

Research Cluster: Trans-Form – exploring design, art and social practices for political and eco-social transitions Timespan December 2022 – November 2024.

Change Agents: Blueprints for Inter-institutional Collaborations in Social Design

Change Agents is a “cooperation partnerships in higher education” funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The project consortium consists of six higher education institutions (MOME, unibz, EKA, UdK, ELISAVA, HAC) and two NGOs as associated partners (OfficineVispa in Bolzano and Democratic Society in Berlin).

Team

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More information: <https://www.socialdesignnetwork.org/projects/2>

Last update: 12/12/2023

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The project aims to make use of new methods and strategies to bridge the gap between the NGO sector and Higher Education Institutions (especially in the fields of design and art) to help them react more actively on real-life challenges with the involvement of “everyday change agents”. The project engages collaborators and field workers to build up a more inclusive system where teachers and students can practice and master social inclusion and diversity in their academic life and beyond while exploring how to develop infrastructures and methodologies with improved social sustainability.

The Change Agent project’s goal is to define, develop and improve innovative practices at the intersection between Higher Education Institutions and other sector organisations to develop pilot cooperation strategies that will later present the potential to be integrated within educational modules. The project wishes to bring the academic sector and the NGO ecosystem closer to one another and generate deeper understanding between these important stakeholders, allowing them to advance a more collaborative, inclusive and participatory practice of design, while recognizing the already existing knowledge of activists and various stakeholders. The project centres around the notion that achieving these objectives will help inclusivity by inviting and involving various agents and sectors which are directly linked to different communities, experienced in ethnographic fieldwork and that can provide knowledge not typically owned by the higher educational framework.

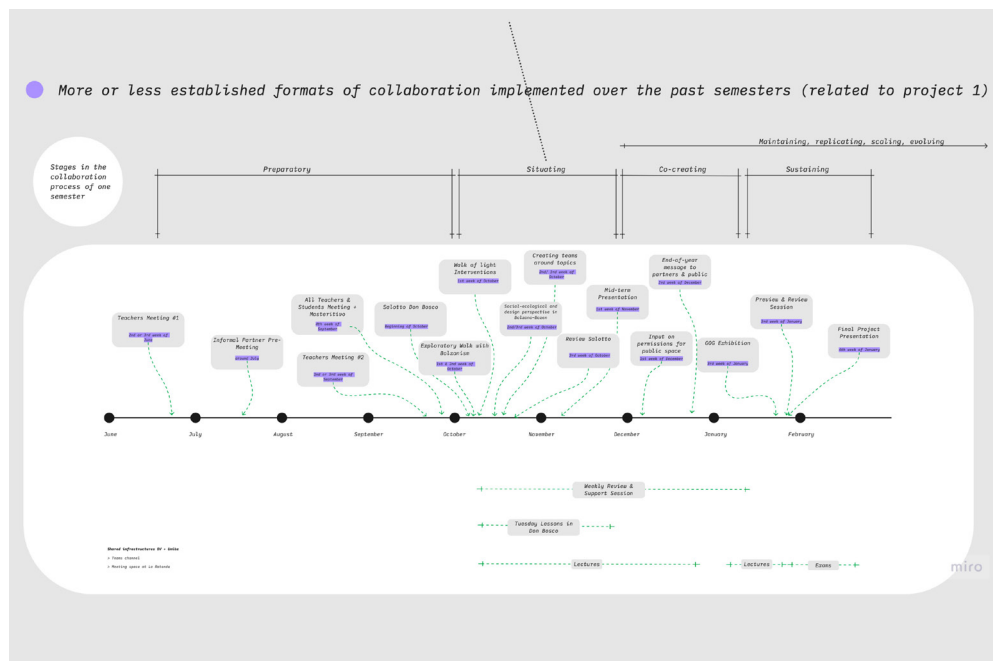


Figure 1. Format of collaboration implemented over the past semesters of Project 1



Figure 2. Interview with the local social cooperative OfficineVispa about the inter-institutional collaboration in the winter semester of 2023.

The project closely investigates the long-standing, semester-long educational module –Project 1 – of the Master in Eco-Social Design as an example of collaborative practices between Higher Education Institutions and NGO in teaching Social Design. During the module, students collaborate with the local social cooperative OfficineVispa in the co-creation of their semester projects.



The project will develop hands-on “blueprints”, methodological recommendations for inter-institutional collaboration between Higher Education Institutions and NGOs to possibly contribute to training future change makers, who are dedicated to stimulating societal change through their own practices.