

REASSESSING THE SOCIAL

SOCIAL DESIGN NETWORK CONFERENCE 2025, LUCERNE

UNDERSTANDING TRANSFORMATION

18.-20. SEPTEMBER '25 PROCEEDINGS

**Reassessing the Social – Understanding Transformation.
Proceedings of the Social Design Network Conference 2025**

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Conference Social Design Network Conference 2025, September 19–20, 2025, Lucerne, Switzerland

PhD Symposium: September 18, 2025, Bern, Switzerland

Host institutions Hochschule Luzern – Design Film Kunst (HSLU DFK) | Hochschule der Künste Bern (HKB)

Board of the Social Design Network: Bori Fehér, Jonatan Ventura, Andreas Unteidig, Shilpa Das

Publisher Hochschule Luzern – Design Film Kunst (HSLU DFK)

Identifiers ISBN 978-3-95254-242-2 | DOI <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17559020>

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Citation Unteidig, A., Herlo, B., & Pierri, P. (Eds.). (2025). Reassessing the Social – Understanding Transformation. Proceedings of the Social Design Network Conference 2025. Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17559020>

Funding and support Swiss National Science Foundation, Watson Foundation, Swiss Leading House South Asia, Winterhouse Institute

Editorial Support Isabelle Dechamps, Marie-Eve von Allmen & Zsofia Pataky

Design, visual concept Michael Speranza

Photography: Tetyana Kalyuzhna, Sarah Peyrel

Website conference.socialdesignnetwork.org | **Website development:** Dominik Schoch

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SOCIAL DESIGN NETWORK CONFERENCE 2025 REASSESSING THE SOCIAL-UNDERSTANDING TRANSFORMATION

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIAL DESIGN NETWORK CONFERENCE 2025

social design
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FROM 18–20 SEPTEMBER 2025, THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DESIGN NETWORK COMMUNITY GATHERED IN BERN AND LUCERNE TO REFLECT ON HOW OUR FIELD IS BEING RE-SHAPED BY INTERTWINED CRISES AND TRANSFORMATIONS. THE PHD SYMPOSIUM AT HKB IN BERN OPENED THE CONVENING WITH A FOCUS ON ENGAGED RESEARCH AND ITS TENSIONS; THE TWO CONFERENCE DAYS AT HSLU IN LUCERNE EXPANDED THE CONVERSATION ACROSS TALKS, WORKSHOPS, EXHIBITS, AND CONVIVIAL FORMATS. TOGETHER THESE PROCEEDINGS DOCUMENT THAT ENCOUNTER AND THE MANY PATHWAYS IT HAS OPENED.

● Andreas Unteidig, Bianca Herlo, Paola Pierri

reassessing the social understanding transformation

After the gathering: why these pages matter

Proceedings published weeks after an event are not a mere record; they are a relay. The texts collected here—paper manuscripts and abstracts of talks, alongside documentation of workshops and interventions—do more than summarize. They reposition ideas in the cooler light of retrospect, connect threads across sessions and disciplines, and invite further work in studios, classrooms, and neighborhoods. Our theme, “Reassessing the Social: Understanding Transformation,” asked us to take stock of our assumptions about “the social” precisely because it is not a stable category. What counts as social is made and remade—through politics and the political, conflict and care, infrastructures and imaginations—and through design itself. The conference framing emphasized the shifting terrain we face: diversification and polarization, climate adaptation, redistributions of capital and privilege, and the deepening datafication of everyday life. That framing lives on as a lens for reading this volume.

A glimpse into future social design practices

PhD researchers play a crucial role in shaping a discipline’s future—by asking new questions, reassessing certainties, and experimenting with methods. They bring fresh perspectives and challenge what is taken for granted. In the PhD Symposium we created space for critical voices from different geographies. More than twenty doctoral students explored the challenges, ethics, and values of doing engaged research in social design: research that aims to critically interrogate and change the world politically. The Symposium offered a glimpse of a coming future—locally committed and globally connected, responsible, and holding reciprocity as a key value.

What emerged across tracks

The main conference was organised around three tracks, which served as vantage points that often overlapped in practice.

Diversity & New Actors explored participation beyond tokenism, asking how alliances are built (and with whom), how accountability and agency operate under data regimes, and how power might be reclaimed or redistributed—including through more-than-human entanglements.

New Conflicts, Old Identities stayed with polarization rather than smoothing it over. Several pieces work in the key of productive agonism: refusing false reconciliation while designing infrastructures for “staying with the trouble.” (as Haraway said). Others interrogate shifting lines of capital—economic, cultural, social, and data-rich—and their design implications.

Pedagogies for (Eco-)Social Transformation asked what capacities and literacies design education must nurture now—critical, ethical, collaborative, relational, ecological. Many authors write from their classrooms and labs, offering situated experiments as well as tools that travel. The track’s cross-cultural ambition, supported by the Swiss Leading House South Asia, is visible in the range of cases gathered.

Across all tracks, we noticed a shared insistence on relations, and a joint

focus on perspectives of maintenance and hospitality as much as on invention; design's "outputs" were often infrastructures for learning together, negotiating conflict, opening up possibilities, or holding open spaces where multiple truths can co-exist.

Orientations: keynotes and closing panel

Keynotes and the closing panel offered orientation. Flor Avelino's opening mapped power and prefiguration in just sustainability transitions, offering language for what many projects attempt on the ground. Jesko Fezer's address on "partisan design" pushed us to own our orientations and accountabilities. The closing conversation with Shilpa Das, Chris Kasabach, and Vera Sacchetti tied those threads back to education, institutions, and public practice. To conclude, we gathered in a circle to discuss open questions for social design—its economy, its plural and engaged nature, and the idea that a practice so deeply contextual knows no centres or peripheries.

Convivial formats as method

The conference wove critique into conviviality. Collective making, exhibits, and the shared dinner workshop functioned as epistemic spaces—sites where knowledge moved sideways through materials, stories, and embodied tasks. Interventions such as The Pollination Hub foregrounded the community's own needs: how we reflect, connect, decompress, and extend the field; how we make room for emerging voices and more-than-human perspectives. Several contributions in this volume document these gestures not as accessories to the "real" work, but as central to it.

Access, support, and the infrastructures that made SDNC25 possible

Conversations about access were matched by concrete measures. A solidarity pricing model supported different participant situations, and, with the Watson Foundation's Design Leadership Initiative and the Swiss National Science Foundation, we offered 24 scholarships to broaden participation. These supports, alongside the Winterhouse Institute and the support of HSLU leadership, materially shaped who could be in the room and thus what could be said. We are grateful to our host institutions—HSLU and HKB—and to the network of supporters and partners acknowledged throughout these pages.

A note on voice, care, and acknowledgment

Our goal was to create a conference designed with sensibility: welcoming diverse epistemologies; naming maintenance, hospitality, and administrative labor as part of knowledge production; and making space for disagreement without collapse. Many of the papers extend that stance. The editors wish to acknowledge the labor—visible and invisible—that made both the gathering and these proceedings possible: authors, reviewers, student volunteers, administrators, technicians, designers, and all those whose contributions went unrecorded.

From field notes to field building

Read collectively, the contributions sketch a field that is plural, pragmatic, and engaged. Plural, because many authors refuse singular narratives—about "the user," progress, neutrality, or scale. Pragmatic, because projects are measured not only by artifacts but by the infrastructures they help prototype: coalitions, curricula, governance arrangements, care protocols, repertoires for agonistic dialogue. Engaged, because accountability—to place, partners, and publics—shows up in methodological choices, not only aspirations.

Several essays take up design's relationship to power explicitly: who is empowered or disempowered by our methods; how data, capital, and institutional logics shape outcomes; where we must refuse to design and instead help unbuild or redistribute. Others offer literacies and tools for eco-social transformation—ways to teach, learn, and evaluate that are honest about limits yet ambitious about possibilities.

If "social design" names anything coherent, it is a commitment: to enabling fairer, more livable arrangements with humility in complex systems; to incremental change where leverage is local; to coalitions where design is one actor among many; to listening where we lack standing. Perhaps a near future is one in which the adjective "social" becomes superfluous because equity, care, and responsibility are inseparable from all design. Until then, we keep practicing, together.

These pages carry that practice forward.

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LITERACIES & PEDAGOGIES

Track 2

As society transforms, so must design education. This chapter explores how to prepare future designers to engage with complex societal challenges through critical, ethical, and collaborative capacities. What should design pedagogy prioritize? What should it let go of? The collected papers share reflections, experiments, and provocations that reimagine education as a driver of transformation.

● **Jana Thierfelder, Patrick Müller**
Feral Pedagogy: A Transdisciplinary Teaching Format for Bridging Art-Science

● **Linfu Zhang, Linyun Song, Xiyu Du, Zhipeng Duan, Yiqun Luo**
Empowering Future Designers: Embedding Multi-Scale Social Analysis in Social Design Pedagogy

● **Annunziata Albano** Neighborhood Networks as Infrastructuring. Tales of Diffuse Infrastructuring from Rete Corvetto

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feminist thinking: Reflections from three pedagogical contexts

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● **Danae Esparza Lozano, Margherita Vacca, Guim Espelt Estopà, Fabio Ballerini** Shared Skills for Social Impact: Designing a Joint Curriculum for Intercultural Craft Practices

● **Teresa Palmieri** Educating Reflective Eco-Social Designers: Tools for supporting reflection in and on collaboration

● **Shilpa Das, Karin Fink, Andreas Unteidig, Sahil Thappa** Navigating the Lowlands: Toward a Literacy Framework for Eco-Social Design Education

● **Teresa Palmieri, Margherita Vacca, Hatice Server Kesdi, Ruth-Helene Melioranski, Fabio Ballerini, Galit Shvo** Designing with Togetherness: Exploring the involvement of more-than-human actors in eco-social design actions

● **Tanveer Ahmed, Leila Kelleher, Renate Stauss, Franziska Schreiber** A Collaborative Imperative: Embodied Design Pedagogies for Democracy

SHARED SKILLS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT DESIGNING A JOINT CURRICULUM FOR INTERCULTURAL CRAFT PRACTICES

Abstract

This paper addresses the methodological framework behind the definition of a joint curriculum for a formative, cultural, and professional exchange among young migrants, local craftspersons, and social workers, within the framework of the Erasmus+ funded project Intercultural Craft — A bridge between traditional knowledge and cultures. Through the promotion of the social inclusion of people from migratory backgrounds in the local social fabric of the hosting territory, the project aims to design and develop a new social business model of shared value for the craft sector. Based on that, the transmission of traditional knowledge, the exchange of cultures, and the development of new skills lead the project activities which involve the development of a joint training curriculum based on the skills and competences of each of the beneficiary actors to engage in collaborative ecological and social design practices. This, together with the pilot action of selected learning modules and units to test properly its effectiveness and impact towards the beneficiaries. The discussion of the project results and the data collected leads to open conclusions supported by new research questions and the submission of a new research project which aims to further scale up and replicate the design actions undertaken so far.

Keywords: joint curriculum; skills; intercultural craftsmanship; pilot actions; social impact

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1. The Context: INTERCRAFT Project

The paper addresses the creation, design, and implementation process of an educational experience focused on the enhancement of craft skills through intercultural exchange. The background context is linked to the research project Intercultural Craft — A bridge between traditional knowledge and cultures (INTERCRAFT), funded under the Erasmus+ KA2 Cooperation partnerships VET 2022 call. INTERCRAFT aimed to promote the socio-professional inclusion of people from migrant backgrounds—migrants, refugees, asylum seekers—in the local European hosting territory where they currently reside. Through the activation of a cultural and professional exchange among young migrants, local artisans, designers, and social workers, the aim was to create a new social business model of shared value—social, ecological, and economic—among the actors involved. Specific gaps were detected during the project preparation phase. As a knowledge gap, it emerged that the existing scientific literature focuses primarily on a theoretical-critical framework, neglecting the mapping, sharing, and connection of practical experiences at the local and translocal level. Furthermore, the gaps highlighted concern economic and social policies that struggle to connect the craft skills of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers with the craft skills of local artisans. From this perspective, it seems interesting to investigate the strategic role of design culture—specifically, social design and eco-social design—which aims to create alternative bottom-up dynamics for the socio-professional inclusion of people with a migrant background. The envisaged scenario has allowed us to conceive the design of an innovative educational experience as the main result of the project. The main objective was to map and enhance the craft skills of young migrants, connecting them to the traditional knowledge of local artisans in the hosting European territories. Social workers were included as a target group due to their important contribution as professional mediators capable of activating intercultural dialogue and relations between migrants and local artisans. The training programme was planned to inquire about what are the key skills and competences that—when shared among migrants, local artisans, and social workers—can promote effective intercultural dialogue, collaboration, and a new social business model of shared value. The project activities prioritised social inclusion by using an innovative systemic approach, specific methodologies related to co-design and design for (eco)social innovation. Activities were structured taking in consideration the needs of migrants who wish to enhance and increase their professional skills acquired in their countries of origin, using innovative educational methods to connect them with local practitioners and help them find employment (EMN, 2020–2022). In this perspective, INTERCRAFT intends to promote intercultural dialogue through the exchange of traditional knowledge coming from different cultures, the adoption of participatory and intercultural approaches, and the practice of doing together that is typical of craftsmanship. A strong point of the project was the process of building a strategic partnership involving four EU countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, Slovenia) and, specifically, three social enterprises that work in the fields of intercultural craftsmanship and circular economy, two design universities that have experience in the issues addressed and two clusters with a networking purpose and experience in the craft-business sector.

2. The Joint Curriculum

2.1. Contextualisation and Methodology

One of the key project activities was the development of a joint training curriculum based on the skills and competences—those they already have, or those that would be interesting for them to acquire—of each of the beneficiary actors to engage in collaborative ecological and social design practices, encouraging a synergic exchange of knowledge and experience.

The INTERCRAFT Joint Curriculum was designed to meet a paramount project objective: the facilitation of social inclusion for individuals with migrant backgrounds within their local communities. This overarching goal drives the structure of the curriculum, underpinned by the belief that fostering cultural and professional exchanges among young migrants, social workers, and local artisans is instrumental in achieving this objective. As a result, the curriculum offers a dynamic blend of modules, each meticulously tailored to equip participants with competences crucial for this endeavour. The development of the Joint Curriculum began with a comprehensive literature review to pinpoint essential skills and competences. These identified skills were then clustered into related groups, followed by a prioritisation process to determine which were most crucial for the curriculum's focus. This systematic approach ensured that the subsequent curriculum development was built upon a foundation of relevant and high-priority skills and competences.

2.2. Literature Review for Building a List of Skills and Competences

The Joint Curriculum definition started with a literature review, to gather key sources that can provide information about skills and competences—those they already have, or those that would be interesting for them to acquire—in relation to the three main target groups of the INTERCRAFT project.

For selecting the literature, we used a hybrid method consisting of starting from an initial literature superset, i.e., a list of literature sources (articles, books, book chapters, and reports) obtained through an online survey of the international partners of the project. They were asked to suggest key sources that present information about skills and competences related to each of the project's target groups, as well as sources related to creativity, interculturality, or other concepts related to the project. This initial list was later complemented by searching online platforms using keywords also obtained during the same survey.

A corpus of 43 sources was gathered and subjected to a thorough analysis. A first set of literature was related to migrant people (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018; Bonfanti & Xenogiani, 2014; Fabrique Nomade, n. d.; Focus Bari, 2021; Huber et al., 2010; ILO, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2022, n. d.; Nowicka, 2014; Odyssey, 2018; OECD, 2014; OSCE, 2018; Tountopoulou et al., 2021), to artisans (Common Objective, n. d.; De Munck, 2019; ETF, 2021; Luckman, 2020; Mbatha et al. 2014; Millennium Challenge Corporation, 2020; Scrase, 2003; Talbert & McLaughlin, 2020), and to social workers (Braslauskas, 2021; EU, n. d.; IFSW, 2020; Malmberg-Heimonen et al., 2016; Mataitytė & Ališauskaitė, 2020; NSW & STARTTS, 2004; Pierandrei et al., 2019; Pymn & Marsh, 1984; University at Buffalo School of

Social Work, n. d.). Another set of literature included references in relation to creativity, interculturality or labour market (Braslauskas, 2021; CEDEFOP, 2010; European Commission, n. d.; Groyecka et al., 2020; Kozina, 2020; OECD, 2014, 2019; MindTools, n. d.; Peña et al., 2019; Rosa & Taddeo, 2022).

All pertinent skills and competences identified within these sources were systematically compiled onto a virtual canvas. Subsequently, the methodology involved several key steps: highlighting the most frequently mentioned and relevant skills for each distinct target group (migrants, social workers, and artisans); identifying coincident skills shared across all three target groups; and assessing skills specifically related to creativity or those deemed generalistic in their applicability. Following this, the identified skills and competences were clustered into overarching conceptual categories. A critical review was then conducted to ascertain the skills and competences already possessed by each target group versus those that would be beneficial for them to acquire, ensuring an equitable distribution of pre-existing and new skill acquisition targets across all groups. This rigorous process culminated in the definition of a comprehensive skills and competence list, prepared for subsequent validation by key stakeholders.

Resulting of this process, we developed a preliminary list of skills and competences with brief descriptions:

1. Business and entrepreneurship
 - a. Understanding marketing, financial management, pricing, legal issues, and sales strategies
 - b. Fostering entrepreneurial mindset: identify opportunities, take initiative, and develop the confidence to turn ideas into action
 - c. Enhancing organisational and time management skills
2. Community engagement
 - a. Promoting active engagement with local communities and encouraging participants to become change agents within their communities
 - b. Understanding the social dynamics of the local context and increasing the knowledge about the market/trade: characteristics and agents, events, spaces, fairs, weeks, organisations, conferences, grants, competitions, etc.
3. Craftsmanship and traditional skills
 - a. Enhancing and refining existing craftsmanship and traditional skills for preserving and promoting local artistry, heritage, and cultural traditions
 - b. Recognising and promoting the value of craftsmanship
 - c. Understanding the quality standards of the craft sector
4. Creativity and design thinking
 - a. Nurturing creative thinking and design skills: innovate, adapt to changing market demands, and develop products that meet the needs of diverse customer segments
5. Critical thinking
 - a. Questioning norms, practices, and opinions: to reflect on own one's values, perceptions, and actions; and to take a position in the sustainability discourse

- b. Engaging in innovative problem-solving practices; build confidence to share them to influence others
- 6. Digital literacy
 - a. Using technology for digital marketing and communication, information sharing, and service delivery
 - b. Understanding social media as a marketing tool
- 7. Empathy and collaboration
 - a. Empathy: learning from others; understand, relate to, and respect others' needs
 - b. Teamworking: develop helpfulness; accept criticism
 - c. Problem solving: deal with conflicts, facilitate participatory solutions
 - d. Coping with authority
- 8. Ethics and sustainability
 - a. Promoting knowledge and awareness of sustainable and ethical practices and environmental issues
- 9. Intercultural competence
 - a. Fostering cultural sensitivity and awareness
 - b. Promoting inclusion and engagement with individuals from diverse background
- 10. Language and communication
 - a. Developing language proficiency in the host country's language(s) to facilitate effective communication and integration into the local community
 - b. Focusing on vocational language to improve work-related communication (interaction with clients or customers, teamworking, ...)
- 11. Organisation and project management
 - a. Providing participants with project management skills, including planning, organising, and executing projects effectively
 - b. Transforming ideas into actionable plans and achieving desired outcomes
- 12. Personal development
 - a. Self-awareness: reflecting on one's own role in the local community and (global) society
 - b. Self-motivation: evaluating and further motivating one's actions
 - c. Self-care: dealing with one's feelings and desires
 - d. Self-marketing: understanding one's strengths and communicating oneself accordingly
- 13. Professional development
 - a. Empowering and exploration of employment opportunities
 - b. Cultivating lifelong learning mindset
 - c. Reskilling: embracing flexibility, improvisation and adaptation to change
 - d. Skill matching: identify activities that match with one's skills to avoid deskilling
 - e. Consolidating professional skills: politeness, confidence, professional courtesy, self-control, punctuality, planning

2.3. Collaborative Prioritisation and Refinement

Based on the preliminary list of competences derived from the literature review, it was decided to prioritise those skills considered most relevant for the subsequent development of the training curriculum. This prioritisation was carried out in collaboration with various social entities previously contacted during the initial phases of the INTERCRAFT project, particularly as part of the field analysis of social enterprises employing migrants and individuals with fewer opportunities and engaged in forms of intercultural craftsmanship in Italy, Greece, Slovenia, and Spain—the countries of the project partners—as well as a selection of key organisations at the European level.

To this end, an online survey was developed and distributed by the project partners to a set of selected social entities. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 22 organisations. Its main objective was to qualitatively identify the most relevant competences and skills that each of the target groups (migrants, social workers, and local craftspersons) should acquire in order to promote effective pathways for collaboration among them.

The survey consisted of four questions. The first three asked respondents to assess the relevance of each competence within the framework of the project, using a three-level scale: basic, relevant, and priority, for each of the target groups. The fourth and final question provided an open field for participants to suggest additional competences they considered important and not yet included in the initial list.

The responses helped to identify both cross-cutting competences shared by multiple groups—such as empathy and collaboration or community engagement—and skills more specific to each profile. However, after joint analysis of the data during internal consortium meetings, it was decided not to develop exclusive content for each group. Instead, a modular and transversal system was proposed, recommended for all target groups. This approach emphasises shared learning spaces and the exchange of experiences as a fundamental part of the curriculum.

2.4. The Joint Curriculum: Modules and Units

Once the key competences were identified through the participatory process described above, the development of the Joint Curriculum was initiated. The training programme is structured into eight distinct modules. The first two serve as introductory modules and provide a general overview of the programme. The first module sets the foundation by fostering empathy and collaborative attitudes among participants, while the second module addresses the pivotal concept of intercultural competence, offering theoretical and practical insights into its relevance for inclusive collaboration.

Following the introductory phase, six specialised modules are presented, each focusing on a specific set of competences and knowledge areas identified as priorities in the consultation phase:

- Interpersonal and soft skills
- Creativity and design thinking
- Craftsmanship and traditional knowledge
- Sustainable design and eco-social responsibility
- Digital literacy
- Business and entrepreneurship

The INTERCRAFT Joint Curriculum encourages collaborative learning among the three primary target groups involved in the project: migrants, local artisans, and social workers. The training programme is designed to engage all groups in collective, participatory learning activities. Through this process, participants not only acquire competences in specific thematic areas but also develop mutual empathy and a deeper understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds, practices, and perspectives. This reciprocal exchange fosters intercultural dialogue, encourages the sharing of knowledge and capacities, and strengthens collaborative and empathetic relationships among participants.

From a methodological perspective, the curriculum emphasises experiential and practice-based learning. A variety of pedagogical approaches are employed, adapted to the content and objectives of each module. Activities include interactive workshops, group dynamics, hands-on exercises, and immersive experiences that promote active involvement and peer learning. In addition to the content delivered in each module, the curriculum incorporates two key components that support the practical application and contextualisation of learning. Firstly, a group project is developed to foster integration and transversal learning. Multidisciplinary teams composed of migrants, artisans, and social workers engage in a collaborative project that extends across all modules. This ongoing activity culminates in a final presentation and provides participants with the opportunity to apply, connect, and synthesise the competences acquired throughout the curriculum. Secondly, three field visits are organised to provide participants with direct exposure to exemplary initiatives in the areas of creativity, social innovation, and craftsmanship. These visits serve as contextual learning experiences, allowing participants to observe real-world practices aligned with the values and objectives of the INTERCRAFT project.

The content of the modules and units that constitute the INTERCRAFT Joint Curriculum is outlined in Figure 1. This structure reflects the pedagogical priorities and competences identified during the project development, and serves as the foundation for a comprehensive, inclusive, and practice-oriented learning programme.

2.5. Methodological Handbook

The INTERCRAFT Methodological Handbook serves as an operational and pedagogical toolbox providing a methodological imprint and guideline. It was conceived and designed as a practical match to the Joint Curriculum's aim, to activate processes of co-creation and cultural exchange among migrants, local artisans, and social workers. Through a systemic and participatory approach, it frames training as a transformative practice in which craftsmanship becomes a vehicle for mutual understanding, empowerment, and integration.

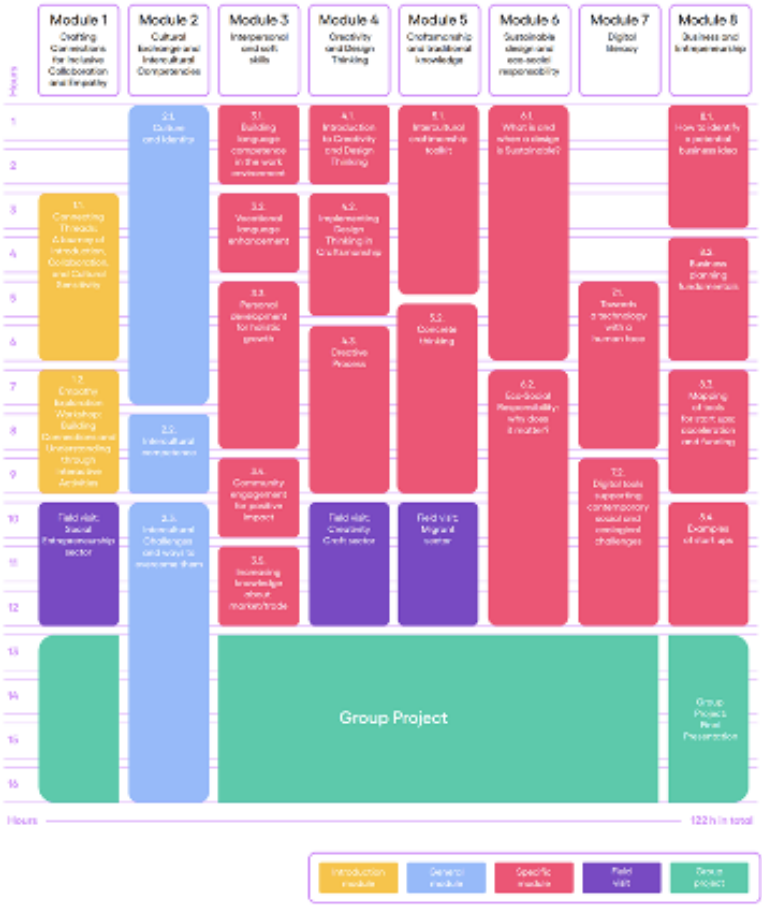
Its educational value lies in combining “hard” skills (technical and craft-based knowledge) with “soft” skills (communication, empathy, teamwork), along with digital literacy, entrepreneurial capacity, and eco-social responsibility. Inspired by principles of non-formal education and design for (eco) social innovation, the handbook emphasises active, learner-centered, and cooperative methodologies.

The approach is experiential, participatory, and inclusive. Each module

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includes practical tools (e.g., role-playing, mapping exercises, canvases, group discussions) and clear guidelines for implementation. The methodology promotes a learner-centered model that values diversity, autonomy, and collaboration, aiming to create “safe spaces” for exchange and growth. The Methodological Handbook represents a comprehensive document offering a range of activities and practical tools designed to support the effective implementation of the various training modules. Its purpose is to equip other organisations active in the field of intercultural craftsmanship with adaptable and ready-to-use resources that can enhance their educational initiatives. By providing structured guidance and relevant tools, the handbook facilitates the deeper exploration and application of the modules included in the Joint Curriculum, promoting knowledge transfer and broader adoption across different contexts.

Figures 1. Outline of the INTERCRAFT Joint Curriculum specifying the different modules, dimensioned and classified according to their content.



3. Testing and Assessment Phase

The pedagogical framework designed proved itself to be innovative for the approaches, methods, and tools envisaged and used, based on the scientific theoretical-critical framework structured so far. The contamination with other methodologies, external to the discipline of design, has brought a considerable enhancement on the applicative and experimental level. This, especially during the pilot actions phase of the training path, allowed the research group to collect fundamental qualitative and quantitative data for the drafting of lessons learned useful to assess it and improve it. Thanks to a participatory and bottom-up approach, the activities foreseen in the pilot action aimed to meet the needs of migrants who wish to enhance and increase their professional skills acquired in their countries of origin, as well as the detected needs of local artisans in the host European territories who require a generational turnover in their businesses. Additionally, social workers played a strategic role by leveraging their intercultural skills, local knowledge, and ability to engage migrants in community projects and activities. Their efforts focused on facilitating and stimulating dialogue and interaction among artisans and migrants.

The Pilot Action phase was structured in three steps: preparation phase, implementation phase, evaluation phase. The preparation phase started in May 2024 and concerned the creation of the organisational and methodological framework within which the Pilot Actions would be carried out by the social organisations Terra di Tutti (Italy), Odysea (Greece), and Terra Vera (Slovenia). The defined structure provided very flexible general guidelines, to allow freedom to the Italian, Greek, and Slovenian trainers to organise the lectures and workshops according to the features of the application context and the set of skills and abilities of the participants involved. The Pilot Action implementation provided the selected participants with a theoretical framework as well as engaging them in hands-on activities related to crafts, circular creativity, design thinking, and business knowledge. A further specific objective was to create a collaborative learning environment fostering intercultural dialogue between people and their skills. It demonstrated the importance of fostering a deep understanding of agency and participation among all participants, empowering them to actively contribute to the project's goals.

3.1. The Pilot Actions

The three Pilot Actions provided a comprehensive package of learning modules and activities with the main aim of testing the Joint Curriculum operational and methodological framework. This phase concerned the actual delivery of the selected learning modules of the Joint Curriculum and the usage of the Methodological Handbook by trainers and facilitators to have a common methodological guideline. Pilot Actions were essential for evaluating the jointly designed curriculum through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from key target groups, including migrants, artisans, and social workers, which subsequently informed the development of a detailed training kit (connected with the methodological handbook previously designed and delivered).

Partners designed targeted and practical activities to ensure the Pilot Actions operated as dynamic blended learning environments, allowing the

Figures 2. Photographs from the different activities carried out during the three Pilot Actions in Italy, Slovenia, and Greece.



innovative training methods to be tested effectively. The concrete nature of these specific objectives also supports the broader aims of the INTER-CRAFT project. These include: developing an innovative training method that enhances the creative potential of the skills of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers within the craft sector through vocational education and training programmes; promoting interaction and inclusion between migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and local professionals who possess traditional craft knowledge; stimulating the intercultural dialogue facilitated by the bridge-building efforts of social workers; strengthening the capabilities of social enterprise operators working with migrant reception at the local level in destination countries; and creating as well as reinforcing European intercultural craft networks that connect migrants, the craft sector, and social workers in the third sector.

The Pilot Actions provided valuable insights on the designed joint training path that have been key to framing a new Erasmus+ project proposal. Specifically, it emerged that the participants' diverse educational backgrounds did not compromise their learning and fruition of the learning modules in any way. Furthermore, the theoretical component seamlessly intersected with the practical component, although it would have been preferable to give more space to the latter: it was detected that "craft tinkering" can itself be considered a universal language and communication tool, thus fostering intercultural dialogue. Further discussion on the insights concerns

the learning module focused on business enterprising, as it would be appropriate to give it more space in a possible future implementation of the joint curriculum. Lastly, it proved to be a powerful testament and good practice to its potential to facilitate meaningful intercultural exchange and promote effective social inclusion actions.

4. Conclusions and Further Steps

From a preliminary analysis of the data collected, it emerges that the activation of training courses in intercultural craftsmanship capable of enhancing the artisanal skills of migrants and of promoting critical dialogue with the local artisanal tradition are strategic devices for social inclusion. Much of (eco)social design passes through here, that is, from the enhancement of traditional knowledge and skills of the local territories and communities, and from the implementation of socio-professional inclusion policies that are truly inclusive, just, and sustainable over time. Based on the reports and exploitation plan delivered after the Pilot Actions' implementation, it emerges that the INTERCRAFT project has demonstrated a powerful model for fostering intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, and creative entrepreneurship through craft-based learning. Specifically, the project has created a solid foundation for further impact, replication and scale-up, thanks to the Joint Curriculum designed and tested. The immersive and hands-on activities undertaken during the three different pilot actions resulted in being part of a grassroots training process and highlighted the actual need (because of a policy void) related to the provision of alternative socio-professional inclusion paths.

The structured methodological framework proved itself to be an important basis for coordinating activities from both a technical and scientific perspective. Specifically, the use of bottom-up and hybrid methodologies (drawing from various disciplines) allowed for collective and participatory design action among both the consortium partners and the direct and indirect beneficiary participants. The dissemination of the outputs and outcomes achieved with other national and international colleagues working in the field of (eco)social design allowed for the dissemination of the knowledge generated, as well as for critical consideration of the future replicability and improvement of the training programme.

The exploitation potential of the project results proves itself significant, particularly in light of growing societal interest in sustainable development, circular economy application, intercultural preservation, and inclusive education. Through its learning modules and units, hands-on and bottom-up approach, and emphasis on designing a cooperative educational environment, INTERCRAFT aimed to respond and design alternative ways to the real needs of migrant communities, artisans, designers, educators, and cultural institutions.

As a future perspective, INTERCRAFT's priority is to ensure that the tools, methods, and networks built during the project are accessible, preserved, refined, and put to use in new contexts. This includes encouraging further use of the curriculum by educational providers, promoting the platform as a hub for intercultural exchange, and nurturing the creative and entrepreneurial potential of participants beyond the project's lifetime.

The social inclusion and innovation process started by INTERCRAFT will require ongoing engagement, flexible adaptation, and strategic alignment with funding opportunities, policy developments, and institutional agendas. The next steps will involve identifying partners willing to champion the approach, continuing to test and refine materials in real-life settings, and seeking opportunities for integration into long-term programming. While the future of these initiatives cannot be guaranteed, the groundwork done so far offers strong potential for continued growth. Through thoughtful dissemination, supportive partnerships, and a commitment to inclusive values, the legacy of INTERCRAFT can continue to evolve—enriching communities, empowering individuals, and inspiring new forms of intercultural collaboration through craft.

Following this perspective, a new project proposal (INTERCRAFT 2 — Empowering a European network of social businesses dealing with intercultural craft, circular economy, and skills enhancement practices) was submitted to the recent 2025 call of the Erasmus+ KA2 Cooperation Partnerships VET programme, which intends to focus on a new level of beneficiaries, namely the trainers of trainers, who will facilitate the educational experience and activities that promote the socio-professional inclusion of people with migratory background.

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Statement on compliance with ethical standards

For elaborating the preliminary list of skills and competences, AI was occasionally used to help in the clustering process. In this article, AI has been used only as assistance to rephrase or fine-tune certain sentences.

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MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS, PARTNERS, HOSTS AND SUPPORTERS!

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This conference and these proceedings would not have been possible without the contributions of many people and institutions.

We thank Jacqueline Holzer and the DFK directorate for their trust and support in making this event possible. We are grateful to the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Swiss Leading House South Asia, and the Winterhouse Institute for their financial support. We especially thank the Watson Foundation, particularly Erika Wang and Chris Kasabach, for their partnership throughout.

Conference Organization

Isabelle Dechamps held a key role in coordinating the conference. Jlanit Schumacher provided calm and caring support throughout. Michael Speranza created the visual identity and brought these proceedings to life. Dominik Schoch developed the website. Sarah Laura Peyrel organized the PhD Symposium in Bern and supported the conference. Jan-Christoph Zoels, together with the MA Design team, integrated the conference into the curriculum. Christoph Schindler provided beautiful infrastructure. Ibrahim Demirci and Margareta Hüsser expanded existing systems to accommodate the conference. Studio Kollyguyer offered valuable design support. Zsófia Pataky and Marie-Eve von Allmen patiently edited all relevant texts. Sin Mei Cheung created a collaborative dumpling dinner experience. We are particularly grateful to all Student Volunteers for creating a welcoming, fun, and collaborative atmosphere for everybody to enjoy: Annina Coray, Anastasiia Dubinkina, Eva Moreno, Lennart Schiffers, Sharaya Naik, Amin Sharq, Salome Gyr, Enna Brandt, Mica Meier, Mariam-Sophie Karl, Lena Fritzsche, Jithmini Fernando, Jasmin Lienhard, Amalia Gutmann, Tanja Schüpbach, Felix Schutz, Deborah Fischer, Figen Çiçek Yaman Karaca, Fernanda Moreno, Yunus Emre Karaca, Shanice Heuzeveldt, Manushi Khatlawala, Maria Roza Cielecka, Evan Sands, Simon Scheepers, Sylwan McGowan

Academic Program

We thank all authors, exhibitors and facilitators that participated in the conference program, as well as our keynote speakers Flor Avelino, Jesko Fezer, Shilpa Das, Vera Sacchetti and Chris Kasabach. The Board of the Social Design Network provided partnership, advice and guidance. Our track chairs Bori Feher, Karin Fink, Anna Antonakis, Jan-Christoph Zoels, Gilly Karjevski, Jonathan Ventura, Isabelle Dechamps, Jens Badura, Shilpa Das and Axel Vogelsang facilitated our discussions. All anonymous peer-reviewers ensured academic quality.

Participants

The PhD candidates participants in Bern: Agnivech Sharma, Anna Lena Menne, Brian Morgan, Carina Lange, Caroline Du, Claudia Zampella, Daniele Dell'Ort, Emilia Knabe, Eva Lisa Kubinyi, Friederike Frobél, Harshavardhan Pandian, Isabelle Dechamp, Isabell Schnalle, Juan Fortun, Marosan Borbala, Milagros Hurtig, Paula Keilholz, Rosina Eugenia, Sajith Gopinathan Nair, Samein Shamsheer, Silvia Cantalupi, Svenja Bickert.

The SDNC Impact Fellows: Elizabeth Aderinola, Caroline Yunhe Du, Vartak Sushrut, Durre Shehwar Ali, María Martina Cassiau, Sucharita Beniwal, Roleen Gail Sevilla, Guruprasad Sathyanarayanan, Huma Mobin, Agnivesh Sharma, Timea Izsak, Juan Fortun, Mariane Meshaka.

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