becomes clear that their complexity is not only their worries to be reunited with their families, who still live in their home countries, but also the difficulties to learn Italian language, to find a job, to adapt with the new community and the feeling that they feel 'separated' in the local neighborhood.

We also had an opportunity to interview with the local community. From our investigation, we concluded that some of the communities do not care or, even worse, do not know that refugees live in their area, while the others feel insecure with the existence of the refugees or feel uncomfortable at times, due to the differences of living habits of the refugees. There have been some events, organized by local community to know each other closer in order to make a good relationship between the refugees and local residents, also to grow a 'trust' among them. But the difficulty is there are limited activities, which will entice them, in engaging with single refugee men.

After our short study, we came to the notion to fill their 'gap' and make them more integrated. Our idea is to create a sense of continuity in the integration process by implanting a framework of retaining memories, which is expected to develop the strong solidarity between the community and the refugees. The approach could be as simple as possible by making an initiation ceremony where the refugees and the community are introduced to one another. It could be a simple sport game (since all the refugees in that area are men), which the refugees could play football together with the men from local residents. Another approach is by making community mural to record incrementally the presence of the refugees over time. We believe once they know each other better, creating an integrated community is not more impossible.

SARAH AHMAD (Pakistan)

Brescia Reflection: Enabling Identities & Communities

BUDDCamp 2012 helped illustrate the complex political and social realities connected with displacement, relocation, and identity. Brescia, as I came to understand it, is a locus of multiple ethnicities striving to create a space for themselves in an increasing global environment of scattered identities and placelessness. Working with refugee and migrant groups, under the auspicious guidance and invitation of the LDE (Embassy for Local Democracy), us students undertook an enriching task of navigating urban



and social narratives in an effort to make sense of the often disjointed and difficult lives led by many of Brescia's inhabitants. Our job was to analyze and intervene in four different sites and situations in the northern city of Brescia, Italy. Mr. Agostino Zanotti and his team from the LDE were incredibly gracious and helpful in mentoring us in every way during our trip. The exercise asked us to understand why and how people from nations such as Morocco, Pakistan, China, Iran, Ghana, etc. found themselves living in Brescia and starting their lives as outsiders striving to integrate. In many instances where the paperwork had been completed and refugees and immigrants had gained citizenship, there was still much to be desired by way of making a community.

What struck a chord for me during our 3 days in Brescia was how a city so small could illuminate issues that were so large, so multi-dimensional, and so challenging. Brescia showcased a diversity of cultures, religions, and life styles. In its labyrinthine streets, quaint markets, and quiet café's existed a dormant patience, tolerance, and acceptance of strangers and foreigners. However, this appearance of acceptance had many complex issues that were not visible to the average visitor. There were neighborhoods without spatial and social connections, latent expressions of exclusion, and a hesitation for different ethnic locales to interact. Simply put, the lives of the people in the city were connected through time, but not through space. People did not mix with each other unless they shared an ethnic background; the Italians remained together, the Arabs formed their own cliques, the Chinese had their own community and so on and so forth. There was co-existence, but there was no collaboration.

What BUDDcamp taught me was that there is a crucial step in development and community making that goes beyond being tolerant, accepting, and patient; this is the step of recognition and integration. What we learnt through our interviews, tours, and discussions was that for many migrants institutional and socio-economic recognition remained an arduous and disorienting process. This process needed a middle ground, an authority, an organization or an office that handled social integration through employment provision, legal counseling, and language classes. Moreover, a space for cultural expression and the making of communal ties was desperately needed in Brescia.

This crevice of social empowerment and development was where the role of the LDE repeatedly became highlighted. Central to my analysis was the office and working of the LDE and understanding its potential and role in making communities from various ethnic and social backgrounds come together to make space for their own expression and existence. Working in a group of seven, my classmates and I observed the interchanging uses of the LDE office and discovered how it acted as a multi-purpose space serving the needs and aspirations of a variety of communities. Operating as an ad-hoc multi-cultural center, the office space of the LDE was an encompassing language learning center, meeting place, information center, and most importantly space that enabled individuals and their initiatives.

We were asked to come up with socially rooted spatial interventions or strategies as a culmination of our observations in Brescia. What I found particularly ironic and intriguing was that the LDE headquarters by their very nature were a socially rooted spatial strategy to begin with. Our task thus shifted towards making the presence of the LDE more prominent for locals and the neighborhood.

Making the presence of the LDE more widely known around Brescia could, we believe, help both new and old immigrants to the city better use the facilities that Agostino Zanotti and his team offer. After studying and speaking to the various users of the office space and better understanding its location within the city center, we decided to undertake an intervention of “placemaking”. A revealing and insightful irony illustrated herein is that the LDE strives to help people find a place in Brescia without having been able to give itself a definitive place and function. Therefore, our proposal was one born from a deep sense of admiration and respect for the work done by the LDE and its adjacent organizations. We wanted to give them an established identity and a grounded presence in Brescia. We did this by giving the office a formal name and suggesting the putting up of street signs with directions leading up to the LDE. A list of comprehensive services offered and available would also augur well for the office, for example:

- 1) Legal counseling for immigrants
- 2) Italian & English language courses offered
- 3) Space available through booking for communal events (religious celebrations, cultural evenings, etc.)
- 4) Information about temporary housing also available.

During a conversation with Agostino, he revealed that he did not know who and how many people his work helped or assisted, but that he felt it was important nonetheless. In that one moment during my stay in Brescia, Agostino unwittingly highlighted why communal and developmental outreach remains euphemistic and difficult to explain or assess. There are gray and blurry lines associated with social work that cannot be tangibly seen, but for those who have their finger on the pulse of social inequality and injustice these lines can be felt and experienced. This deeper sense of awareness comes from a compassion that can only be born out of tolerance and the acknowledgement that our greatest strengths lie in sharing, caring, and harmoniously weaving our urban fabric.


STEFANO MASCIA (Italy)

“Vai”, freedom attained and freedom lost

Background

The word “vai” (in English “go”), stayed in my mind from the start of the exercise in Brescia. Its impact and implication explain and summarize the perception and reflection I had during our exercise in Italy. Its significance goes beyond its meaning as a verb, action, becoming a status, a condition that state in an fluid and dark position between helplessness and freedom, opening questions and ideas about the condition of being an immigrant, in particular a refugee, and about what can be done to change this status-quo. I heard the word “vai” first being uttered by a refugee who was being housed in a building owned by the LDE (our hosts and the organization we were analyzing and studying during our trip).

The word “vai”, given the context of understanding and analyzing transience and placelessness, ceased to be just an order, but instead became an almost poetic symbol of freedom attained and freedom lost. This was most apparent in the story of the gentleman we were interviewing who had first heard “vai” when he arrived in Italy full of hope, after 5 month of hard journey to escape from the war in his country. After the police had given him the documents registering his status of refugee, he was told his paperwork was done and he could “go”. This sense of freedom associated with being a refugee was more a form of washing away of responsibilities from the Italian side. Instead of giving this man some reference or contact the police just told him “vai”, and where, how, for what, with whom and to who did not matter, just “go”, like thousands of other people in the same condi-



The logic of uneven development derives specifically from the opposed tendencies, inherent in capital, towards the differentiation but simultaneous equalization of the levels and conditions of production."

Neil Smith

tion. Apparently from this status of freedom start all the contradictions and dark sides of the status of being free. Where do you go if you do not know anybody? You do not have contact and you do not speak the language and you do not know the place that should be your new home?

Refugee Narrative

After a long journey from the north to south, nights spent on the train and in the street he heard that in other country, in his case Holland, they could help him. But the condition of incapacity and enervation only compounded itself there, after discovering that his conditions of refugee was only registered in Italy. He was “put” in a plane to go back in Italy, after he had waited for 8 hours sit in the airport, someone went to speak with him, again the only word that he received was “vai”, with a renewed hopelessness and displacement. However, a fortuitous contact finally directed him to the association (the LDE, Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici) in Brescia, which is helping him to rebuild his life. The association focuses on the capacity of the person to integrate himself in the city, as a citizen, starting from a house, with its rule and regulations, slowly obtaining socio-economic recognition in the neighborhood as a citizen, through learning the new language and making the effort to find a job. Near to the end of the program, he will have to move from the house, and a new worry of recovering himself again in the condition of “vai”. If for the end of the term he does not keep a secure job, he will not know what to do and where to go.

This temporary reality of the refugees made them live an almost ghost life, illustrated through invisibility, uncertainty and anonymity in the city. Therefore my reflec-

tion started upon this realization and I began to question what could be done?

Towards Hope

The LDE can help the people to start a process of bridging the gap between the life they left behind and the new one they are unable to start. What this allows is the stabilizing and/or accommodation of the disorienting status of not knowing where to or how to “vai”. One of the ways in which this bridge can be made is through addressing the collective memories, of the city and its refugees as an entry point towards recognition and acceptance. This becomes an important middle ground.

Moreover, this starts a process in which every person can feel part of the community, the condition of being accepted not as an invisible foreign but as a “real person” with own will and needs. The network of people, the support among each other could be a strengthening force for the process of integration. Through the memory of every person who lived in the house, and the future one as well, a sign of presence in the surrounding area, the invisible and temporal condition can be alleviated, transforming the short six month term, challenging the condition of temporal and individual in a long term process of recognition, dwelling and citizenship, that goes beyond the single human presence.

LDE can help to have new hope, not only for the refugees but for us as well, as citizens and practitioners, teaching that even in a contradictory world, in an imposed international and national political frame full of injustice and negation of human rights, there is the space to negotiate; to make actions and open our cities and societies to new possibilities and hopes.

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