



Creative Fellow 

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### Sandwiches – Community Building through Shared Food

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## A. Main Insight

The project Sandwiches – Community Building through Shared Food explores the potential of communal food and the use of it as a method in community building, especially when establishing new communities that have yet to build strong relationships, structures and shared values. In an intense, personal and practice based approach I actively worked in sociocultural communities and organised shared lunches, observing the subtle interventions one can make to guide and start certain aspects of community building.

The sandwich itself works as a conceptual device that can be used to discuss and teach about community building, is accessible to make by anyone and can be easily shared in any context, on the go or when sitting for hours around one table. Over the course of 6 months I held workshops, events and longer formats to build new communities and understand the forms of mediating through shared meals. As a tangible outcome of this process I developed the zine Sandwiches which brings together many of the recipes developed during the process and proposes a scaffolding for other practitioners when looking at food, while working within communities. New and engaging formats for community care, open discussion and relationship building can help the creative and cultural sectors in building stronger and longer lasting networks.

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### A.1 *Insights*

Through its practice based approach this project touched different communities in the creative and cultural sector in Europe. Besides having a direct impact in the communities I worked with during this project there are also multiple lessons for the practice based field of community building, creative processes and the bigger CCE. Using food as a tool for design and community building has great upsides. It is an engaging, welcoming and multi-sensory format that can bring together people from various backgrounds.

The zine I developed in this project lays out seven recipes for community building through shared meals. They can act as a starting point for other community organisers and practitioners in the creative and cultural industry. The seven recipes are about:

Structures and how a recipe is just a rough sketch of a possible and adaptable structure.

Clearly communicated repetition of meeting times are important for access, especially for open participatory processes.

One table can accommodate everyone and reduces the hierarchies of many different tables.

Using tiny irritating ingredients can shape a table's discussion and let it find communality.

When mediating the unexpected is often your best friend, it activates and brings together the creativity to react to everyone.

Sharing a meal should always adapt to the place and try to open private spaces to the public.

Food is best when it is gifted.

### ***A.1.1 Cultural and Creative Industries***

In cultural institutions holding workshops and interventions with food and sharing meals can help in creating shared narratives and common ideas. It can also work beyond classical hierarchies and bring everybody together around one casual table where life within and beyond the cultural institution can be discussed. Shared meals are also always a great moment for individuals to contribute and gift to the collective and bring in their very individual recipes and tastes. Creating open and democratic structures is important in reimagining the cultural and creative industries, tools of community building and engagement with the public can help in starting these processes.

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### ***A.2 Acknowledgements***

I want to thank all who have contributed to this project. It was great to listen to all the discussions this project has started and to hear all the opinions on what a sandwich is and what it isn't. Cooking, laughing and eating together has been so inspiring and showed me the value personal practice has. I want to specifically thank my friends from Baustell, the shared atelier I am part of, for all the meals where we discussed past, ongoing and future projects. My thanks go to all projects I am involved in like Verein Zentralwäscherei, Stadionbrache, FOGO or Hardgutbrache. They continue to be a source of great inspiration for everything community and socio-cultural related.

My thanks also goes to all the participants of the sandwich workshops I held. In Zürich these were all the creatives involved in the building process of Minigolf Hard, Yael Anders and Patrick Wild who organised the two week long workshop together with the participants of Service Civil International. The long night about the future of intelligence at BaseCamp / Locarno Film Festival 76 organised by Rafael Dernbach was another wonderful workshop in the middle of the night that sparked many new thoughts about collective intelligences and communal meals. In Oslon, Bulgaria Nevena Yovcheva organised an exciting weekend about the Rural Re-

naissance, the sandwiches that we gave each other were out of this world! Besides their own fascinating workshop in Oslon, Anna De Mezzo and Nyangala Zolho and I had great moments of reflection about our individual CIRCE projects.

Lastly I also want to thank all other creative and research fellows that were part of the CIRCE project and of course the whole project management team from u-institute to. Marleen and Stanislav did an outstanding job answering all questions and always being there to help!

## **B. Creative Endeavour**

In my work as an active member of uncommercial and democratic socio-cultural centers in Zürich I have witnessed time and time again how communal food acts as a medium for building, fostering and rethinking community. Food has fascinated me on a personal level as a practice of creative expression, moments of wellness and a form of meditation. The fundamental human necessity of eating, cooking for others and the dynamics of a table are elements that interest me as a design researcher and points that I can design with as a mediator.

In this project the sandwich holds the role of the medium and of a conceptual device that enables to have approachable and universal discussions about the value of shared meals in sociocultural communities.

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### **B.1 *Personal Note***

This is a personal project that involves a lot of moments of friendship and unpaid past, current and future work within communities. The project therefore combines work of mine that has been in the past, was ongoing during the project and that I will continue after funding for this specific CIRCE period ends. For it to not be extractive it was important to me to research this topic of applied community building through action and gifting. To learn and observe passively and to notice minute details, all while being anonymous, unintrusive and human. Therefore these are personal and very subjective observations and methods that may not apply within other projects.

Still I think that they are valuable and provide an insight into the everyday and basic modes of creative work that are open and accessible to a broad public. I have chosen this mode of inquiry that uncovers answers in a post-fact world to build a narrative and to find a form of communication of the insights that sparks interest in others.

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### **B.2 *Past Projects***

In past projects I have come in touch with communal meals at various spaces in Zürich. I want to highlight three of them that have shaped this project and its approach. These projects mean a lot to me, since I have been an active part of all of them, and taught me many lessons about community building and the intricate fabric of local relationships.

#### **B.2.1 *Stadionbrache***

The Stadionbrache is a community garden that has taken over an old soccer stadium. Over more than 10 years the space has transformed into an open park, outdoor sports center and gardening

spot for people of the neighbourhood and from across the city. Everybody is invited to garden on a small plot of land on biodynamic principles. The garden also has a shared outdoor kitchen in the center of it that acts as a hub for information, tools and people. There one could also find an oven for bread making and one for pizza. Throughout the year there is also firewood, which provides warmth in the cold times of the year.

Two times a month on the 13th and 26th there is an open pizza session where everybody is invited to bring ingredients, share and learn how to fire a pizza oven. The dates are set in this fashion, that they rotate throughout the year and are never on the same weekday. Therefore it's open to more people who might have scheduled work or appointments during specific days of the week. If they can't join this month, they can the next. Since I lived in the immediate neighbourhood of the garden I quickly became an active member and started with friends our own plot garden.

After a storm that destroyed almost half of the trees at Stadionbrache we had a common moment of healing while preparing fruits from a destroyed tree to be turned into liquor. This shared experience brought the community closer together and created a stronger sense of place as well as identity, since we planted new trees that can act as a reminder of this shared moment. Pizza dough, or gifting food in general acts as a starting point for human relationships, but also shows the connectedness to the land through stories and places with meaning.

### **B.2.2 *FOGO***

FOGO is a neighbourhood in the west of Zürich that offers student and refugee housing. Half a year after it opened in 2019 I joined a project that would work on activating the neighbourhood through food events. To our disposal we had previously built food carts that acted like a kitchen, with an oven, washing station and preparation space.

During two weeks we developed different lunch formats that would cater to the diverse groups living and interacting within the area. We had a hard time finding interested people that wanted to join our lunches so we did a day of only cooking and eating cake. So we sat there in the courtyard, ate cake and got gifted kofte by a woman living there. This was the key moment, us just being there and taking space passively invited her to give us something and so was a relationship formed through food.

The next day we cooked together with her and she opened up relationships in the whole neighbourhood to us. It taught me that gifting food is a key to relationships, it can act as a welcoming invitation to join and engage with a community.

### **B.2.3 *Zentralwäscherei***

In 2019 the association Zentralwäscherei, named after the space, took over the old central laundry of Zürich with the goal to establish a low-barrier and uncommercial cultural center. Over the next two years this group would raise funding, establish program guidelines, planning architectural changes to the space and much more. In November of 2021 the space would open and

offer a restaurant, bar, various musical events, discursive formats, exhibitions and everything in between.

I joined the association in 2021 and helped in refurbishing the building and working on digital, democratic infrastructure. On all of the days we were building two or three persons were responsible for lunch and dinner. After intense hours of construction work, creative thinking or long discussions about the association's policies, these meals created an intimate moment of togetherness and a feeling of accomplishment. They acted as a common moment of breathing, laughing and sharing. A moment in the they where you would finally find the time to get to know all the people involved in the project. Which was necessary, because over 300 people were and still are involved in organising everything.

At Zentralwäscherei I learned how simply cooked meals and a long table could offer people and low barrier entry into a community that knows each other already so well. It also showed how a kitchen, or the infrastructure to cook is like a hearth to a space that lets people from different backgrounds come together and create a shared place.

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### **B.3 *Shared Food***

Communal meals are magical, they let us come together in one of the most human formats. Like sitting around a fire, singing and telling stories, cooking and eating together creates human bonds and lays the foundation for peaceful and successful collaborations. Especially in the cultural sectors this often gets overlooked with projects originating from a more professional starting point, missing more closer to life aspects that could be of more immediate concern. Convening together after working on creative projects always also acts as a moment to reflect on the creative process and to think of ideas and challenges ahead. Doing this at a table, filled with good food reduces pressure and may change the dynamic of the people and project involved. It is also always a low-barrier time to enter a cultural project.

So, in its broader term the project is about food and how it can be used as a tool in community building. This could be done through ice-cream, risottos, barbecues or anything else, but for me, sandwiches and their transient aspects have fascinated me the most.

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### **B.4 *Why Sandwiches***

As a designer working with critical and speculative design methodologies I often work and experiment with different media. Food as a medium can hold, transform and translate meaning, it can be shared easily and is embodied by the people who consume it. Touching upon all senses it can transport many layers of meaning and activate someone's whole body, most important-



ly giving them energy. As a medium it also has the element of time being something temporary that has to be used, discussed and appreciated soon after its creation. A sandwich can be eaten in any situation, it can be given on the hand and eaten while moving within minutes, or set on a plate, appreciated, shared and consumed over the period of an afternoon.

On a personal note, working with food has always been something that fascinated me, since my father was a passionate hobby-cook and always wanted to open his own restaurant. For me therefore this is a medium that has deep roots and is something that lets me connect to my past.

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### **B.5 Approach**

This whole project was conducted in a semi structured creative process, a process that would mainly consist of practical, close to life creative research embedded in the communities I work with. Accompanying the processes of appropriation of unused spaces through building together new shared infrastructures for social and cultural events. The sandwiches and research on community building through shared food would be a part of this larger process of Minigolf Hard, but I also conducted more exploratory workshops at various other locations and settings. An approach of placing things in the world and especially also placing the mediated story of shared sandwiches in these processes of community development was the main line of practice. This led to very nuanced and low-friction events that felt like life.

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### **B.6 Starting Point**

Just as this CIRCE project started, a sociocultural outdoor sport facility (Minigolf Hard) that I actively shaped came into the active communal building process. So these two projects aligned and I could actively observe the building of a new urban, democratic socio-cultural community. This shaped my process in the first half of the project and I would take on more of a role of a community organiser and less one of a researcher.

## C. Process

The start of this creative endeavour was an intense phase of practise. For three months I dived into a personal point of view. I observed and shaped community building in the example of Minigolf Hard as an active member. During the summer months I hosted various workshops in Zürich and with other CIRCE fellows in Locarno, Switzerland and in Oslon, Bulgaria. There I applied the learnings from the process at Minigolf Hard and experimented with the format. In these steps I also worked more closely with culture itself and conceived of more experimental and discussion-rich workshops. After all this applied research and practise I brought all the recipes and learnings together into a zine that I would share with other communities and allies.

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### C.1 *Methodologies*

During this project I employed various methodologies of community building. I tried to stay away from classical creative methods like design thinking since this was intended as a more practice based, ad-hoc and personal form of inquiry. The overarching methodological approach can be described as designing and researching through practising and observing everyday day life. With a background in interaction design I also applied many design methodologies from workshop formats, the ideas of everything is a prototype and performative methods.

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### C.2 *Workshops and Process*

#### C.2.1 *Minigolf Hard*

The project Minigolf Hard and the association that organises it was the community I was most involved in during this process. It is an uncommercial and inclusive outdoor sociocultural center that combines minigolf, building, gardening, cultural events and room for friendly encounters. From February to June 2023 twelve courses were built by various collectives, children and persons. Over 100 people were somehow involved in the building process. For us it was important to have this process as open as possible and providing lunch was a big part of this. In July an additional course was built by Dynamo which I also accompanied with the sandwich project.

##### C.2.1.1 *Building Process*

During the building process members of the association Minigolf Hard built infrastructures surrounding the minigolf course, organised the open call, looked after catering, searched funding and planned the following low-barrier, public and uncommercial operation of the course. The

different collectives, school classes and individuals were solely responsible for building their individual course. Together came a wild group of people with various backgrounds in architecture, performance, education, art and much more.

#### C.2.1.1.1 *Weekends*

On six building weekends all participants of the construction phase of the project came together and built their individual courses. People were sharing knowledge about materials, tools, construction methods and having a good time creating something unique. On each weekend we also provided an open lunch to all who were on site. Very quickly this became a central meeting point and time for all to share the status of their work and how the project can progress further and become something even better.

It was an open lunch so everybody and their friends were invited and people sometimes also only came for the shared meal, which is a testament to the community that was built and how food can contribute to building these bridges and relationships. Often we made shared sandwiches, where everybody built their own sandwich, but during the earlier, colder days of the year we also cooked soups, risotto etc. to fill the hungry stomachs after building in the cold.

#### C.2.1.1.2 *Sandwich Extravaganza*

As a celebration of the successful opening of Minigolf Hard and the wonderful building phase we organised a sandwich extravaganza for all who contributed. Janina Tanner and I conceived and prepared the sandwiches, set a long table and invited all. 70 people joined the table throughout the night and engaged with each other, reflecting and maybe even a little bit of dreaming about the process that lies in the past. For the people from the association and especially me this was a moment to give back and to put a smile on to all the involved people.

#### C.2.1.2 *Workshops with Dynamo*

In late July a group of international volunteers from SCI (Service Civil International) came together in Zürich. This project was established to give individuals from various international backgrounds the possibility for a cultural exchange with a partner organisation in another country. The social department of the city of Zurich therefore holds a yearly two week workshop with some of these individuals where they physically build together in a semi-public environment.

This year they chose Minigolf Hard, the uncommercial outdoor “sports” center next to an old slaughterhouse, to build a new minigolf course. Over the course of these days they would learn how to weld, work with concrete, plan and build their shared course together. Since I am an active member of the association that built and runs the minigolf course I facilitated the more tasty aspects of the project.

In this research session I employ a very close to life and low invasive practice of inquiry. Stepping back as often as possible and taking a casual, observational role. I only prepared a rough plan of what I could do, but would adjust to each day’s unique situation and the vibe of myself and the group.

#### **C.2.1.2.1 Day 1 - Before - 19.07.2023**

The first day of the project all participants ate breakfast together and then arrived around 11 am at the location where they would build together a creative sports project. In the two days off-site they got to know each other and had an introduction into the workshops of Dynamo, a local community center for people of young age. On this day my sandwich project would not officially start, but only the day after so I introduced myself and showed them the infrastructures available on the site. Even though it wasn't planned for, they organised a common lunch where they prepared sandwiches. It was interesting to observe this and see how and where things could be adapted.

#### **C.2.1.2.2 Day 2 - A Gift- 20.07.2023**

The first act in this process was meant as a gift. An approachable sandwich made with simple, self-made ingredients, that show aspects of appreciation, dedication and pleasure. I introduced myself again, as the sandwich researcher. On this day I made a super saucy sandwich to test the theory that saucy ones are the best ones, which turned out to be true. The group approved, gained trust and people wanted to specifically join the sandwich action the next day. During this lunch I got to know the group better. Among themselves they were already very open and knew each other's names.

#### **C.2.1.2.3 Day 3 - The Storm - 24.07.2023**

The third day on the minigolf course started normal. I got the ingredients for a Mumbai street sandwich ready and two people from the group helped me cut the vegetables, set the table and spread the sandwiches. We were setting up a tiny outdoor kitchen to freshly toast these cheese sandwiches, as you would do on a summer day when pouring concrete. The storm arrived out of nowhere and within a minute the weather changed from a sunny day to rain and hail, so that everybody needed to find shelter inside. In the last moments we could also save the sandwich ingredients and the toaster, only one parasol got some damage from the storm. But still this storm and the food brought the people together since we had a shared experience and were all soaking wet from the rain. The sandwiches were delicious and we all couldn't get enough of them.

#### **C.2.1.2.4 Day 4 - Building - 25.07.2023**

On this day the group split up into two, while some stayed at the Dynamo workshops, the other half came to the course and finished the railings. Since they were pressed for time we decided to make a quick and uncomplicated on the hand approach to the lunch. Me and two other persons prepared some simple ingredients and set them on a table next to the construction site. Although this was a very uneventful lunch it still showed the first signs of communality and shared ideas. The collective was growing together so that first inside jokes and steps beyond formalities arised. People were making sandwiches for each other and gifting them also respecting dietary restrictions. This was a beautiful sign of trust and friendship among everyone.

#### **C.2.1.2.5 *Day 5 - Do it Yourself- 26.07.2023***

The last day of meals on site was again a self organised one. This time they joined together on a big table and made sandwiches together. A lot of the ingredients were leftover from the days before, but also some specific ingredients that people wished for. Throughout the lunch there was an energetic atmosphere and excitement about the successful end to the project. There were many talks about food from different cultures and no border between topics about the creative project itself and other topics. For me this is a great facilitation of a cultural discussion that has blended edges and no clear start or finish, at some times it also turned into moments of creative reflection.

#### **C.2.1.2.6 *Day 6 - Vernissage- 27.07.2023***

On the last day we didn't have lunch, but I was invited to their vernissage of the course in the afternoon. It was wonderful to see how close the group grew together exchanging many hugs and clinking glasses. A time to relax and to exchange contact info for future collaborations and visits.

#### **C.2.1.2.7 *Reflection***

I can't prove that the interventions I made helped the group grow closer together, but what I can say is that it created memorable moments that worked. A shared story though the sandwiches emerged and food was no longer a necessity but became an active part of the process of building a community. This week taught me plenty about the setting of tables, spontaneity in mediation and transcultural food practices.

### **C.2.2 *Locarno***

For the "Long Night of Dreaming about The Future of Intelligence" at Locarno Film Festival 76 I joined forces with Andreas Bütler with whom I am working as the Dialoguing with Ecologies Group on experimental forms of dialoguing with more-than-humans. Together with Rafael Dermbach we conceived a sandwich workshop in the middle of the night that would act as a moment to breathe, replenish and change pace, after four hours of more input focused formats. We prepared 26 different ingredients that the participants could spread onto freshly baked focaccia and build landscapes. The goal of the workshop was to create shared ecologies and dream of a future of intelligence that goes beyond the human and technological.

The atmosphere that the workshop created was amazing and I think we really unlocked a kind of creative, speculative collective intelligence. The participants dived deep into the phase of creation and built truly together, reacting to the inputs and ingredients others placed with their own idea of what the sandwich could become. What also worked out incredibly well was the very different format and medium of the workshop, compared to all others that happened during the night. Through this it really changed the perspective of the participants and opened a new line of conversation that wasn't present before. Thoughts and ideas that went beyond the now-

days standard talks and discussions about artificial intelligence, but ideas about human, ecological and shared intelligence emerging momentarily and fading away again.

### ***C.2.3 Bulgaria***

The goal of coming to Olsen was to learn more about the international application of these ideas and exchange knowledge about community building with Nevena Yovcheva. Anna de Mezzo and Nyangala Zolho also joined the trip and worked on the futures of rural living. During the first so called “Oslen Weekend” we held different workshops to help the community and be creative.

My workshop was of course a sandwich workshop. This time I wanted to do one with the smallest form of intervention. Using and preparing local ingredients just in time and no preparation from my side before arriving in the village. By doing this I aimed to adjust and reflect the workshop exactly on the place where it happened. This led to the workshop idea simply being that all participants make a sandwich and gift it to a stranger, some other person. One additional “rule” was that one ingredient must have some meaning to the sandwich maker and they have to tell this meaning to the gift receiver. This sparked many talks about the meaning of food, why the people were here right now and much more. Even though the workshop was simple and basic, it worked wonderfully and the excitement, wonder and energy that it sparked was amazing. But it must also be said that mediation also played an underestimated role.

The research trip was a great moment to dive deeper into the topic of rural community building and the challenges it faces. These challenges are different from the ones that work in the city has. The main concern being to find a critical amount of people that want to join the village and leave the city behind. Similar challenges between city and village are the necessity to build trust among all participants of the community and to build flat hierarchies that are flexible and can grow and shrink as needed. Mediation and exercises can help in these steps and build a shared narrative. Simple and with thought placed interventions can be the first steps to establish routines and start discussions that lead to a stronger and more resilient community.

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### ***C.3 Zine Development***

After all the practical work I created a zine collecting all the recipes developed during the process and highlighting easy to understand key lessons for community building through shared meals. It should act as a starting point for interested parties to start their own journey and experiment with different methods for facilitation. I want to start a lust for the process and a moment where one can start to act. In the end this project is not about concepts, but about applied work and learning, adapting and designing in the moment. Every community, every workshop, every moment is different and by using food one can adapt quickly to the situation and start a conversation.

The zine is a starting point for future community building processes and an invitation to do the same. I will distribute it via open access digitally and also produce a limited number of physical copies to be shared with interested communities and allies.

## **D. Analysis**

Being a semi-structured project that didn't follow a classical design project meant that the project would have a fluid start and end. Learning was constantly applied during the project and a big whole piece of work manifested itself. Also for myself the various steps blurred together, specifically because the project was so close to life and embedded in my everyday life that it was always ongoing. When creative practice comes closer to me it is because more applied and its impact are more human and touches upon a more diverse group of people. During and after the project I analysed key ingredients of successful community projects, mediated through the use of food.

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### **D.1 *Sharing Food***

It goes without saying that food can play a major role in building and healing communities. This project should give a starting point to other practitioners and ignite a lust for cooking more together, embedded within open socio-cultural community structures. Cooking together is always a place for stories, fantasies and relaxed kitchen talk. Sharing food is a form of care and gives members or newcomers of these structures an incentive to come again and again. It gives access to a broader group of people that may benefit from good food. As said before, food is best when it is gifted.

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### **D.2 *Mediation***

In processes like this, mediation and clear moderation should take a step back. Do you need a mediator? Yes, because there needs to be a person or a group in charge of the invitation and story of the event. The mediation should stay very much in the background and only act as an initial input and provide a general setting within which the various actors can be creative and shape an event in the moment. Then mediation can become something very human, more akin to hosting, since the conflicts and discussions can emerge momentarily and be facilitated by participants themselves. The mediators don't even need to know the exact contents of what was talked about, but should be more concerned with a lively event itself.

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### **D.3 *Workshop Format***

During the different workshops I observed various nuances and iterated on them in the course of the project. I have included them as starting points in the zine and also want to highlight a couple of them here.



### D.3.1 *Setting the Table*

Setting a table, as it already says, has one key ingredient, it should be one table. However long it must be to accommodate all participants of an event, workshop, meeting, lunch or anything else. One has also to be prepared to extend the table if needed to accommodate more people. It's also good to not have someone sit at the beginning or end of the table, or use a round table, so that there are no hierarchies. Sitting in the middle of the table versus towards the ends of a table should feel equal and there will be no one table talk, but distributed talks up and down it. Of course adding a couple of personal nice touches can help to make the table inviting, it is just important that they are personal and come from the space itself.

### D.3.2 *Make it Public*

A public setting is key to lower the barriers of entry. Public means that all doors are open and it's clearly labeled where what happens. This lets also neighbours and passerbys know that something happens, even though they might not want to engage with it at that specific time.

With a public setting also comes varying levels of engagements, some people may just come by to listen while they sip a coffee or they get heavily involved and stay for hours until the end and even pick up on tasks that may come up. These fluid borders are a space that can be designed and opened. The moment of joining and leaving from the public setting is a space where informal exchanges happen and people learn more about each other.

### D.3.3 *Invitation*

Conceiving open invitations is one of the most important steps to create an environment where everybody feels welcomed and included. Generally transparent and consistent communication is key. This means to spread the invitation up to two weeks ahead through analog and digital channels. The invitation should also communicate what the event is about and how new participants can join. Having for example dedicated 30 minutes before the event to introduce newcomers to the processes and let them get comfortable and familiarised can help to increase the involvement and transparency.

At times also a spontaneous invitation, arising from the moment can be used as a complementary approach to invite people that pass by or are hard to reach via digital communication channels. To make the invitation personal and give people a way they can add to the event gives the invitation more value and can distribute tasks.

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## D.4 *Sociocultural Community Building*

Building successful and long lasting communities that stay open to outsiders is a long process that requires the right commitment from a diverse group of people. When working within the sociocultural context the lives that come together in one space are varied and may have clash-

ing ideas and values. Mediation through shared food is a crucial tool in building and strengthening the communities and can be a space where these different values can come together and form something new. Working with emerging communities is different every time and it's hard to break it down to simple bullet points. Therefore, having tools and methods that one can fall back to and use over and over again is invaluable in the form of cultural work that begins from a vastly different starting point every time one joins a project.

#### D.4.1 *Structures*

To have a successful community that can outlast its original conceivers means to create structures that are fluid, transparent, clear and prepared to be taken over by others. Democratic structures with elected committees, principles and regular assemblies are self transforming and can outlast its initial founders. Establishing structures for a communal project means to think of a project that one is no longer involved in. As sad as this may sound in the moment of excitement, of starting something fresh, the best projects and their structures can outlive its original contributors and transform into something new.

There are many structures one can choose, in Switzerland for example we often use the form of an association. With its democratic principles, easy and flexible principles and clear distinctions of power (financial, ethical and decision-power) it can grow with the community itself and support it as a legal framework where responsibilities are no longer with individuals but in communality.

#### D.4.2 *Meeting*

Setting regular and open meetings is key. Repetition lets people from all backgrounds join in at their own pace since they don't need to look online to know whether a meeting is happening. They know it always happens, for example on Thursday evening. This builds trust and eases access.

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### D.4.3 *Seven Lessons*

For the zine I also developed seven short lessons that can be easily applied and interpreted by the reader. They are the following:

#### STRUCTURES

A recipe is just a starting point. It sketches a structure that can be expanded upon, adapted, overthrown, redrawn and rewritten.

#### AGAIN AND AGAIN

Repetition like Sunday roast, taco Tuesday or pizza every 15th of the month let's all join in their own tempo. A recurring invitation opens participation to more since it gives more people the chance to plan to come. It becomes ritual.

#### A TABLE

Tables combine into one. Without a beginning or end it can accommodate everyone. Holding not one discussion, but up and down the table.

#### ON INGREDIENTS

Too much salt can be off-putting, but tiny irritations like it can shape a table's discussion and let it find communality. This can be an ingredient that traditionally does not fit a recipe, like chocolate in a sandwich, self-made items or alternative tools for eating.

#### CHANGE OF PLAN

When mediating the unexpected is often your best friend, it activates and brings together the creativity to react of everyone. A storm can turn an ordinary lunch into a shared story.

#### PLACE

Adapting to and respecting a place is key. Boundaries can be overcome and spaces opened to the public.

#### A GIFT

Food is best when it is gifted.

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### D.5 *Intelligence*

Looking beyond the practice based scope of the project can teach us about intelligence. When sitting around a table a form of collective intelligence emerges. In a shared environment signals become noise, and when someone asks for more salt it can create a spark at the table and start

new tangents, collaborations, relationships and more. Places and spaces are smart and inviting for things they need to happen. As humans we can observe and react, forming a combined intelligence with the place itself.

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#### **D.6 *Ending the Project***

Ending this project wasn't an easy task, because there was no real start to it and there will never be a real end to it. It has merely been a more intense phase of thinking and working with communities through the medium of food. Despite this I wanted to collect all what I have done in the zine and give it an approachable and tangible form. An creative artefact that can be used by others and act as a conversation starter. While it is a great conversation starter it is often hard to talk about shared food without practising it, therefore I find it much more important to hold workshops and build open, democratic communities, rather than trying to bring everything into one cookbook. This part of ending the project therefore always felt a bit pushed and limiting.

I want to continue to facilitate workshops and community building along the ideas of shared food and develop more creative forms of expression through the food itself. I believe this methodology can be used in various cultural projects and can help different stakeholders discuss projects in a more human setting that goes beyond simple workshopping. Especially the input at the long night about the future of intelligence in Locarno showed how energising and interesting discussions can be facilitated through food among creatives from different fields.

## **E. Linking to CIRCE**

Working on this project has shown how important strong communities are. Whether in the densest cities or remote villages fostering relationships among locals can shape a place in democratic, open and human forms. Using food and creating shared meals acts as an excellent facilitation device when working with and in communities and building new relationships, especially in the context of sociocultural place making. In the creative and cultural industries communal meals can be used to negotiate ideas, visions and contradictions in a casual, open and constructive setting that is multi sensory and close to life.

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### **E.1 *Urbanities***

In our tightly knit and always changing cities local communities contribute to a lively and adaptive urban environment. They respond to challenges and changes and actively shape the further development of the neighbourhoods they are placed in. Through place-making and community building we can strengthen relationships within the city and develop strategies, communal places and sociocultural centers that can act as tools for mediation.

#### **E.1.2 *Resilience***

In these times of polycrisis it is important to build communal structures that are resilient and can act within ever-changing environments. The ongoing assaults on democratic processes indicate that these local communities should be organised in democratic and open ways. Food as a tool to bring people together and engage in discussions around one table can help. It helps building strong neighbourhoods and cities with shared ideas, values and visions that can take on the challenges of today and remediate them. Through various cultural activities these groups can grow, adapt and shape places to their needs and engage with the public. Mediation methods like shared food act as a barrier-breaking tool that brings people from diverse backgrounds together to life and tackle the problems.

#### **E.1.3 *Urban Change***

Neighbourhoods all over are under constant pressure from economical, ecological and social change. Strong communities are often rooted in place and therefore need to have the tools to grow, readapt and evolve in the complex environments of our cities. Places of freedom run by communities can offer a place of relive and togetherness that can help in healing the processes of gentrification. In the constant renewal of cities we can find parallels to the way communities are shaped, new people are joining, others are leaving, ideas come and go. To have some constants, like shared meals, gatherings for dinner or cooking together is necessary to offer a place of casual knowledge exchange and a place to build new relationships on a human level. Through this a community can live on.

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## **E.2 *Sociocultural Community***

Building socio-cultural spaces These sociocultural communities that constitute themselves and produce cultural output to a broader public are often in a constant flux and therefore need formats and structures that lets them bring in new members and mediate ever changing ideas, values and wishes. These sociocultural open spaces can take on different forms, focusing on one or more forms of cultural creation in combination with a strong social and communal aspect. What often works is to think of them more as destinations and less as part of the normal fabric of a city. As a destination they can bring their communities together in places that are outside normal routes through a city and therefore create spaces with a stronger sense of place. Some of the forms of destinations can be for example: sport-facilities, gardens, third-places, cultural venues, or informal markets. What they all have in common is that people make an active choice to go there and engage with the community of said place, rather than just strolling by.

To create and foster sociocultural spaces, means also to have a strong social aspect to a project and to design the spaces to be open and social for people of all backgrounds. This starts with building accessible, free and low-barrier infrastructures that allow for different use. There is always an aspect of social control where the different users of a space can act as the space's social and informal control group, reminding visitors to feel comfortable in the space, leave it as they found it (or better) and to respect the spaces' various users and the neighbours.

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## **E.3 *Cultural and Creative Economies***

My insights show that the medium of communal meals and food preparation can provide a new perspective for debates in the creative and cultural sector. Eating together provides a commonality from which new ideas, perspectives and shared narratives can evolve.

During my process I have engaged with where my work and the methodological device of communal eating has helped them in their own project. At Locarno Film Festival 76, for example, the workshop at the long night about the future of intelligence acted as a platform for imagination and was a unique inflection point of the night. It was a transition from thinking to acting. In Oslen, Bulgaria on the other hand my workshop sparked discussions about the fundamentals of community building and organisation. Over the next days Nevana, Nyangala, Anna and I had many talks about how these processes work best and exchanged learning from our practices.

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## **E.4 *Policy Advice***

This project shows that giving sociocultural projects that work with the simple aspects of life itself can have an impact across a wide spectrum of people. Allowing for personal and qualitative

research lets practitioners engage within communities in forms that focus on shared practices. Supporting active members of communities shifts the focus from research to practice and places the value on engaged work in the creative and cultural sector. By supporting individuals it lets them contribute to building these structures without having to create places that are driven by economic factors. Therefore plural places can be created that are open to everybody and let people enjoy socio-cultural without the need to consume.