EU Design Day 2026

NEB as a game changer: Rethinking affordable living, housing policies and urban regeneration through the lens of NEB

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INTRODUCTION

After several successful events, EU Design Day has become a concept and a brand recognised by the key players within design at the European level and the European Commission.

EU Design Days breaks down barriers between sectors. Several speeches and networking opportunities offer the chance to share experiences, elaborate on challenges and learn about each other's success stories. By doing so, the EU Design Days format organically creates a unique platform where researchers and designers come together with stakeholders, policy-makers, and SMEs from regions across Europe.

This distinctive concept enables all participants to walk away with not only new contacts and possible new partners but also with valuable input to tackle current challenges in an integrated manner.

The event is an initiative of the **ERRIN New European Bauhaus & Creativity Working Group**, which supports the development and implementation of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) in line with the latest EU policies and the NEB Communication.

It follows EU-level NEB developments while showcasing concrete local and regional activities that demonstrate how design- and creativity-driven approaches can deliver sustainable, inclusive and beautiful solutions in practice, helping to build momentum towards a stronger and more actionable NEB across Europe.

Stuttgart Region

RÉGION SUD PROVENCE ALPES CÔTE D'AZUR

REGIONE AUTONOMA FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

Regione Lombardia

AUTONOME PROVINZ BOZEN SÜDTIROL

PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI BOLZANO ALTO ADIGE

Rethinking affordable living, housing policies and urban regeneration

The 14th edition of the EU Design Day (EUDD) focuses on affordable housing as a key societal challenge, exploring the role of regions in shaping inclusive, sustainable and high-quality living environments through the lens of the New European Bauhaus.

The event focuses on three key thematic dimensions:

1. **Inclusive and social housing**: looking at how housing policies, design approaches and governance models can foster social inclusion, affordability and accessibility.
2. **Sustainable housing and climate adaptation**: looking at the role of housing in the ecological transition, addressing energy efficiency, circular construction, climate-resilience design and the use of sustainable materials, as well as the role of regions as laboratories of innovation and pioneering projects.
3. **Urban regeneration and transformation of the built environment**: looking at the role of culture as a driver of urban regeneration, with an emphasis on territorial approaches, co-creation processes, innovation and resident-centric urban transformation.

Through a series of keynotes, breakout sessions and networking, participants from different backgrounds – regional stakeholders, policymakers, designers, architects – will share their experiences, reflect on challenges and learn from success stories on the topic of housing.

DESIGNDAY

ERRIN European Regions Research and Innovation Network

Designing Affordability and Resilience: Lessons from NEB Blueprints

Olivia Goonatillake

This work is presented by Olivia Goonatillake, a Design Innovation Specialist at PDR, Cardiff Metropolitan University, specialising in policy-led design, sustainability and social innovation.



With a background in fashion and interdisciplinary design, she has worked internationally in commercial, public sector and research environments.

She has worked across New York, the UK and Melbourne gaining diverse international experience at the intersection of design, policy, and innovation, working with organisations like OECD, Design Council, NEB and Welsh Government.

How can design help tackle the challenges of housing affordability while also building climate and social resilience?

The Catalogue of Blueprints for Affordable and Resilient Homes explores this challenge within the framework of the New European Bauhaus, bringing together various real housing projects from across Europe that demonstrate how design can act as a strategic lever for social, environmental and economic transformation.










Rather than presenting housing as a purely technical or financial challenge, the catalogue positions it as a cultural and spatial project rooted in everyday life.

At its core, the catalogue demonstrates what NEB values - sustainability, inclusivity and beauty - look like in practice, across different contexts. It reframes these projects as transferable Blueprints, analysing how spatial strategies, material choices, governance models and social processes respond to specific local contexts.

The aim is to make it easier to see how affordability and quality don't have to be in conflict and how housing can respond to social and environmental pressures simultaneously.

By bringing these examples together, the catalogue acts as a practical learning tool, helping people to understand how thoughtful design can support more inclusive, resilient and sustainable housing, and offers ideas that can be reused and reinterpreted to different European contexts.

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Heritage, housing, and urban regeneration in Bergamo (Lombardy, Italy): A case study of the Montelungo Colleoni Project

Paola Delmonte, Stefano Morosini, Nicola Eynard







The work is shaped by Stefano Morosini, Nicola Eynard and Paola Delmonte, who contribute to the research on heritage-led urban regeneration, governance and socio-economic transformation.

Their interdisciplinary perspective combines urban history, planning analysis and social and financial expertise to explore how underused heritage sites can be reactivated for housing, education and inclusive urban development.

This approach understands regeneration not only as spatial change, but also as a long-term process of institutional cooperation, investment structuring and social impact creation.

Together, their work on the Bergamo case highlights how collaborative governance between universities, public institutions and private investors can transform former military and industrial sites into mixed-use districts.





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How can historic heritage become a driver for affordable housing, education and sustainable urban regeneration?

The experience of Bergamo offers a compelling example of how underused buildings and former industrial or military sites can be transformed into active spaces for community life, learning and social inclusion.

Through long-term collaboration between the university, the municipality, the Lombardy region and private partners, the city has developed a regeneration model strongly aligned with the principles of the New European Bauhaus, combining sustainability, inclusion and architectural quality.

Since its foundation in 1968, the University of Bergamo has adopted a distributed campus model, reactivating monasteries, historic palaces and industrial buildings across the city.

Formerly abandoned spaces have been converted into university campuses and cultural venues, preserving their historical identity while adapting them to contemporary needs.

Projects such as the restoration of the Sant'Agostino monastery and the regeneration of the Astino valley demonstrate how heritage can support both cultural revitalisation and public accessibility.



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A central example is the Montelungo-Colleoni project, an €80 million regeneration of former military barracks abandoned since 1998.

Managed by Near sgr through a partnership involving public institutions, financial actors and the university, the project will transform the 25,000 sqm site into a new urban district with teaching facilities, green areas, shared services, 450 student housing units and 80 publicly accessible apartments.

The project responds directly to growing housing demand in a university city while avoiding additional land consumption.

What makes Bergamo's experience particularly transferable is its cooperative governance model and flexible financing structure, combining public investment, institutional partnerships and private capital.

By integrating heritage preservation with affordable housing, education and public space, the city demonstrates how regeneration can strengthen urban identity, social cohesion and long-term sustainability across different European contexts.

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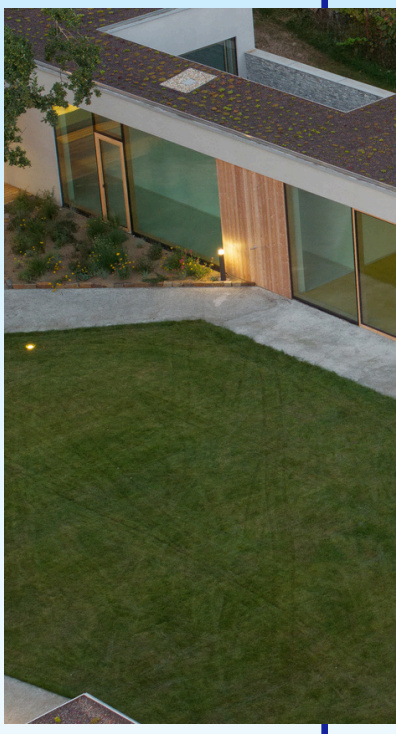
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A place that didn't exist: Designing Czechia's first children's hospice

Karel Kubza







This work is presented by Karel Kubza, architect and founding partner of the Brno-based studio ČTYŘSTĚN, which he leads together with Milan Joja and Tomáš Págo. Their practice focuses on residential and public buildings with a strong attention to social context, combining architectural design with strategic thinking, communication and the broader impact of architecture on people's lives.

Through the House for Juliet, ČTYŘSTĚN demonstrates how architecture can give form to care that has long remained underrepresented in public infrastructure. By helping translate a civic initiative into a calm, family-centred and nature-integrated environment, the project redefines the children's hospice as both a place of support and a place of dignity.

Its collaborative model, combining architectural sensitivity, municipal commitment and NGO expertise, offers a transferable example for European cities seeking to develop more compassionate and inclusive social infrastructure.






How can architecture respond to forms of care that have long remained invisible within public infrastructure?

The House for Juliet (Dům pro Julii), completed in Brno in 2024, offers a pioneering answer as the first dedicated children's hospice in the Czech Republic.

Designed as a place for residential respite care, paediatric palliative support and family accommodation, the project addresses a major gap in healthcare and social infrastructure across Central and Eastern Europe.

The initiative emerged from a deeply personal story. After losing her six-month-old daughter Julinka in a conventional hospital environment lacking emotional and practical support, her mother Petra transformed this experience into a civic initiative advocating for a different model of care.

The result is a facility conceived not only around medical treatment, but around the needs of the entire family. The hospice provides specialist nursing, therapy, psychological support, social work and practical assistance for parents, siblings and relatives navigating life-limiting illness and grief.

Designed by ČTYŘSTĚN studio in collaboration with the NGO Dům pro Julii and the City of Brno, the building establishes a new architectural typology for paediatric hospice care in the region.






Nature-integrated, barrier-free and family-centred, the 2,712 m² facility includes therapy rooms, family accommodation and a dedicated end-of-life apartment, creating a therapeutic environment without the atmosphere of a clinical institution.

The care model is equally innovative, based on personalised support with a one-to-one staffing ratio tailored to each child's needs.

What makes the project especially relevant at European level is its transferable governance and financing structure. Combining EU structural funds, municipal investment, NGO expertise and civic fundraising, the initiative demonstrates how public institutions and civil society can co-create essential social infrastructure.

Awarded the Grand Prize of the Czech Architecture Award 2025, the House for Juliet represents not only an architectural achievement, but also a replicable model for compassionate, inclusive and community-based care across Europe.

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Collaborative housing: Living together, living better. Innovative solutions for social inclusion and innovation in the Province of Bolzano

Samuele Verucchi and Marcello Onofri



The initiative is presented by Samuele Verucchi and Marcello Onofri of Cooperativa Sole, a social enterprise specialising in community-based care services, collaborative housing models and social innovation.



Through its Human360 methodology the organisation combines research, technology and participatory design to develop new approaches to wellbeing, healthy longevity, and inclusive living. Cooperativa Sole also collaborates with partners such as IBM Italy and IBM US to explore how digital technologies and the Internet of Things can support community care and better understand social behaviour.

The Bolzano pilot demonstrates how collaborative housing can contribute to regenerative neighbourhoods, active ageing, and sustainable urban development, offering a transferable model for inclusive housing across Europe.

How can collaborative housing become a driver of social inclusion and regenerative communities?

The collaborative housing model 'Living together, living better' developed by Cooperativa Sole in Bolzano offers a concrete answer. Designed to address ageing, loneliness, housing vulnerability and socio-economic fragility, the initiative transforms housing from a passive welfare service into an active ecosystem of participation, empowerment and community wellbeing.

At the core of the project is the Human360 methodology, an innovative operational model combining collaborative housing, social innovation, life design and impact evaluation. Through this approach, residents are not simply beneficiaries of support services but active co-creators of their own life paths.

Personalised empowerment plans integrate social activation, educational opportunities, work orientation and community participation, promoting autonomy and long-term wellbeing.

The project brings together diverse groups, including older adults, students, single mothers with children and people experiencing socio-economic vulnerability, within shared housing units located in via Aslago, in Bolzano. A key feature is the presence of a community manager, who acts as a bridge between residents, local institutions, universities, social services and neighbourhood organisations.

This role enables solidarity-based initiatives such as mutual help, digital literacy activities, cultural events and accompaniment services, strengthening social cohesion and reducing isolation



Supported by an interdisciplinary team of psychologists, educators, social economists and project managers, the initiative also integrates an impact evaluation framework based on wellbeing indicators and Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology.

Recognised within European research networks and featured as a case study in the ASSETS project, the model demonstrates how collaborative housing can foster regenerative neighbourhoods, active ageing and inclusive urban development. Strongly aligned with the principles of the New European Bauhaus, the initiative presents a scalable and transferable framework for community-based housing and social innovation across Europe.



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Showcasing climate resilience: Demo houses built to withstand flooding and to test solutions at the Danish coastline

Torsten Sack-Nielsen



This work is shaped by Torsten Sack-Nielsen, Associate Professor, PhD and Head of Programme for sustainable built environment at VIA University College.

Trained as an architect, his research focuses on climate-responsive architecture, sustainable construction and adaptive building solutions.

His background in architectural experimentation, material performance and circular approaches to the built environment informs a practice-oriented perspective on climate adaptation.

Through the RESIST demo houses in Lemvig, Sack-Nielsen's work demonstrates how housing can become both resilient to flooding and more environmentally responsible.

By testing full-scale solutions in real coastal conditions, the project connects research, construction practice and public awareness, translating climate adaptation into tangible architectural prototypes.

Its combination of flood-resistant design principles, low-carbon thinking and knowledge-sharing offers a transferable model for European regions seeking to prepare their built environments for rising sea levels and extreme weather.



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How can housing become both climate-resilient and climate-friendly in regions increasingly exposed to flooding?

The demo houses developed along the Danish coastline offer an innovative response by testing building solutions designed to withstand extreme weather events while significantly reducing the environmental impact of construction.

Developed within the broader European RESIST initiative, the project explores how resilient architecture, circular materials and sustainable construction practices can support climate adaptation in vulnerable coastal areas.

At the centre of the initiative are two demonstration houses built as real-life laboratories for testing five innovative design principles focused on flood resilience and low-carbon construction.

Rather than relying only on theoretical models, the project evaluates how buildings can function under actual climate stress conditions, generating practical knowledge for future applications in the built environment.

The houses showcase how climate adaptation measures can be integrated with biogenic materials, circular construction methods and resource-efficient design to minimise CO_2 emissions while improving long-term resilience.

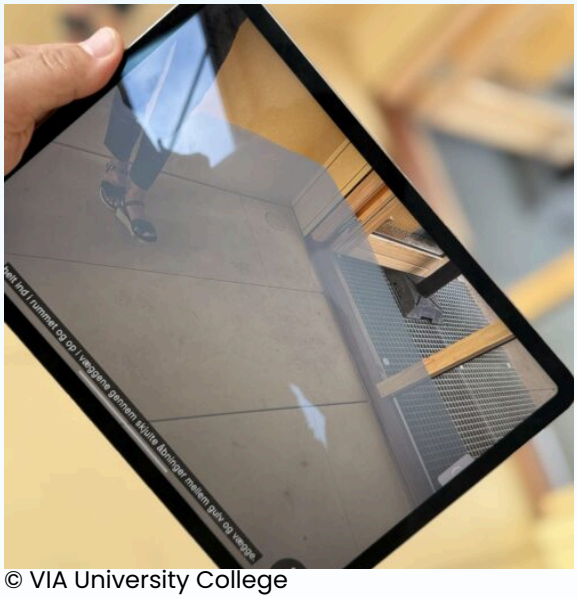
The project also aims to strengthen awareness and knowledge-sharing among citizens, homeowners and professionals operating in vulnerable regions.



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By disseminating lessons learned from the pilot houses, the initiative supports innovation within the construction sector and encourages the adoption of climate-smart solutions capable of responding to increasing flood risks.

In this sense, the demo houses function not only as technical experiments, but also as educational and demonstration tools for communities and stakeholders.

The initiative is particularly relevant at European level because many regions face growing climate-related challenges linked to rising sea levels, flooding and extreme weather events.

Through the RESIST project, tested solutions can be adapted and transferred across different territorial contexts, helping municipalities and regions accelerate climate adaptation strategies.

By combining scientific research, sustainable construction and citizen engagement, the project demonstrates how resilient and low-carbon housing can contribute to the future of climate-smart and sustainable European regions.

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LIFE ReHABITA: Tackling energy poverty through deep renovations and climate adaptation

Pilar Meseguer Sanchez



This work is shaped by Pilar Meseguer Sánchez, Energy and Innovation Specialist at EuroVértice.
An Industrial Engineer with a Master's degree in Renewable Energy from the Polytechnic University of Cartagena, her experience focuses on consultancy in the fields of energy and innovation.

Her involvement in the writing and management of European projects, including LIFE, Horizon Europe and other EU funding programmes, informs a practical and policy-oriented approach to the energy transition. Through LIFE ReHABITA, her work contributes to making deep energy renovation accessible to vulnerable households.

By connecting technical expertise, European cooperation and local support structures, the project demonstrates how climate action can address both environmental and social challenges.

Its focus on ReHABITA Offices, climate shelters and municipal capacity-building offers a scalable model for a fairer, more inclusive renovation process across European cities.

IFE ReHABITA is an EU-funded project focused on tackling energy poverty through deep energy renovations and climate adaptation measures in vulnerable communities.

It supports the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Renovation Wave by promoting sustainable housing and accelerating building upgrades to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

At its core, the project introduces the ReHABITA Offices, one-stop support structures that guide citizens through the entire renovation process, from initial energy advice and grant applications to the coordination of works.

This approach simplifies complex administrative and technical procedures, making energy renovation accessible to households that would otherwise be excluded.

The project also develops 'climate shelters' to strengthen resilience against extreme weather events, while improving living conditions in at-risk neighbourhoods.

In parallel, it invests in capacity-building activities, training municipalities, NGOs, and construction actors to ensure long-term local expertise in energy efficiency and climate adaptation.

A key strength of LIFE ReHABITA lies in its integration of energy poverty measures into local Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), ensuring that its impact is embedded in long-term municipal strategies.



Tested across different neighbourhoods, the methodology is designed to be adaptable and scalable across diverse European contexts. Recognised as a territorial application of the New European Bauhaus, the project combines sustainability, inclusion and design quality, demonstrating that the energy transition can also be socially fair and locally rooted.







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Cultural clauses in planing projects

Maud Le Floc'h



The concept is led by Maud Le Floc'h, Director of POLAU, an urban laboratory she founded in 2007.

As a planner specialising in cultural urbanism, she has pioneered narrative-based approaches to territorial transformation.

Her work with the French government on 'arts and territorial planning' laid the foundation for the cultural clause as both a methodological and legal tool.

By embedding cultural practices into the core of planning, the project redefines how urban transformations are conceived and experienced.

It offers a transferable model for European cities, linking spatial development with storytelling, participation and social cohesion.

How can urban planning go beyond physical transformation to create shared meaning?

The cultural clause concept, developed by POLAU–pôle arts & urbanisme, introduces culture as a structural component of planning processes. Rather than treating artistic interventions as an add-on, this approach integrates cultural activities directly into public tenders and project contracts, ensuring that cultural engagement accompanies every phase of urban development.





Tested through a Living Lab programme, the cultural clause enables a flexible framework of residencies, workshops and public events that evolve alongside planning projects, from early concept stages to implementation.

Whether applied to brownfield regeneration, public space redesign or building rehabilitation, it fosters dialogue between stakeholders and creates narrative continuity throughout the process.



By translating technical challenges into accessible, creative formats, it strengthens citizen engagement and supports more inclusive decision-making.

The initiative brings together local authorities, planners and cultural actors across Europe, forming a network of Living Labs that experiment with culture-led methodologies.

These collaborative environments generate new project models, encourage co-creation and build long-term capacities for integrating cultural strategies into spatial development.

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Place - Creativity - Transformation

Malin Andrén, Björn Ohlén



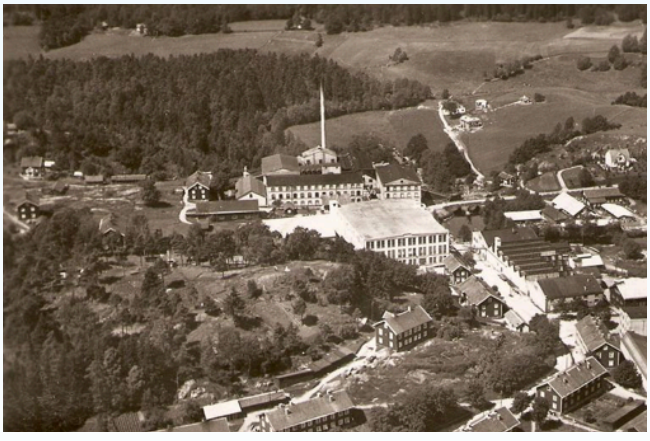


This initiative is presented by Malin Andrén and Björn Ohlén.

Malin holds a Master's degree in Museum Studies and Cultural Heritage. She has worked in the public sector on issues related to democracy, place-based development, social sustainability, and cultural development. Malin is Region Västra Götaland's contact person for Local Chapter West and is responsible for matters related to the New European Bauhaus within Region Västra Götaland.

Björn has a background in heritage and building conservation but the last 15 years he have focused on strenthen the role of culture and heritage in regional development in the culture administration in Region Västra Götaland, Sweden.

Björn was responsible for setting up the NEB- project Culture, crestivity, transformation. In 2026 he works as a culture strategist in one of the subregions in Västra Götaland.







How can culture unlock the potential of underused spaces?

The initiative Place – Creativity – Transformation in Sweden's Västra Götaland Region explores this question through a regional approach to culture-driven place development.

Since 2026, ten sites have been selected from 55 applicants to take part in a transformation process, focusing on former industrial and infrastructural buildings such as factories and railway stations.

These locations are being reimagined as cultural clusters that combine creative production with new forms of spatial use.

At the core of the project is the ambition to connect cultural practitioners with property owners and municipalities.

By fostering collaboration across these groups, the initiative seeks to establish sustainable, long-term models for the use of spaces.

The selected sites develop place-based business strategies that not only support cultural activities but also generate new economic opportunities. At the same time, the process strengthens individual cultural clusters while building networks between actors across the region.

This work is supported by Västra Götaland Region, Sweden's largest region with 49 municipalities, where interdisciplinary teams guide and advise local stakeholders.

By reactivating existing buildings and embedding them in local ecosystems, the project demonstrates how culture can drive regeneration.

It highlights the broader value of cultural and creative industries, not only as economic drivers, but as forces for social cohesion, identity, and long-term regional development.

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La Friche: a laboratory for urban regeneration through culture



Alban Corbier-Labasse

This project is shaped by Managing Director Alban Corbier-Labasse, whose experience spans cultural institutions in France and the French cultural network abroad, including Brazil, Mexico, Senegal and Morocco. His background in international cooperation informs a collaborative, cross-cultural vision.

Through initiatives such as T-Factor and Future DiverCities, it contributes to sustainable urban development, demonstrating how former industrial sites can become dynamic, inclusive spaces addressing social, ecological and economic challenges.

How can culture drive urban regeneration?

La Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille offers a compelling answer. Established in 1992 on the site of a former tobacco factory, the 100,000 m² complex has evolved into a vibrant cultural and social hub. Today, it welcomes over 500,000 visitors annually and hosts more than 650 events, positioning itself as a key 'third place' within the city.





At its core, La Friche functions as a living laboratory: an open space for experimentation where new forms of collective life, artistic production and urban practices are explored.

Its industrial architecture has been reimagined through flexible and reversible design, allowing spaces to adapt to diverse cultural uses. Exhibition halls, performance venues, community gardens, sports facilities and childcare services create an inclusive ecosystem that brings together residents, artists and visitors, encouraging a shared reappropriation of public space.

A defining feature is its cooperative governance model. Operating as a Société Coopérative d'Intérêt Collectif (SCIC), La Friche relies on a horizontal structure where users, producers, employees and public stakeholders contribute to decision-making. This strengthens local engagement and has helped revitalise the historically isolated Belle de Mai neighbourhood.

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Ideas, doubts and expectations - Communication and participation for Stuttgart's New City District



Fabian Jensen

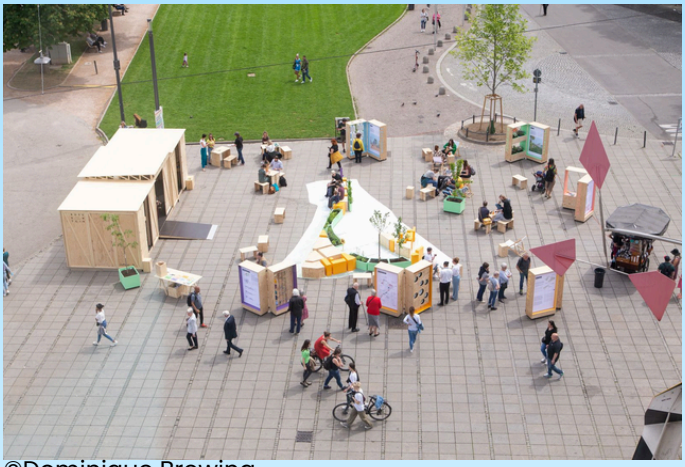
This work is led by Fabian Jensen, Head of Communications for Stuttgart Rosenstein at the City of Stuttgart. Trained as a Strategic Designer, his practice focuses on the development of meaningful communication strategies, with a particular interest in exhibition design and urban development.

Alongside his role in the municipality, he is also active as a freelance speaker and lecturer, bringing a design-oriented perspective to public communication and participation.

Through Stuttgart Rosenstein, Jensen's work demonstrates how strategic communication can become a central tool in complex urban regeneration processes.

By addressing citizens' ideas, doubts and expectations through dialogue, public formats and participatory processes, the project seeks to build trust in a sensitive context shaped by the legacy of Stuttgart 21.

In doing so, it offers a relevant model for European cities, showing how transparent communication and civic engagement can support more inclusive, socially accepted and future-oriented urban transformation.


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How can communication and citizen participation shape the future of large-scale urban regeneration projects?

The Stuttgart Rosenstein project in Stuttgart offers an important example of how dialogue and public engagement can support the transformation of complex and controversial urban areas.

Developed on the former railway track fields connected to the Stuttgart 21 infrastructure project, Rosenstein will become the largest urban development initiative in the city, providing housing for around 10,000 residents, with approximately half of the units publicly subsidised.

The project emerges within a particularly sensitive context.


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TThe Stuttgart 21 rail redevelopment sparked intense public debate and protests over many years, culminating in a referendum in 2011.

Against this background, communication and participation have become central components of the planning process.

Rather than limiting public involvement to formal consultation, the city has developed a broad range of dialogue and participatory formats aimed at building trust, gathering feedback and responding to citizens' concerns throughout the project's evolution.

Led by Fabian Jensen, Head of Communications for Stuttgart Rosenstein, the initiative explores how strategic communication can help address doubts, expectations and conflicting visions surrounding urban transformation.

The approach seeks to engage urban society as a whole, while paying particular attention to groups affected by housing affordability and access to public space.

Through workshops, public events and participatory processes, citizens are encouraged to contribute actively to discussions about the future district.

The experience is highly relevant at European level because many cities are facing similar challenges linked to the regeneration of former industrial or railway sites.

Like projects in cities such as Strasbourg or Amsterdam, Stuttgart Rosenstein demonstrates how participation can become an essential tool for creating more inclusive, transparent and socially accepted urban development processes.

The case highlights the importance of combining housing strategies, infrastructure transformation and citizen engagement to shape sustainable and liveable cities for the future.

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Urban regeneration in Amsterdam and Rotterdam: Studio-based scenario planning for Haven Stad and Rijnhaven

Rana Habibi



This work is led by Rana Habibi, Senior Researcher and Lecturer in Urbanism at BUAS. With a PhD in Architecture and international experience in urban design across Europe and Asia, her research bridges practice and academia.

Her focus on inclusive urbanism, climate-responsive design and non-Western urban histories informs a critical, globally aware perspective on regeneration.

By positioning the university as an active urban actor, the project demonstrates how education, research and governance can intersect.

It offers a transferable model for European cities, showing how collaborative, design-led approaches can generate more inclusive, adaptive and context-sensitive urban futures.





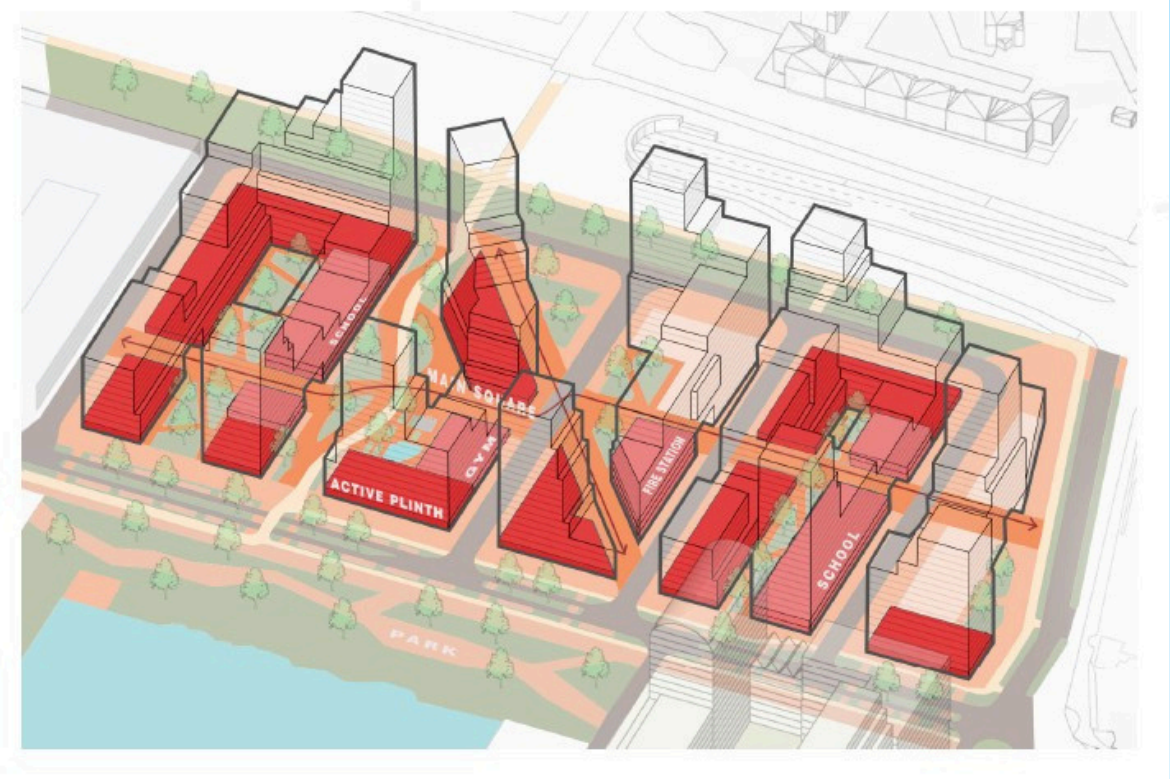
How can universities actively shape the future of cities?

The urban regeneration projects for Haven Stad in Amsterdam and Rijnhaven in Rotterdam explore this question through studio-based urban design research at Breda University of Applied Sciences.

Both initiatives focus on the transformation of post-industrial waterfronts, where former port and industrial areas are being reimagined as mixed-use urban districts.

At the core of the approach is a shift from traditional top-down planning toward participatory, scenario-based design. .





Public space network

Within the studios, students developed alternative urban futures for complex sites such as Amsterdam Noord and Rotterdam's inner harbour.

These scenarios addressed key challenges including housing, mobility, ecology, heritage and social inclusion.

By working closely with municipal authorities, who co-defined briefs, attended reviews and evaluated proposals, the studios became platforms for co-production, linking academic research directly to real planning processes.

The methodology embraces uncertainty and negotiation, encouraging diverse visions ranging from incremental, community-led transformation to large-scale infrastructural change.

In doing so, it reflects the reality of contemporary urban regeneration, where multiple stakeholders with competing interests must collaboratively shape outcomes.

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Turning a former prison into a neighbourhood anchor: Temporary use in Brno's Káznice

Aneta Kovářová



This work is shaped by Aneta Kovářová, a specialist in regional policies, strategic cooperation and creative industries at the City of Brno.

Working within the municipality's strategic development framework and the Kreativní Brno platform, her practice connects cultural policy, urban development and support for the creative sector.

This position allows her to approach regeneration not only as a matter of physical transformation, but also as a process of building networks, testing uses and strengthening local cultural ecosystems.

Through the temporary activation of Káznice, Kovářová's work contributes to reimagining a historically sensitive and long-neglected site as a neighbourhood anchor.

By supporting gradual, flexible and community-oriented uses before full redevelopment begins, the project demonstrates how public buildings can generate immediate social and cultural value.

Its combination of municipal strategy, creative-sector engagement and respect for memory offers a transferable model for European cities seeking to turn vacant heritage sites into inclusive spaces for participation, culture and local belonging.

How can temporary use support urban regeneration before long-term redevelopment begins?

The case of Káznice, the former prison in Brno, offers an innovative example of how neglected and historically sensitive sites can become active spaces for community life, culture and social inclusion.

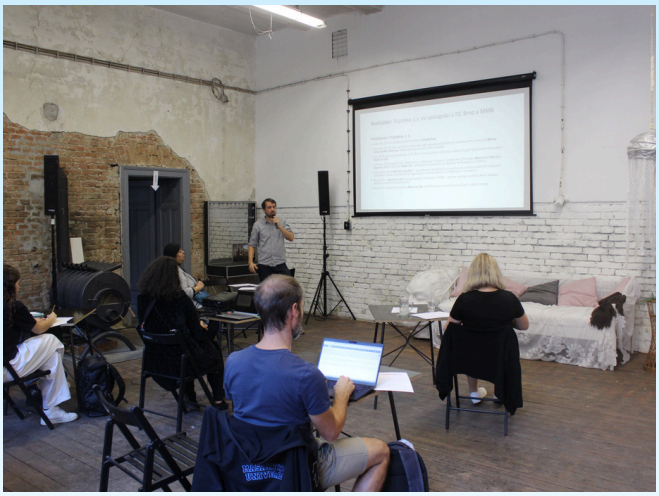
Located in a neighbourhood shaped by long-term social challenges, the former prison remained closed and disconnected from everyday urban life for many years.

Rather than waiting for full reconstruction, the site has gradually been reopened through temporary cultural, educational and community-based activities.

The initiative demonstrates how temporary use can generate immediate public value without requiring major physical transformation.

Through non-invasive and flexible interventions, the site has become more accessible, welcoming and socially connected, creating opportunities for local residents, young people, artists and cultural organisations to engage with the space.









This gradual activation process has helped improve perceptions of safety, strengthen neighbourhood identity and encourage cooperation between public institutions, local organisations and citizens.

What makes the Káznice experience particularly relevant is its understanding of regeneration not only as a physical process, but also as a social and cultural one.

The project highlights how shared activities, participation and openness can contribute to rebuilding trust and belonging in vulnerable urban areas. At the same time, the approach remains sensitive to the historical memory of the site, balancing preservation with new forms of public use.

The case is highly transferable to other European cities facing similar challenges related to vacant public buildings, brownfield sites and socially fragile neighbourhoods.

Its strength lies in its simplicity and adaptability: instead of relying on immediate large-scale investment, the model tests future uses step by step through collaboration and real-life experimentation.

In this way, Káznice demonstrates how temporary use can become a practical tool for inclusive urban regeneration, community activation and sustainable neighbourhood development across Europe.

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