



YOUTH
IN
THE
CITY

YOUTH IN THE CITY

ACTIVISM, CREATIVITY AND DIGITAL
INNOVATION FOR TRANSCULTURAL
LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS YOUTH IN THE CITY?

Youth in the city (YITC) is an initiative led by scholars at Monash University and Aalborg University, in collaboration with the design and innovation studio Logic Moon. Young people in superdiverse urban contexts can play a vital role in bringing together their communities, fostering social cohesion and building socio-economic resilience. Their lived experiences across different cultures, languages and social contexts provide the potential for great leadership within increasingly complex, transcultural and multilingual societies. Yet such great potential is often hindered by lack of opportunities, confidence and leadership skills; and by different forms of discrimination at the intersection of class, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientations, and physical abilities.

YITC aims to foster leadership for social change through creative practices and digital projects within superdiverse cities across the world. We focus on initiatives centred around young people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds that will foster the development of leadership and communicative skills and build communities of practice.

YITC provides young people with the opportunity to work on impactful creative and digital projects with established cultural entrepreneurs, digital designers, artists, scholars and educators. By empowering the youth and giving their perspectives enhanced visibility and impact at local, national, and global level, *Youth in the City* encourages young people to recognise and embrace their potential for leadership. Our approach is founded on three pillars: it is transcultural, transdisciplinary and participatory.

Transcultural, as we believe in the creative potential of different languages and cultures coming together and influencing each other, in turn fostering social cohesion within superdiverse communities.

Transdisciplinary, as we believe in bridging the gaps between research, creative practices, entrepreneurship, education, and civic engagement.

Participatory, as we believe transcultural processes need to be led by empowered local communities and to nurture local leadership, especially amongst young people.

WHY DO WE NEED LEADERS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?

Scientists almost unanimously point out that our societies operate way beyond the regenerative capacity of our planet. The world in the coming decades will be one of huge regional and class differences, increased polarization, and social strife. More than ever before, younger generations will need leaders able to operate within superdiverse societies and their ever-changing constellations of objects, spaces, people, ideas and information. Such leaders will have the difficult task to bridge social and cultural differences, to bring people together and to direct their joint efforts towards leverage points that can make our society more sustainable and equitable.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE IN SUPERDIVERSE URBAN CONTEXTS PLAY A VITAL ROLE?

When operating in an environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, leaders need a different approach than the traditional top-down hierarchical chains of command, in which one single person has a clear idea of how to tackle the problems at hand. Nowadays, successful and innovative organizations function through more agile and horizontally structured networks. Their leaders strive to (1) bring together individuals and groups of people, especially the ones who think and behave in different ways and (2) to nurture relationships of respect and trust and foster a sense of community. Leaders realize that it is precisely from the standpoint of this rich assemblage of divergent perspectives that complex problems can be better understood and elaborated.

In their life trajectories, young people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are generally more exposed to a multiplicity of perspectives, cultures, languages and social contexts. Programmes such as *Youth in the City* can help these young people capitalize on their life experiences and provide them with further skills to appreciate diversity and to manage and lead projects that thrive by leveraging diversity.

Each project is developed in collaboration with different local partners, to ensure an authentically participatory and 'grounded' approach. We welcome enquiries from educators, scholars, artists and community leaders who feel our expertise could enhance their ongoing projects or would like to collaborate with us on new projects.

OUR EXPERTISE

Members of the core YITC team have experience in leadership roles within public and private organizations; demonstrated ability to manage large and small projects in research and enterprise; scholarly and educational expertise in Transcultural Studies, Interaction and Service Design, Translation and Intercultural Communication, and Media and Screen Studies; and experience in working with minority groups, including Indigenous, migrant and LGBTQI+ communities and individuals.

We offer scholars, educators, artists, institutions and organizations crucial expertise and support on how to:

- promote leadership for social change** through the youth's involvement and co-leadership in impactful creative practices and digital projects;

- augment community and scholarly projects** through the integration of participatory design, transcultural creative practices, intercultural literacy, digital storytelling, and social media strategies;

- augment digital design and social media projects** through the collaboration with leading scholars in the humanities and social sciences (translation, cultural literacy, geography, history, anthropology, linguistics, etc.);

- use existing YITC projects to **promote transcultural awareness and intercultural literacy** - our guidelines on how to use or replicate a project for educational purposes are available open source on our website.

Our contribution to a specific project can take different forms:

We design and realise projects using the YITC methodology and design as either distinct stand-alone activities or embedded within broader initiatives.

The YITC team also provides consultative support, including:

- facilitating workshops on leadership for social change;

- providing scholarly advice and transdisciplinary expertise for applying the YITC methodology and design to a project;

- an innovative combination of digital and interaction design informed by the disciplines of Humanities, to produce striking digital outputs that are highly original and impactful.

INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE WORKSHOPS - FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

The unique methodology that we propose in our creative workshops relies on:

A focus on diversity. The activities of the creative workshops revolve around the collaborative creation of digital storytelling in the form of data visualizations, interactive installations, websites, traveling exhibitions, augmented-reality and location-based apps. This digital storytelling is geared towards mapping, highlighting and appreciating diversity in the daily life and encounters of young people.

A structured creative process. Our workshops systematically expose the participants to cycles that alternatively fuel convergent and divergent thinking. Techniques for divergent thinking push participants in producing multiple ideas and in exploring different directions. Techniques for convergent thinking invite the participants in coming back together on the same creative trajectory. Going through multiple cycles of divergent and convergent thinking makes the participants realize that they can welcome diversity of ideas and of creative contributions and work with it to produce rich and satisfactory outcomes. During the workshops, this co-creative process emerges by combining the contributions of all the participants. Participants learn how to express and represent their creative ideas but also to respect the work of their peers.

A hands-on and practical process. Rather than simply brainstorming about abstract ideas, YITC facilitate hands-on creative processes through which participants develop urban interventions and digital outputs on social and cultural aspects that are critical to them. These projects have local impact and aim to achieve broader visibility at national and international level, providing young leaders with a strong sense of agency and empowerment.

A transdisciplinary process. The YITC facilitation team brings together researchers from humanities, experts in collaborative design, and entrepreneurs with a long track record in management and leadership. This transdisciplinary team exposes the participants to different perspectives, different ways of seeing things, different ways of saying things, different ways of facilitating. The workshop participants have to learn how to adapt and react to this diversity and how to tune their way of expressing themselves in relation to this diversity.

Feedback on completed and developing projects show that during the workshops participants feel empowered to value and leverage their diversity to engender social and cultural change. They also understand the challenges of tuning

potentially conflicting agendas, needs, and interests and the power to come together.

Here is what some of the young participants in our 2019 pilot project *La Nostra Prato* had to say on their experience:

- I have learnt that, even if you are young, you can have your voice heard if you believe in it. **Darla**
- This experience enriched me because I encountered many other cultures. I have learnt to observe my city from other points of view, and I discovered new places in areas that I cross daily. **Greta**
- I have learnt that we take many things for granted. We often stop at the surface and do not truly engage with what surrounds us. **Claudia**
- Thanks to this project I worked with other young people and shared my emotions with them. I am proud of the work we did. It was worth it. **Edoardo**
- I have learnt to observe more carefully the places that surround me and to pay attention to details that I often miss in my daily life. I have also learnt that unity is strength. **Joana**

THE CORE YITC TEAM

FRANCESCO RICATTI [Monash University](#)

Francesco Ricatti is Cassamarca Senior Lecturer in Italian Studies at Monash University, Australia; a portfolio leader within the [Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre](#); and a member of the [Network of Excellence: Regional Liveable Diversity](#). His research focuses on creative, interdisciplinary and decolonising approaches to migration history and transcultural studies. [Personal Research Profile](#)

LUCA SIMEONE [Aalborg University](#)

Luca Simeone works as a researcher, educator and professional consultant across interaction and service design, design management and innovation management. He has founded and managed successful companies and award-winning design firms operating in more than 30 countries for clients such as Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Dior, Sony. He also helps private and public organizations (e.g. the European Commission and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research) to define strategies, policies, and funding schemes to foster innovation. [Personal Research Profile](#)

RITA WILSON [Monash University](#)

Rita Wilson is Professor in Translation Studies in the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, Interim Director of the [Monash Intercultural Lab](#) and Co-Director of the [Monash-Warwick Migration, Identity and Translation Research](#)

[Network](#). Her work contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary research that focuses on the complexities of cross-cultural contact and the relationship between language, culture and social inclusion. Most recently, she has published on identity and culture in migratory contexts, and on narratives of mobility and place-making.

[Personal Research Profile](#)

MATTEO DUTTO Monash University

Matteo Dutto is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. His research explores how cultural producers collaborate with Indigenous, migrant and multi-ethnic communities to produce transmedia and transcultural counter-narratives of belonging and identity. He recently collaborated to the production of the Australian Indigenous Film and Television ([AIFTV](#)) online knowledge sharing platform. [Personal Research Profile](#)

ELLA BAYBIKOVA Logic Moon

Ella Baybikova is co-founder, partner and innovation manager of [Logic Moon](#). She is mostly interested in the strategic, operational, entrepreneurial, economic and financial dimensions of [innovation projects](#). In her previous role as the Head of the Research and Strategy Department for the Eurasian Development Bank, she supervised and coordinated activities spanning from industry analysis and innovation research, all way up to the evaluation of large investment projects. She got an MBA from Nottingham University Business School and further advanced her studies within the World Bank.

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