SWITCH

ON

MEHRINGPLATZ

BERLIN

This is one in a series of 6 brochures about the project Euler. Euler took place from 2015 to 2017 in Antwerp, Barcelona, Berlin and London.

Euler aims to contribute to the development of cities by harnessing the skills, competences and capacities of local people. Through peer-to-peer, cooperative and solidarity actions citizens learn but also teach each other skills that will be crucial in the future of work. Euler looks at the different ways in which this sharing and exchange takes place, and tries to derive methods that will allow others to also benefit from these empowering and emancipating practices.

Euler is a project from Transit Projectes, ndvr and Tesserae and is coordinated by City Mine(d).

For more details contact City Mine(d) at jim@citymined.org

SWITCH

ON

MEHRINGPLATZ

BERLIN

This booklet is the final outcome of the training program developed in Berlin by Tesserae Urban Social Research within the EULER transnational exchange, a collaboration between organisations from Antwerp, Barcelona, London and Berlin. The aim of our programme has been to promote participatory methodologies for social and entrepreneurial initiatives at the scale of the neighbourhood. The following report is structured into three parts. In the first we outline the general features of the neighbourhood selected for the application of our methodology and the reasons why it was considered a fertile ground for our territorial laboratories. In the second we present the calendar of training activities that have taken place. The modules correspond to the structure of the methodological toolset that we have specifically assembled for this programme. The third one shortly introduces the concept of an online neighbourhood atlas of which a prototype was designed as an experimental outcome of our activities.

PART 1
SÜDLICHE FRIEDRICHSTADT: A PERIPHERY AT THE CENTER

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Mehringplatz and the surroundings of the Südliche Friedrichstadt have been selected for the EULER application as an emblematic spot of today's Berlin. Situated in a very central location – once the periphery of West Berlin bordering the Wall – its unclassifiable mix of incongruent elements and landscapes makes up a quintessential Berliner place, embodying all of the contradictions and spillovers that make up this city's identity. Today, this former public housing complex conceived in the Sixties by famous modernist architect Hans Scharoun is faced by strong transformative tensions, urban regeneration programmes, new economic trends, immigration flows and latent gentrification.
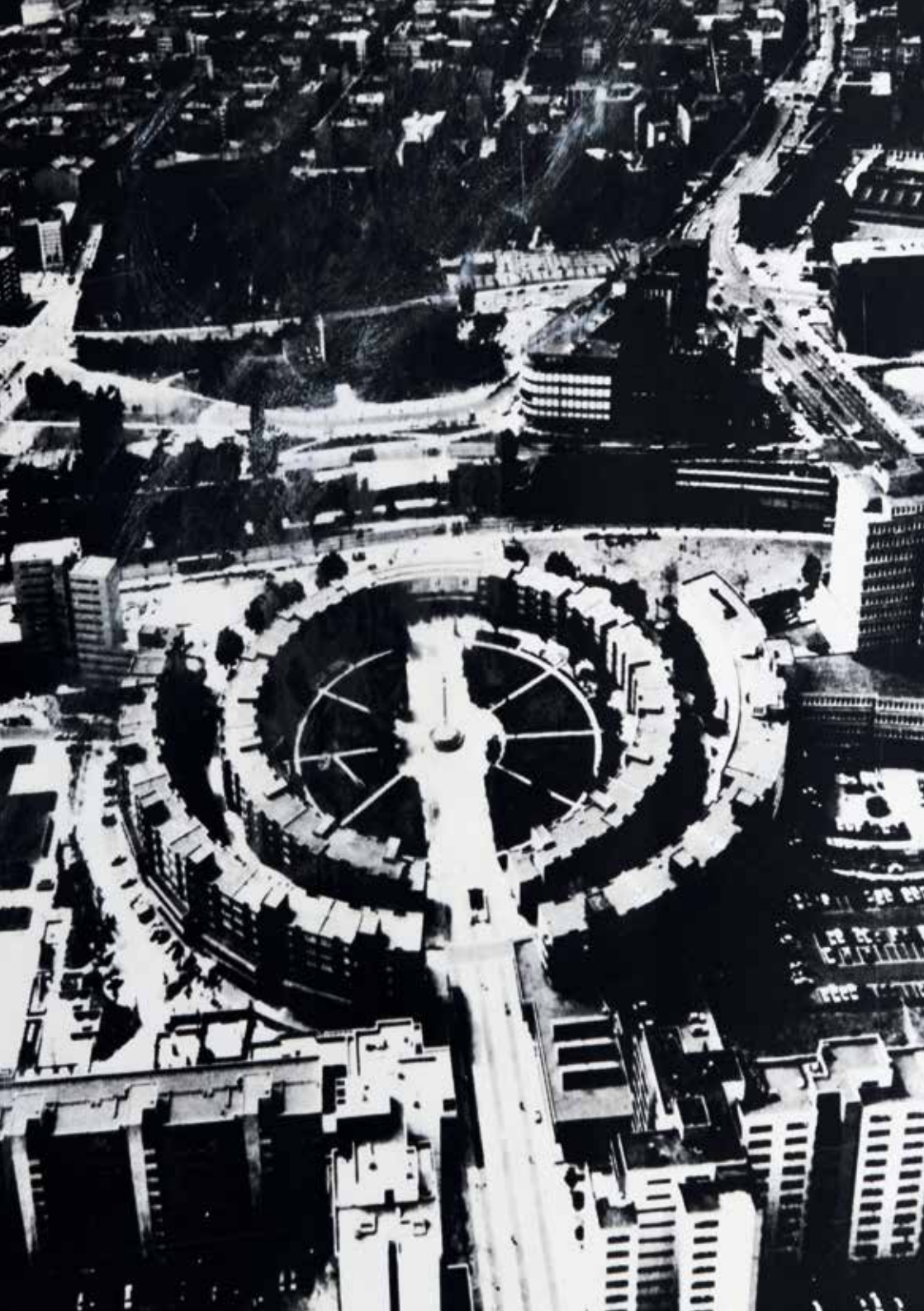
A periphery in the centre. Throughout its history, Mehringplatz has been characterized by the opposing dynamics of centralization and peripheralization. Merhingplatz is situated at the crossroads of two main axes of the city, the north-south oriented road Friedrichstrasse and the east-west Ufer along the canal, whilst sitting adjacent to Hallesches Tor – one of the main gates of the wall which surrounded the city in the eighteenth century. The round plaza (*Rondell*) was designed in 1720 as part of the city extension undertaken by King Frederick William I, inspired by the model of Piazza del Popolo in Rome. The successive expansion of the city repositioned Belle-Alliance-Platz, as it was named after the Napoleonic wars, as a thriving, central area until it was razed through heavy bombing during the Second World War. With the construction of the Berlin Wall, this area found itself as a periphery in the suffocated West Berlin, only a few hundred metres away from the infamous Checkpoint Charlie. In such a historical setting, the plans for the reconstruction of the *Rondell* were initially designed by Hans Scharoun, but were in fact finalised in the 1970s by his collaborator Werner Düttman. Originally conceived as a commercial hub connected to infrastructural projects that were never actually realised, the project turned into a social housing estate, populated by a dense concentration of citizens supported by social programmes, the majority of which with migrant background. Despite its central location, by the end of the twentieth century, Mehringplatz has the typical social profile of a modernist *banlieu*.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the neighbourhood experienced an important recentralization process resulting from the reunification of Germany and the progressive reconnection and healing of the divided city. In 2005, the area around Mehringplatz was targeted by the national *Soziale Stadt* programme (Socially Integrative City), identifying this territory as a deprived neighbourhood in need of specific social support. *Soziale Stadt* is a complex and comprehensive community-led local development scheme that combines a tight spatial focus, local participation, and the integration of policies, as well as human and financial resources.

The Programme is locally coordinated by a *QuartierManagement*, a team which provides a platform for networking and interaction, enabling groups and actors to debate and identify local needs, values and responses. In 2009, the study *Kreative Raumpioniere am Mehringplatz* developed a strategy to support the settlement of cultural actors and creative industries in the area.

The vision was successively developed in a set of projects mobilizing a mix of private and cooperative investors, *Kunst- und Kreativ-Quartier am ehemalige Blumengroßmarkt* (KuKQ), and was taken on within the framework of a Regeneration Area Plan approved in 2011 (*Sanierungsgebiet*). This Regeneration Area Plan complements the new constructions financed by private stakeholders with a set of publicly-funded infrastructural and public space renewal projects. In 2015, a temporary architectural structure, the *Bauhütte*, was created with a combination of private and public resources to act as an interface between locals and the incoming inhabitants/stakeholders, hosting among other events the meetings of the *Sanierungsbeirat* (regeneration advisory board). Recently, the area has been recognized as a *Milieuschutzgebiet*, designated with a public interest status as an area to be protected from gentrification and preserved in its original character and social mix.

The combination of different investments and policies being implemented in the last years have promoted public interest in the area, but also tensions among inhabitants because of potential displacement of vulnerable groups.

The main reason for choosing the Südliche Friedrichstadt as an application area for our project has been the complex composition of public policies, economic opportunities and social demands influencing local development. Understanding this socio-economic scenario, and investigating its implications for the local economy and employment, have been the main objectives guiding our programme.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT AND BENEFICIARIES

The aim of the EU Erasmus + project is to provide training with a focus on skills and competences developed in informal contexts and grassroots initiatives. The *Switch On Mehringplatz* programme has been structured into different modules of laboratories and a set of conferences (public conversations) focusing on inclusive methodologies for the facilitation and representation of territorial contexts and community initiatives. The complementary goal has been to fine-tune a toolset for participative urban analysis and representation supporting the training of hybrid professional actors who are able to employ innovative methodologies at the neighbourhood level. Finally, in testing the tools in the specific context of the Südliche Friedrichstadt, we set a further objective in experimenting with a prototype for a neighbourhood atlas aimed at assessing potentialities and local resources available for social and entrepreneurial initiatives. We named this outcome "Neighbourhood Solidarity Curriculum" to shift the attention from the individual capacity to the collective potential expressed by a given socio-spatial milieu.

Due to the limited timeframe of the project and our organisation's position in the local context as a relative outsider, we refrained from delivering a programme directly aimed at local residents. We rather targeted professional figures working within local communities and initiatives with roles of facilitation, intermediation or planning. The beneficiaries addressed by the programme have been identified among social entrepreneurs, civil servants, activists and artists, with the objective to deliver a toolset for participative methodologies enriching their capacity to intervene in local territories.

PARTNERSHIP

Once we identified the area for the application and the target beneficiaries, we initiated a survey of local stakeholders, with particular attention given to organisations active around Mehringplatz in the field of social care, integration and creative industries. As noted above, the mix of location, social composition and concentration of public policy programmes has produced a complex, fragmented and sometimes competitive landscape of organisations acting in this territory with a variety of purposes and legal forms.

Being part of an EU-funded programme, a delicate question for us in this context has been how and where to position ourselves to avoid being seen as yet another organisation competing for a place in the social work market. We finally identified *Supermarkt Berlin*, a platform for digital culture, alternative economies and new forms of work that had been active on Mehringplatz for two years, as an ideal partner organization to settle our programme.

Their organization runs a very central working space in Mehringplatz, an ideal vantage point from which to observe the neighbourhood, as well as a very visible place to have a public presence. In addition, *Supermarkt* is representative of the type of new actors involved in the creative industries increasingly settling in the area. Furthermore, it has a specific attention to new fair economic models and good connections with national and international networks. *Supermarkt* independently runs its own workshops and conferences, which gave us the possibility to include some of their public events in the framework of thematic discussions that were part of our training programme.

PART 2
SWITCH ON MEHRINGPLATZ: TOOLS FOR COMMONING

METHODOLOGY

Understanding the local context is an essential prerequisite for any meaningful intervention. This is the principle we based our training methodology on. Whether in the field of planning and policy making, social services and care, education or enterprise development, targets and solutions may be sectoral, specific and tailored – but the preceding analysis must be wide-angled and able to frame the complexity of factors that influence a local identity, whilst also determining its socio-economic condition.

Mehringplatz Anknipsen ("Switch On Mehringplatz", but also "Let's frame Mehringplatz") aims at understanding and fostering the neighbourhood as a common platform where social initiative and entrepreneurship can spread. In this regard, particular attention has been put on a commons based approach to urban governance and economies, as underlined by the chosen subtitle of the programme "Tools for Commoning". The programme focuses on participative techniques for spatial analysis such as urban reconnaissance, collaborative mapping and digital storytelling to capture local characteristics and contradictions, whilst also fostering engagement and cooperation. Three training modules have been conceived as successive steps into a socio-spatial analytical process going from understanding the multiplicity of aspects that qualify a given urban context, to representing its key elements, and finally expressing personal views or narratives.

The first module focused on Urban Reconnaissance, a methodology of spatial analysis developed by the *ogino:knauss* collective / *Tesserae* as a key participative exploration methodology. It aims at disentangling the complexity of factors that contribute to a given spatial identity using a series of exercises for spatial exploration. The second module tackled how much of the complexity of diverse elements can be represented and schematised through collaborative mapping techniques. Finally, the digital storytelling module introduced tools for the production of simple and effective place narratives, aimed at expressing personal points of view within a collective cognitive process.

![SWITCH ON]	PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS	URLAB	MAPLAB	STORYLAB
COMMONING	26th Oct 2016 7PM **Commons in Practice** Conversation with Silke Helfrich	27th Oct 2016 10AM **City of Commons**	19th Nov 2016 2PM - 7PM **Map as a Commons**	26th Nov 2016 2PM - 7PM **Collective Narrations**
COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIES	9th Dec 2016 7PM **Platform Coops** Conference on digital cooperative economies in collaboration with SUPERMARKT / AGORA	10th Dec 2016 2PM - 7PM **Platform City**	26th Jan 2017 2PM - 7PM **Mapping Actors and Economies**	21st Jan 2017 2PM - 7PM **Place Narratives**
NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVES	15th Feb 2017 7PM **Activating local Knowledge** Conversation on bottom up initiatives with Prinzessinengärten.	18th Feb 2017 10AM - 5PM **Spontaneous City**	24th Mar 2017 2PM - 7PM **Connecting Layers**	22nd Apr 2017 2PM - 7PM **Collecting Stories**
ARTISTIC/ACTIVIST STRATEGIES	23rd Mar 2017 7PM **Strategies for change** Conversation with MetroZones	15th Jul 2017 10AM - 5PM **Representing the Neighbourhood**	2nd Jul 2017 **Neighbourhood Atlas**	1th Jul 2017 2PM - 7PM **Urban Sketches**

The laboratories were supplemented by a set of public conversations focused on key themes of the debate on urban development and innovative economic and employment models, including themes such as the commons, platform cooperatives, informal learning and creative strategies for local empowerment. The public events were organised in a calendar formulating a path towards a methodology for urban intervention. Each meeting within the programme – whether conference or workshop – was structured around one or more key questions that were also displayed on the posters and leaflets. The themes introduced by the conversations were employed to "horizontally" connect the three modules. Each of the twenty events scheduled in the programme has been conceived as complete on their own, but the participants also had the choice either to follow "vertically" an entire module dedicated to one specific technique, or to horizontally follow three labs dedicated to different techniques but connected by one thematic reflection. In the course of the programme, the calendar of workshops and their content was slightly adjusted according to the needs of the participants and organisational contingencies, as well as to local initiatives providing further opportunities to interact with the neighbourhood.

As an additional outcome, the training activities were employed to test an experimental format named "Neighbourhood Solidarity Curriculum", a local atlas devoted to map resources, memories and current transformations – with the ultimate purpose to sustain social capital and solidarity networks.

PROJECT'S IDENTITY AND OUTREACH

After identifying the area of intervention, the objectives of the training programme and its structure, the next step was to create a visual identity able to define and communicate the project to the outside world. A specific graphic identity has been designed for the Mehringplatz laboratory both with the aim of promoting the training programme and of testing principles for effective place branding as part of the techniques and skills necessary for our neighbourhood curriculum tool set. Analysing the morphology and the geographical location of the area, we outlined the round shape of Mehringplatz as a strong visual element characterizing the local identity. Historically built on the model of Piazza del Popolo in Rome and rebuilt in the 1970s in the same circular shape according to Hans Sharoun's modernist design, seen from an aerial perspective the *Rondell* looks like a target pointing to a main node of Berlin's urban fabric. But its shape is also strikingly similar to a computer switch button icon. Naming the project "Switch On" and accordingly designing the logo has been one move. Furthermore, the German expression *Mehringplatz Anknipsen* has the double meaning of "Switch on" as well as "Let's frame Mehringplatz", alluding to the scope of mobilizing the local community, as well as to the goal of comprehending the socio-spatial context.

A chromatic palette, a font set and specific graphic design codes have been created by designers Manuela Conti and Sergio Segoloni and employed all along the activities to design posters and flyers, webpages, video motion graphics, map layers and icons – creating a recognizable and congruent visual language marking the project in all its outcomes. Particular attention has been dedicated to use inclusive design principles in all printed and online features, respecting accessibility and usability for impaired audiences, i.e. people with visual impairments.

SKETCHES AND STORIES   MONUMENTS AND MEMORIES   INFRASTRUCTURE   STAKEHOLDERS
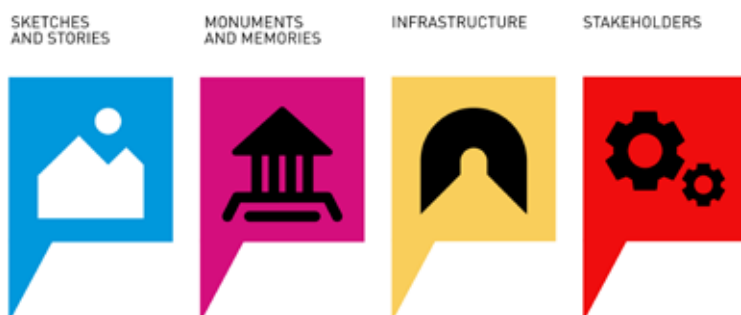
The activities of the laboratories have been communicated through a wide set of channels and media – both in English and also German. Posters and flyers announcing public events and workshops have mainly been distributed in the neighbourhood and in a targeted circuit of universities, schools, bookshops and galleries. Announcements and reports about laboratories and public events have been published on the **eulerproject.eu** and **tesserae.eu** websites. A mailing list has been created to specifically reach people interested in the programme, while the general mailing lists of local partners have been employed for the launch of the events, including those of *Tesserae*, *Supermarkt* and the *Mehringplatz Quartiermanagement*. Twitter and Facebook accounts have been used extensively, not only to advertise and repost information about the laboratories, but also as tools to collect information, complement the field exploration and connect with similar initiatives and resources.

THEMES AND PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

The public conversations had the purpose of introducing the different stages of the laboratories that investigated the local context of Mehringplatz. The laboratories also enabled a broader reflection on innovative practices and models that affect local economies and governance. These events, open to an audience beyond the participants of the laboratories, were organised in collaboration with other organisations that are active in Berlin and facilitated discussions and exchanges on experiences and struggles in the field, whilst also providing networking opportunities for different local initiatives. Next to the main partner, *Supermarkt*, events were created in collaboration with and participation of *European Alternatives*, *Nachbarschaftsakademie* and *metroZones*, who were invited to introduce their work and present projects and methodologies on the specific topics under discussion. The public events took place at Mehringplatz in the evenings and were always well-attended by an active audience. The main presentations were documented through audio and video recordings with edited versions being published on *Tesserae*'s Vimeo channel. The presentations were also disseminated through the project's blog, newsletters, and social media accounts shortly after the events. The thematic conversations were directly connected to the laboratories of *Urban Reconnaissance*, where a set of spatial explorations were designed to investigate geographies related to the discussions.

COMMONS IN PRACTICE

with Silke Helfrich and the participation of Martin Pairet, Ela Kagel, Lorenzo Tripodi. Chaired by Laura Colini.

What is an urban commons in practice?
Should we understand the city in itself as a commons?
Do commons oriented economies represent feasible alternatives to capitalist models?

18

The above questions were discussed with Silke Helfrich on 26 October during the opening event of the *Switch On Mehringplatz* laboratory. The discussion focused on the practical implementation of the commons and dealt with the question of how "commoning" may represent a concrete tool for improving the collective capacity to shape and manage neighbourhoods and promote more just and sustainable economies. Co-organised with *European Alternatives* and *Supermarkt*, the discussion aimed at connecting the local scale of intervention with the necessary quest for transformative changes on a greater scale – though without neglecting how most of the issues that affect lives at a neighbourhood level are determined on a transnational/global scale. The discussions were supplemented on 27 October with an urban reconnaissance workshop exploring the Südliche Friedrichstadt and its surroundings, which was coordinated by the *ogino:knauss* collective.

PLATFORM COOPS

This event organized by *Supermarkt* was aimed at gathering key players of the platform cooperativism movement to explore shared values, common goals and a joint political agenda. Over the course of two days, participants were introduced to cooperative structures – from learning how to start off and run cooperative businesses to exploring visionary ideas about platform coop design and its impact on politics, markets and society at large.

ACTIVATING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The third public conversation of the *Switch On Mehringplatz* programme involved the activists of *Prinzessinnengarten* who discussed the capacity of bottom-up voluntary projects to foster urban transformation.

What skills and competences are formed and shared in spontaneous citizens' initiatives? How can these be promoted and mobilised? What practices can be employed to empower communities and foster a more just and sustainable city?

These questions were debated on Wednesday, February 15 in a talk with Marco Clausen of *Prinzessinnengarten* and the *Nachbarschaftsakademie*, as well as with Andreas Unteidig, of *Design Research Lab*, the *Berlin University of the Arts (UdK)* and *MAZI*.

The discussion concluded on Saturday, February 18 with the third *Urban Reconnaissance Lab* dedicated to the exploration of the "Spontaneous City".

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

How can we employ artistic practice to foster urban transformation and social empowerment? What languages can be used to involve marginalised social groups and reclaim the right to the city?

Such questions were the starting point for a discussion with the members of *metroZones* Kathrin Wildner, Christian Hanussek and Erwin Riedmann. They introduced the manifold experience of the *metroZones* collective in urban research, art and education and presented some of their recent projects: "Hellersdorfer Tapete", "metroZapp" in Moritzplatz and the "metroZones School for Urban Acting".
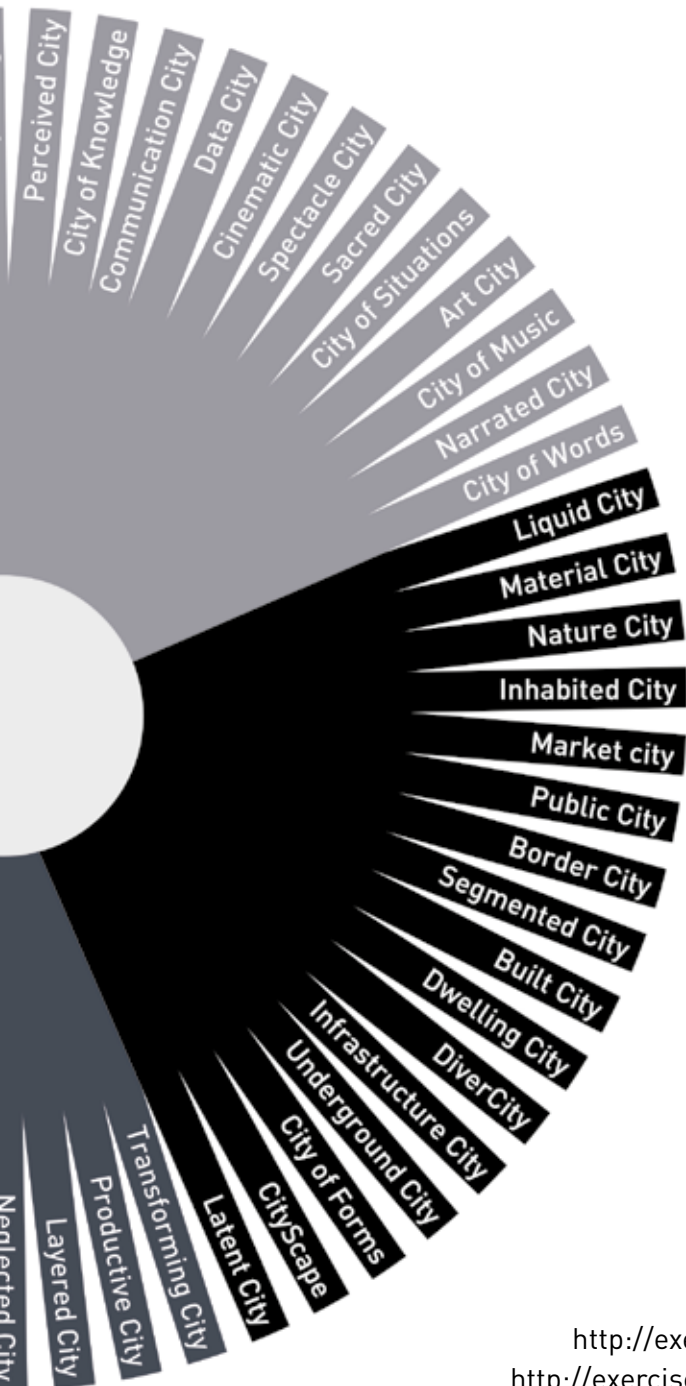
URBAN RECONNAISSANCE LAB

The first module of the training programme introduced the *Urban Reconnaissance* methodology developed by members of *Tesserae* within the *ogino:knauss* collective. The methodology is a multidisciplinary toolbox which has been successfully employed and constantly refined in almost fifteen years through a wide range of workshops on territorial/urban assessment. The method is designed to disentangle the complexity of elements that determine local identities, comparing multiple perspectives to understand a given spatial context. It employs an online interactive device collecting 64 different definitions of the word "city" based on different disciplinary approaches. Each definition is connected to a specific exercise of spatial reconnaissance focusing on the related perspective.

The definitions are linked to each other in the text and on the website, allowing the reader/explorer to circumnavigate and intersect the multiplicity of connections between morphological, cultural, economic, political and psychological factors influencing, determining and defining urban life, form and discourse. In the course of the EULER programme, this methodology has been the base of all of the activities of the laboratory. Accordingly, the four *URLabs* used the themes set in the public conversations as entry points to develop exercises of urban exploration.

The matrix of keywords provided by the methodological device has constituted the basis to define the essential layers adopted in the mapping exercises of the *MapLab*, while the field exploration activity provided input to the *StoryLab*'s goal to produce place narratives. Most of the outcomes of the UR laboratories have been published as posts on the *Urban Reconnaissance* blog that collects the outcomes of seminar activities realized through the methodology.

City of Signs
Ordered City
City of Names
Represented City
Governing City
City of Commons
City of Memory
City of Places
City of Cultures
Stranger City
Surveilled City
Prohibited City
Membrane City
Disadvantaged City
Contested City
Divided City
Commodified City
Property City
Ruled City
Power City
Energy City
City of Waste
Edible City
SoniCity
Event City
CycliCity
Rhythmicity
Transit City
City of Flows
Web City
Playground City
Spontaneous City

Perceived City
City of Knowledge
Communication City
Data City
Cinematic City
Spectacle City
Sacred City
City of Situations
Art City
City of Music
Narrated City
City of Words
Liquid City
Material City
Nature City
Inhabited City
Market city
Public City
Border City
Segmented City
Built City
Dwelling City
DiverCity
Infrastructure City
Underground City
City of Forms
CityScape
Latent City
Transforming City
Productive City
Layered City
Neglected City

http://exercises.oginoknauss.org
http://exercises.oginoknauss.org/wiki

WHAT IS AN URBAN COMMONS IN PRACTICE?

SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND THE CITY IN ITSELF AS A COMMONS?

DO COMMONS ORIENTED ECONOMIES REPRESENT FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO CAPITALIST MODELS?

COMMONS IN PRACTICE

A PUBLIC CONVERSATION
WITH SILKE HELFRICH
AND A WORKSHOP
WITH OGINO:KNAUSS
ON THE CITY AS A COMMONS

SWITCH ON

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26
/ THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

SUPERMARKT, MEHRINGPLATZ 9 – BERLIN

24

URLAB#1 – CITY OF COMMONS

Building on the questions formulated during the first conversation "Commons in Practice", the laboratory produced a first survey of the Friedrichstadt looking for existing or potential urban commons. The initial discussion outlined a variety of interpretations of the concept of commons. Accordingly, each participant was encouraged to choose from 64 keywords the exercise that in their opinion was significant to understand the city as a common good. Accordingly, several interpretations emerged. Some focused on immaterial commons such as memory, culture or knowledge. Others engaged in a confrontation with the concept of public sphere and space. At the same time, some participants started with the inhabitants in order to question how a community establishes a commons. Other approaches included questioning power relations or surveillance as essential factors determining or limiting the existence of a commons. In other instances still, participants identified the commons as acts of contestation and reaction to commodification, with others also analysing latent potentialities and utopian visions as founding elements of the commons.

In the subsequent step, the exploration continued with a walk around Mehringplatz. Like a compass oriented towards Berlin's geography, the walk around Mehringplatz led to the identification of several goals to be explored. We used the "Rondell" as a launching pad to let the participants spin off on individual *Wanderungen* and to reflect on the city as a commons – asking them to be back in three hours to report their findings. Their observations were discussed in the closing session and reported in various forms. Interestingly, the main finding of the exploration performed during this first laboratory is the negligible relevance of urban commons in the territory under scrutiny. As opposed to other areas of Berlin where conditions of uncertainty and indetermination have left room for spontaneous organization and social appropriation, the Südliche Friedrichstadt appears to be a territory which is firmly designed and controlled. Strong public and private stakeholders steer multiple governance processes and the area is part of numerous public programmes which paradoxically reduced the neighbourhood's self-organising capacity and resulted in fragmentation and relative passivity of local civil society actors.

PLATFORM
CITY

HOW DO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECT URBAN LIFE? **HOW** DOES ONLINE INTERACTION COMBINE WITH PHYSICAL BEHAVIOUR TO DETERMINE NEW HYBRID URBAN SPACES? **WHAT** POSSIBILITIES FOR FAIR COMMONS-BASED ECONOMIC MODELS ARE OPENED UP BY DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND DISTRIBUTED PROTOCOLS?

SWITCH ON | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 2-7 pm | URLab #2
SUPERMARKT, MEHRINGPLATZ 9 - BERLIN

26

URLAB #2 – PLATFORM CITY

These questions were formulated to trigger the second *URLab* happening in the context of the Platform Coops conference. Combining two exercises of *Urban Reconnaissance*, "Market City" and "CyberCity", we focussed here the on the conflation of physical and virtual geographies, exploring the augmented geography of Kreuzberg and the neighbouring Neukölln. In a walk connecting the two venues of the conference, *Supermarkt* and *Agora*, we reflected on the increasingly networked geographies produced by communication technologies and their effect on economies and work. Capturing photographically all of the elements connecting spatial locations with internet URLs and successively exploring the digital extension of our path, we examined the augmentation of local geographies into mediated space. The final discussion acknowledged the trans-scalar dimension of the analysed context and in particular how the new creative pioneering enterprises are strongly connected to global networks and expat geographies rather than local communities.

ACTIVATING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE
LOKALES WISSEN AKTIVIEREN

WHAT SKILLS AND COMPETENCES ARE FORMED AND SHARED IN SPONTANEOUS CITIZENS INITIATIVES? WELCHE FÄHIGKEITEN UND KOMPETENZEN WERDEN IN SPONTAN ENTSTANDENEN BÜRGER_INNENINITIATIVEN GEBILDET UND GETEILT? **HOW CAN THESE BE ENDORSED AND MOBILIZED?** WIE KÖNNEN DIESE BEKRÄFTIGT UND MOBILISIERT WERDEN? **WHAT PRACTICES CAN BE EMPLOYED TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES AND FOSTER A MORE JUST AND SUSTAINABLE CITY?** WELCHE PRAKTIKEN LASSEN SICH EINSETZEN, UM GEMEINSCHAFTEN ZU STÄRKEN UND EINE GERECHTERE UND NACHHALTIGERE STADT ZU FÖRDERN?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15
7 PM.
PUBLIC CONVERSATION WITH
MARCO CLAUSEN AND
ANDREAS UNTEIDIG OF PRINZESSINNEN
GARTEN / NACHBARSCHAFTSAKADEMIE
BERLIN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18
10 AM. - 7 PM.
URLab #3
SPONTANEOUS CITY

SWITCH ON

SUPERMARKT,
MEHRINGPLATZ 9
10969 BERLIN

URLAB #3 – SPONTANEOUS CITY

Reconnecting with the discussion on urban commons which took place during the first *URLab*, the objective of this exploration exercise was to retrieve examples of spontaneous phenomena transforming the city or affecting the local identity. Participants were invited to look for manifestations that appear contingent, unplanned and exist outside of formal rules, regulations and legitimations. Examples included the appropriation of public space, squatting, black markets, informal communication, graffiti, unauthorised construction, unplanned structures and spontaneous initiatives. The walk ended with a visit of the *Prinzessinnengarten* community garden as an example of how spontaneous initiatives can develop into recognized public spaces. The lab focused in particular on the mapping of public space – thus shifting the attention to the different intensities of public life (positive/negative) rather than on the legal status of places as privately or publicly owned. This ultimately led to the formulation of one of the planned layers for the final atlas.

ZUM MEHRINGPLATZ

SWITCH ON

REPRESENTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

HOW CAN THE PRACTICE OF WALKING BE USED TO UNDERSTAND THE IDENTITY OF A PLACE AND TO REPRESENT THE SPATIAL MILIEU? WIE KANN DIE PRAKTIK DES SPAZIERENS GENUTZT WERDEN, UM DIE IDENTITÄT EINES ORTES ZU VERSTEHEN UND DAS ÖRTLICHE MILIEU ZU REPRÄSENTIEREN?

SATURDAY **JULY 15** 2017

URLab #4 10AM – 2PM
SUPERMARKT
MEHRINGPLATZ 9
10969 BERLIN

PUBLIC WALK OF THE SÜDLICHE FRIEDRICHSTADT ÖFFENTLICHER RUNDGANG DURCH DIE SÜDLICHE FRIEDRICHSTADT **6PM**
START FROM
CAFE MADAME
MEHRINGPLATZ 10
10969 BERLIN

THIS URBAN RECONNAISSANCE LABORATORY WILL DRAW ON THE PREVIOUS EXPLORATIVE PRACTICE TO RECONNECT DIFFERENT PLACES AND STORIES OF SÜDLICHE FRIEDRICHSTADT IN A NARRATIVE PATH. THE WORKSHOP WILL BE COMPLETED BY A WALKING TOUR OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. DIESES URBAN RECONNAISSANCE LABOR WIRD DIE VORANGEGANGENEN ERKUNDEN PRAKTIKEN ZUM EINSATZ BRINGEN UND VERSCHIEDENE ORTE UND GESCHICHTEN DER SÜDLICHEN FRIEDRICHSTADT IN EINER ART NARRATIVEM PFAD NEU VERBINDEN. DER WORKSHOP WIRD DURCH EINEN ÖFFENTLICHEN RUNDGANG ERGÄNZT.

URLAB #4 – REPRESENTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The last Urban Reconnaissance lab focused on the creation and use of city tours as a tool for participative urbanism and social mobilization. This workshop was conceived as a final component of the achievements of *Switch On Mehringplatz* in the form of a walk. It drew on the previous explorative practice to reconnect different places and stories of Südliche Friedrichstadt in one narrative path. The workshop concluded with a walking tour open to the public as one of the local dissemination events for the project.
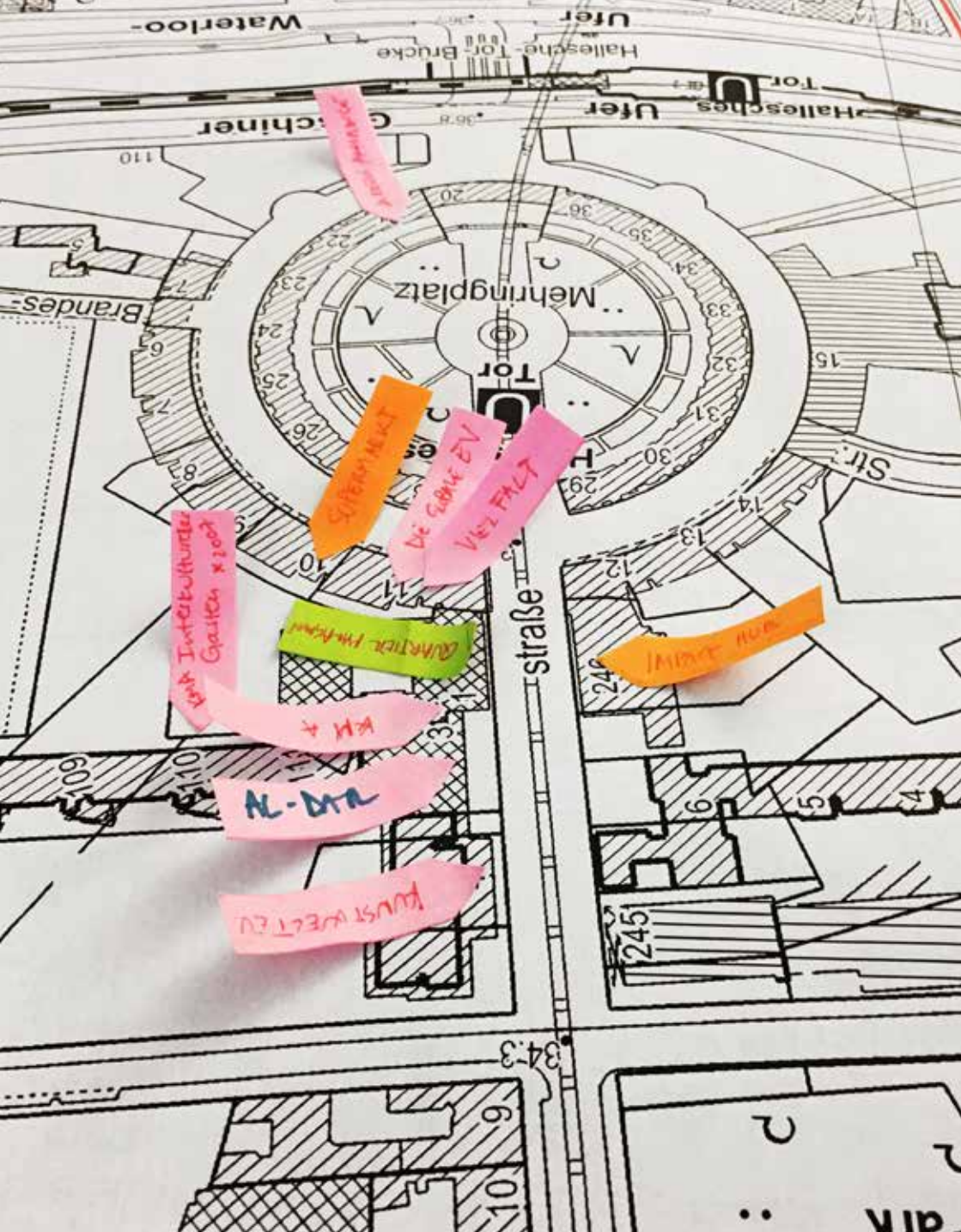
MAPLAB

The training module on collaborative mapping translated the explorative activity developed within the reconnaissance module into the necessity to identify, expose and represent relations among places, actors and power – whilst also retracing economies and social capital. Aside from briefly introducing the technical resources and competences necessary to develop collaborative mapping tools, the main goal of the laboratory was to examine the methodological and social aspects connected with the mapping practice, promote the use of collaborative cartography as a tool for public participation, raise awareness and civic engagement, as well as support local initiatives. A basic taxonomy of mappable phenomena has been discussed, with direct reference to the 64 key definitions of the *Urban Reconnaissance* methodology.

The exercises developed during the labs were employed to produce different maps that were ultimately collected as different layers of the neighbourhood atlas. An important aspect of the laboratory relates to the investigation of the numerous possibilities introduced by current internet based applications in connecting maps with digital content in diverse formats and platforms. Accordingly, the activities of the *Maplab* were progressively integrated into the other two modules, and in particular with the *StoryLab* – exploring the use of maps as a narrative framework to connect stories and local memories in accessible interfaces.

THE MAP AS A
COMMONS DIE KARTE
ALS COMMONS

HOW CAN WE USE MAPPING AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE AND PROCESS? WIE KÖNNEN WIR MAPPING ALS GEMEINSCHAFTSRESSOURCE UND - PROZESS NUTZEN?

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19 | MapLab #1
SUPERMARKT, MEHRINGPLATZ 9 - BERLIN

SWITCH ON

MAPLAB #1 - THE MAP AS A COMMONS

How can we use mapping as a community resource and process?

To respond to this question we invited Sebastian Maier, the designer and animator of *Berlin Maptime* meet-up, to introduce online collaborative mapping platforms and participative GIS. His presentation was very inspiring and provided plenty of information about tools that can be used to develop collaborative mapping projects.
During the discussion in the second part of the evening, each of the participants identified a specific focus/layer/category of phenomena to observe as the starting point to develop a personal mapping exercise, and possibly provide the basis for creating different layers of a collective atlas. Here, we also reconnected with the methodology employed in the first *URLab* – presenting the exercises of *Urban Reconnaissance* as a means to identify specific perspectives to look at urban space.

http://www.eulerproject.eu/2016/12/01/maplab-1-the-map-as-a-commons

MAPPING
ACTORS AND
ECONOMIES HOW CAN WE
MAP THE MULTIPLICITY OF STAKEHOLDERS
AND FORCES SHAPING A NEIGHBOURHOOD?
HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT
FACTORS SHAPING LOCAL ECONOMIES? HOW
CAN WE CAPTURE AND VISUALIZE
NON-SPECIFICALLY LOCATED FORCES THAT
INFLUENCE A TERRITORY?

4-8 pm.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 | MapLab #2

SUPERMARKT, MEHRINGPLATZ 9 - BERLIN

SWITCH
ON

38

MAPLAB #2 MAPPING ACTORS AND ECONOMIES

The second *MapLab* involved stakeholder mapping which identified institutional, economic and social actors influencing spatial transformations and social life in the Südliche Friedrichstadt. The workshop began with the listing of formal and informal organizations which are active in this territory and led to the formulation of a series of essential taxonomic questions related to the production of a local atlas, starting with the problematic distinction between public/private and non-profit bodies. Similarly, a further matter of discussion related to the question of how one should demarcate the specific local context given the multiplicity of larger institutional and territorial governance tiers that intervene in shaping the local reality. After collecting indications on a paper map during the lab, data was transferred to an online map organized in different layers and progressively linked with texts, videos and interviews produced during several laboratories. After this laboratory, the team started a set of video interviews with local stakeholders complementing the mapping process. Edited and published online on *Tesserae*'s Vimeo channel, they constitute, together with the documentation of the public conversations and the digital storytelling clips produced during the *StoryLab*, a video archive integrated within the neighbourhood atlas.

https://vimeo.com/tesserae
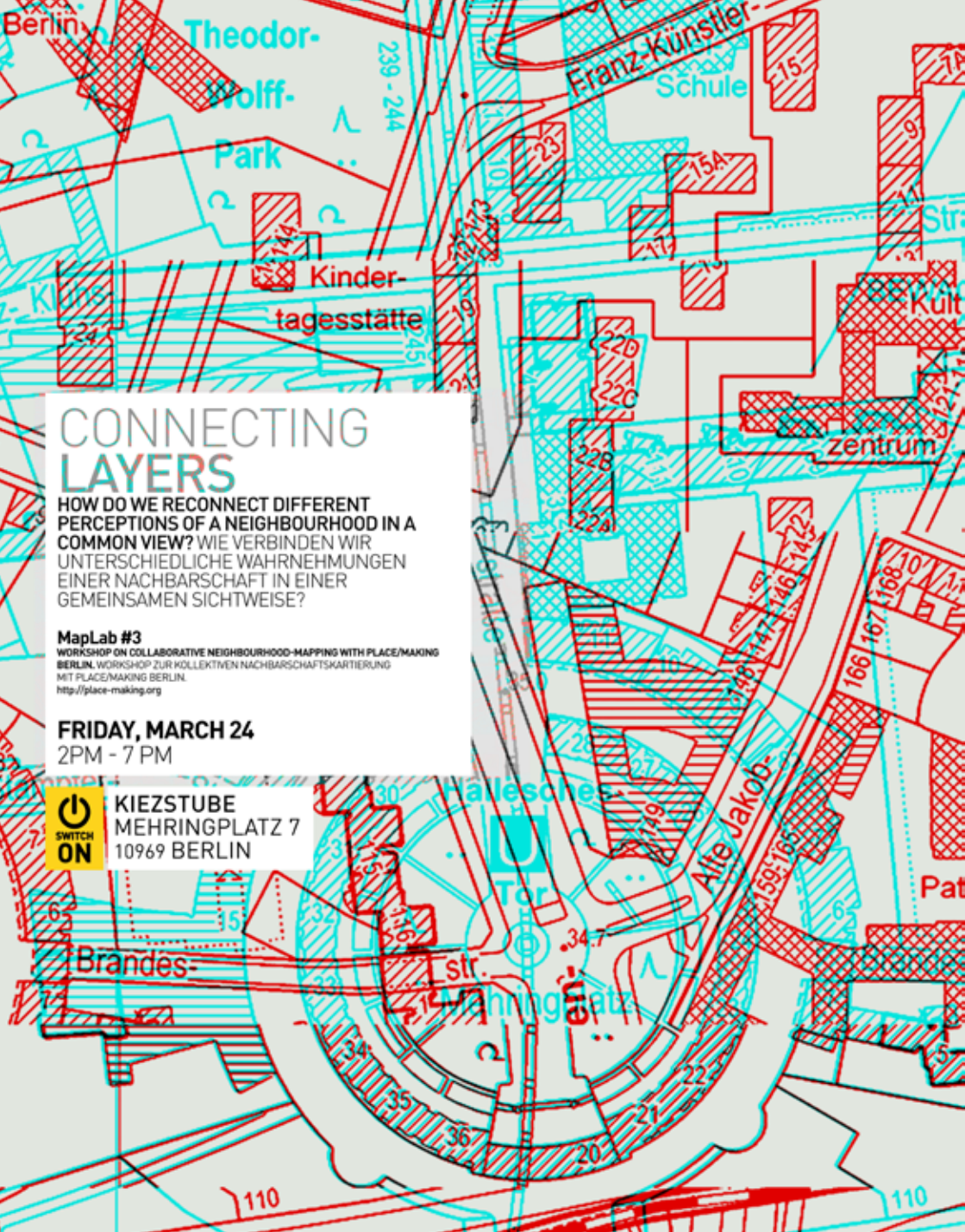
CONNECTING
LAYERS

HOW DO WE RECONNECT DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD IN A COMMON VIEW? WIE VERBINDEN WIR UNTERSCHIEDLICHE WAHRNEHMUNGEN EINER NACHBARSCHAFT IN EINER GEMEINSAMEN SICHTWEISE?

MapLab #3
WORKSHOP ON COLLABORATIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD-MAPPING WITH PLACE/MAKING BERLIN. WORKSHOP ZUR KOLLEKTIVEN NACHBARSCHAFTSKARTIERUNG MIT PLACE/MAKING BERLIN.
http://place-making.org

FRIDAY, MARCH 24
2PM - 7 PM

KIEZSTUBE
MEHRINGPLATZ 7
10969 BERLIN

40

MAPLAB #3 CONNECTING LAYERS

The third mapping workshop was realized in collaboration with the social designers of *place/making* - Jan Lindenberg and Stefan Göllner.

With the help of a previously prepared mapping set using transparent layers, the group of participants was involved in a short walk of the area in order to map very different phenomena and elements characterising the neighbourhood. Each participant selected a different subject according to their background and interest, ranging from retracing the spatial distribution of diverse typologies of objects and functions to capturing more volatile behavioural patterns and signs. Among the subjects chosen by the participants were places of gathering and socialising, gender distribution and gendered use of space, accessible and fenced spaces, languages spoken in public spaces, as well as seats, benches, bike stalls and signs. While the itinerary to follow was freely chosen by each participant, three main spots were identified that had to be observed, including the main public spaces of the area.
Back at the main venue, the single patterns captured were assembled and confronted with participants discussing connections and matching configurations. Furthermore, a set of existing mappings of Mehringplatz printed in scale were provided to add other layers of information based on the observations of the participants.

http://www.eulerproject.eu/2017/04/18/collecting-layers-mapping-lab-report
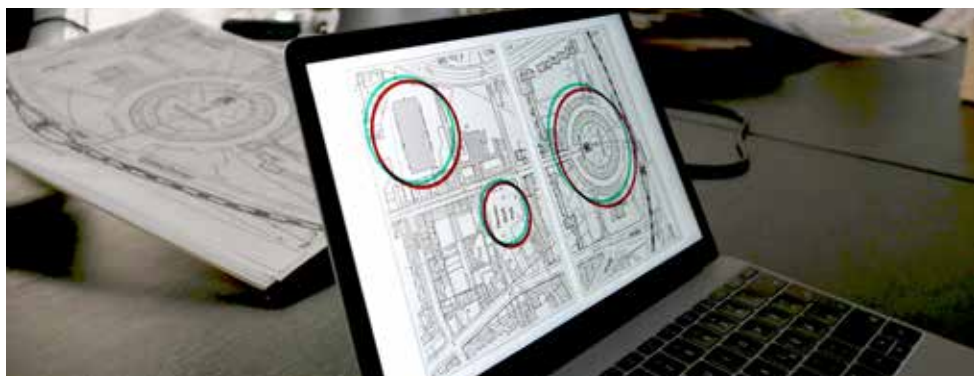
MAPLAB #4 NEIGHBOURHOOD ATLAS

How to visualize multiple data sets in a user friendly and inclusive public interface?

The last meeting of the mapping programme was dedicated to coordinating the collection of different contributions derived from this and other modules in order to construct a public outcome. The different online tools and collections set during the activities – including online maps, spreadsheets, audiovisual archives and blog posts – were revised and the structure of the *Neighbourhood Atlas* drafted and organised in a series of thematic map layers. Different tasks were assigned to the participants of the laboratories to deliver specific contributions to the different sections. Collaborative organizing applications and informal face-to-face meetings were employed to continue the activities of the lab up to the present time and were supported by *Tesserae*'s team coordinating the collection and publication of information.

STORYLAB

The last module of laboratories was specifically dedicated to storytelling techniques that have a potential use for community empowerment and participation. Digital media has entered into the daily lives of people as power democratic devices. With this module we explored the potentiality of consumer digital equipment for collaborative storytelling processes. Starting from the increased technical capacity provided by such tools, the focus of the programme was on language and composition, discussing specific formats of "place narratives" able to investigate spatial context and the social relations within urban milieus. Particular attention was put on the balanced combination of different elements, photography, cinematic images, sound, text, graphics into producing balanced spatial representations. The four workshops were dedicated to producing an archive of personal stories and interviews to local stakeholders contributing to the *Neighbourhood Solidarity Curriculum*.

HOW CAN WE USE STORYTELLING TO CREATE COLLECTIVE NARRATIONS, INVESTIGATE TRANSIENT SUBJECTIVITIES AND UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF TRANSFORMING PLACES?

WIE KÖNNEN WIR STORYTELLING VERWENDEN, UM KOLLEKTIVE ERZÄHLUNGEN ZU SCHAFFEN, VERGÄNGLICHE SUBJEKTIVITÄTEN ZU UNTERSUCHEN UND DIE REALITÄT SICH VERÄNDERNDER ORTE ZU VERSTEHEN?

SWITCH ON

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26 — StoryLab #1

SUPERMARKT, MEHRINGPLATZ 9 - BERLIN

STORYLAB #1 - COLLECTIVE NARRATIONS

The first workshop of the *StoryLab* discussed the potentialities of storytelling and different approaches using narratives as a tool to investigate places and mobilize communities. The presentation by Laura Colini introduced a wide range of different approaches employing traditional and digital storytelling forms to give voice to collective representation processes.

http://www.eulerproject.eu/2016/12/02/storylab-1-collective-narrations

In the second part of the lab, we moved to the *Bauhütte*, a temporary structure built as a public interface to facilitate the integration of new projects and residents in the Südliche Friedrichstadt, to listen to the talk of an elderly resident of Mehringplatz. The *Erzählcafè* program presenting local voices telling personal stories of the neighborhood and the meeting with Frau Wülfild Sydow, who has lived in the area since 1971, made for a perfect kick-off for the *StoryLab*.

PLACE NARRATIVE

HOW CAN WE USE STORYTELLING TO UNDERSTAND TRANSFORMING PLACES? WHAT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES CAN BE CAN BE EMPLOYED TO ASSESS THE COMPLEX, MULTILAYERED REALITY OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD? HOW CAN WE CAPTURE THE GENIUS LOCI THROUGH MEDIA?

2-7pm.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 | **StoryLab #2**

SUPERMARKT, MEHRINGPLATZ 9 - BERLIN

48

STORYLAB #2 - PLACE NARRATIVES

Here we focused in particular on the use of audiovisual language and new media to present spatial dimensions and create *place narratives*. The first part was dedicated to the presentation of the work of the *ogino:knauss* collective which has researched and produced videos and innovative multimedia forms of representation of the transforming territories of the modern metropolis.

In the second part of the laboratory, the focus moved to the specific context of the Südliche Friedrichstadt, with the help of a selection of photographic shots of the neighbourghood taken by *ogino:knauss'* art director Manuela Conti during the previous reconnaissance walks in the neighbourhood. The discussion dealt with the nature of places and spaces, as well as related issues of identity, conflict, publicness, privacy and memory. We subsequently enquired about the participants' interests and backgrounds to formulate a common project for investigating the Mehringplatz neighbourhood. Although conceived as a stand-alone workshop, knowledge and ideas produced in the previous *Urban Reconnaissance* and *Mapping Labs* were presented and integrated into the discussion.

COLLECTING
STORIES

HOW DO WE CAPTURE DIFFERENT VOICES OF A
COMMUNITY IN A SHARED NARRATIVE
FRAMEWORK? WIE ERFASSEN WIR VERSCHIEDENE
STIMMEN EINER GEMEINSCHAFT IN EINEM
ERZÄHLRAHMEN?

SATURDAY **APRIL 22** 2017   StoryLab#3

2 PM

GEGEN ENDE

SUPERMARKT,
MEHRINGPLATZ 9
10969 BERLIN

SWITCH
ON

STORYLAB #3 - COLLECTING STORIES

Starting from the selection of images presented during the previous workshop, we prepared a prototype of a *Mehringplatz Memo* card for this session. This collection of 72 cards gathers different images of the neighborhood including notable places, historical pictures, characters, monuments, clues and other points of interest. It was developed using an online application (Trello) in order to manage collaboratively the collection and selection process, and is still available as an online public archive.
https://trello.com/b/I9fe7DnQ

The card set can be used for multiple purposes and is proposed here specifically as a flexible tool for facilitating various collective processes. For the workshop, a printed prototype was produced with the specific intention to support the facilitation of a collective discussion about the local context and to trigger the development of storytelling processes. In particular, we experimented with it as a tool to create and rearrange storyboards.

URBAN SKETCHES

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE LOCAL NARRATIVES IN ACCESSIBLE FORMATS AND LANGUAGES?

StoryLab#4

SATURDAY JULY 1 2017 10AM - 5PM

SUNDAY JULY 2 2017 2PM - 6PM

SUPERMARKT
MEHRINGPLATZ 9
10969 BERLIN

SWITCH ON

A digital storytelling workshop dedicated to the production of personal narratives based on impressions and memories of Mehringplatz - Südliche Friedrichstadt. Participants will be invited to follow their inclination or favorite languages employing writing, photography, video, music and sound, drawing, graphic design, performance etc. Professional technical notions or artistic competences are not necessary.

Participation is free.
Register please on Eventbrite , facebook or via email at info@tesserae.eu

STORYLAB #4 URBAN SKETCHES

How do we communicate local narratives in accessible formats and languages?

The outcome of the final *StoryLab* with members of the *ogino:knauss* collective was a short video clip to transmit a simple and focused stance on a place. The lab was dedicated to the production of a specific digital storytelling format called "Urban Sketches", based on personal impressions and memories of Mehringplatz. The attention was especially put on aspects of composition and language, rather than technical aspects. We mainly used simple techniques of capture and acquisition including the use of personal mobile digital devices, concentrating on achieving a balanced composition process. As a starting point, we used the *Memo card* set which had been prepared in advance, and asked the participants to pick the key elements from which to develop a short narrative. Using only a few cards and keywords, they were asked to organize a simple script structured on four elements: an entry point (image or place), a perspective (personal, impersonal, third person), a development or conflict and an outcome or conclusion. The participants were asked to provide a draft using a simple presentation form (i.e. PowerPoint).

The initial concepts developed by each participant were revised in the following days through a peer-to-peer process and finally edited and mastered as video clips with the help of our staff. We suggested the use of still images for the sake of simplicity, although the final works showed a range of techniques, sources and languages serving well the purpose of experimenting with a collective narration process to integrate multiple points of view, voices and approaches. The set of videos produced by the laboratory have been published in a video channel on *Tesserae*'s Vimeo account and connected with a layer dedicated to place narratives in the atlas.

PARTICIPATION
AND FOLLOW UP

The laboratorial activities of *Switch On Mehringplatz* have been successfully implemented and well-attended, although with some discontinuity and turnover during the ten months of training. As defined in the initial objectives, we targeted facilitators, mediators, as well as professional figures in urban design, policy, administration and social care as beneficiaries of our activities. A survey is in course to assess the participants' motivations for attending and satisfaction with the proposed programme. As a matter of fact, only a minority of the participants attending the laboratories had a long-time connection with the neighbourhood or were resident in the area. Most of them were representatives of the increasing presence of creative and highly-educated expats populating Berlin, attracted by the potentialities of this area and its concentration of new co-working spaces and cultural venues.

A significant presence among these was from Middle Eastern countries including Syrian, Lebanese and Turkish nationals, together with several European nationals. The programme was designed to be held both in German and English, foreseeing the possibility to support the discussion with real time translations. As a matter of fact, almost all of the attendees were at ease with the use of English as the main language in workshops and presentations. Interviews with local stakeholders were mainly conducted in German, while we are aiming to translate most of the produced texts into both languages within the limits of our budget.

The public events have also occasionally been attended by groups of students visiting Berlin to study, including master courses from Sheffield (UK), Leuven (BE) and Venice (IT). The master programme on "Urban Regeneration and Social Innovation" of the IUAV Venice has developed a week long residence adopting Mehringplatz and our methodologies of intervention as part of their case studies.

Two of their students have successively applied for an internship with *Tesserae* to follow the EULER programme closely and are contributing to its outcomes.

Regarding the effect on the local population and economies, during two years the programme has created several connections with local stakeholders and initiatives, setting the ground for collaborations and possible follow ups. Both the toolset of participative instruments and the *Neighbourhood Solidarity Curriculum* are already set for further experimentation in the framework of *Tesserae*'s current projects (EU Marie Curie RISE project "Co-Creation", Erasmus Plus "Urbex"). Several dissemination and publication outcomes are in progress, including three Master theses that will draw on the activities of our programme and an academic article to be published in 2018.

PART 3
SOLIDARITY CURRICULUM: A NEIGHBOURHOOD ATLAS

The mission of this *Erasmus+* funded action was to support skills and competences developed in informal initiatives and bottom up projects. To achieve these objectives, the training program run in Berlin during nine months has delivered a series of public events and laboratorial activities, while the dedicated methodological toolset employed in the training activity has been published online and through this booklet. Although not an essential objective of the project, the situated knowledge on the local context of the Südliche Friedrichstadt gathered and produced during the training came to constitute a substantial additional outcome of EULER. As a complement to the toolset for participative urban action, we therefore conceived - and within the limited available resources implemented – an innovative format of publication and dissemination named *Neighbourhood Solidarity Curriculum* (NSC).

In the traditional education system and vocational training schemes, the focus is on the individual curriculum as a tool for competing on the job market. However, the competences and skills of an individual are not floating in a neutral field – they depend on context and social relations. They are situated. Developing a situated learning process, we need to evaluate the competences formed in the specific local context and web of social relations. The concept of *solidarity curriculum* therefore alludes to the need to shift the attention from the individual capacity to the collective potential expressed by a given socio-spatial milieu, and from competitive economies to collaborative, commons-based models. For this purpose we imagined the NSC as an innovative local atlas platform, aimed at visualizing and fostering synergies, social capital and relational potentials existing in a given local environment. Connecting personal skills and competences with local networks and social initiatives, its ultimate goal is to capture the value of a place as a commons.

A neighbourhood curriculum can be imagined as a dynamic archive, a territorial atlas and a collaborative baseline-study depicting the existing resources of a community and envisioning its entrepreneurial and solidarity capacity for future initiatives. It is at the same time a reflexive tool for communities to recognize themselves, as well as a proactive instrument to form new ventures and imagine new challenges.

We initially identified some basic qualities of the NSC:

↘ **Collaborative**: it should be a bottom-up, crowdsourced, horizontal platform. It is produced and validated by a community, while redefining and regenerating the community itself. It is based on collaborative procedures and tools - potentially allowing the participation of all the stakeholders in its definition.

↘ **Accessible** and inclusive: devised as an online platform, it should guarantee a high degree of usability for the public. It should be designed to provide online and offline access, whilst being friendly to those who are not internet literate, or else do not speak the local language. At the same time, the NSC should be simple, intuitive and designed using smart and universal graphic codes.

↘ **Dynamic**: the NSC depicts a dynamic situation and should be easily adaptable and updatable. Whilst current technologies provide a great deal of flexible instruments, it is especially the social practice and collaborative procedures that need to be designed to be sustainable and effective.

↘ **Manifold**: the NSC is not a specialised tool with a specific purpose, but rather a visualisation of the multiplicity of factors and relations that enrich a community. It must be able to take into account the complexity of elements that influence a local situation and economy, whilst simplifying and clarifying such a complexity. It must take into account a wide range of sources, data, languages and formats and combine them into a comprehensible and synthetic output.

Having in mind these guidelines drafted at the beginning of the training activity, the outcomes of the different laboratories have been collected as a set of possible components for the NSC. Maps, sketches, itineraries, interviews, as well as photographic and audiovisual recordings have been combined to provide an essential picture of the context of the Südliche Friedrichstadt. The final laboratories were centered specifically on gathering, formatting and systematizing contributions to the neighbourhood atlas. As a result, a structure made of thematic sections and spatial layers was progressively designed.

STRUCTURE (MENU)

Section 1 – Chronogram. Provides a synthetic excursus on the history of the Südliche Friedrichstadt, with a particular focus on public programmes and planning instruments in the last 30 years.

**Section 2** – Spatial patterns. These correspond to as many layers as are on the online map:

1. Administrative boundaries
2. Public intensities
3. Transformations
4. Monuments and memories
5. Stakeholders
6. Narratives

Section 3 – Stakeholders: an inventory of local private, public and non-profit organisations active in the territory

Section 4 – Narratives: a collection of diverse narratives in multiple formats (video interviews, digital storytelling, songs) providing personal perspectives on the neighbourhood.

Much of the digital content required for its realisation has been produced and uploaded in existing online archives. The development of the dedicated technological infrastructure and interface connecting them in an integrated user experience is still in progress. As already specified, its implementation was not among the institutional objectives of EULER nor was it funded by the programme. We developed its concept as an experimental prototype, investing within the given limits in the design of the platform. It is however a planned objective of *Tesserae* to follow up the experimentation of the platform through current and future projects of the organisation.

http://mehringplatz-anknipsen.eu
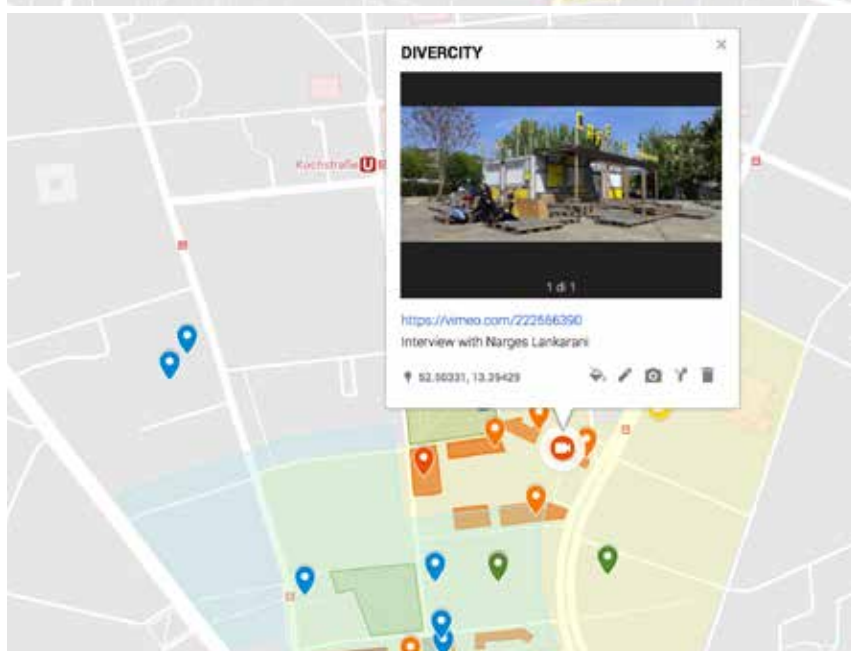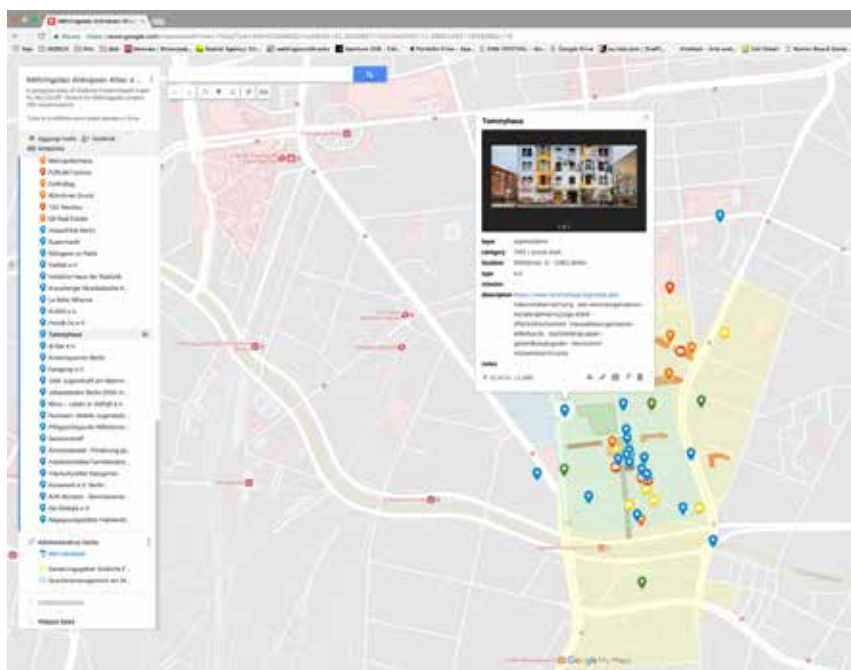
Stakeholders interviews, screenshots

Tesseræ

Tesseræ is a platform to connect critical multidisciplinary research, education, art, communication and project development in the urban and social fields. Based in Berlin, Tesseræ works with local communities, independent and non-for profit organisations, as well as local, national and European institutions.

Switch On Mehringplatz has been coordinated by Lorenzo Tripodi and Laura Colini with the collaboration of Daniele Tognozzi, Vicky Kiefer, Manuela Conti, Paula Mangold, Sara D'Agostino, Giovanna Roncuzzi and Silvia Assalini. The project has been developed in partnership with Supermarkt Berlin, Vielfalt e.V. and ogino:knauss.

www.tesserae.eu

EULER

a project by:

City Mine(d)

Trànsit
Projectes

TESSERÆ

endeavour