

## Intercultural Cities Program

### **Host Communities and Urban Issues Inclusive Cities: Challenges or Opportunities**

29 November 2021, 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. Eastern Europe Time (EET)

Organized by Helinä Rautavaara Museum

Link to Webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84138062818?pwd=aE5tRU9iR21lRWd2OVRRdE44eXAzdz09>

Meeting ID: 841 3806 2818

Passcode: 908282

The webinar ‘Inclusive Cities: Challenges or Opportunities’ is the first webinar on urban issues organized by the Helinä Rautavaara Museum. This webinar sheds light on the timely matter of displacement, refuge, and migration in Europe and Eastern Mediterranean countries and the importance of cultural and religious diversity for social cohesion and the prosperity of the societies.

The webinar articulates egalitarian methods of addressing intercultural dialogue at the city level through presentations and debating migrants/refugees and host community relations. The debate and presentations explicate innovative and interdisciplinary practices for socially just societies that promote intercultural dialogue, hence Urban Citizenship and the Right to the City. Urban Citizenship is the triadic relation between politics, urban spaces, and individual/collective engagement. The Right to the City is considered as the right to collective power for reshaping and transforming the urban in a manner that is inclusive and intercultural, and not negligent of the human rights of any vulnerable and minority group.

The debate aims to acknowledge the timely necessity for a vision, supportive policies, and initiatives for intercultural dialogue to prevent xenophobia and discrimination on the scale of the city. Through the participation of different actors from different paths of life, it will advocate for social cohesion and intercultural interaction, counter-arguing discrimination, stereotyping, and intolerance. It also aims to acknowledge multicultural cities aligned with sustainable development goals and the 2030 Eurovision, as inclusive cities that embrace urban citizenship and the right to the city.

The objectives of the webinar are twofold. On the individual scale, raising awareness, understandings, and capabilities of individuals concerned with the inclusiveness and sustainability of their environment; and develop a more comprehensive understanding of migrants/refugees and host community relations as a multilayered process including the social, spatial, and economic. On the public scale, forming a network of diverse, transnational host communities and propagating knowledge, methodology, and pedagogy across borders and while advancing modalities of inclusive cities.

The webinar has two panels hosting a total of 7 presentations with a short coffee break. After the second panel, the floor will be open for Q&A and discussions for all participants. The entire session will be recorded and later uploaded on the website of the museum for outreach and future reference. The information from the event will be further analyzed and presented through a manifesto and seminar for local urban agencies such as Espoo Municipality during the museum’s exhibition in March 2022 that is titled ‘Cities and Communities: Sustainable Development Through Culture’.



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MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2021

### 5:00 -5:15 PM: OPENING SESSION

- Ilona Niinikangas (Director of Helinä Rautavaara Ethnographic Museum). Welcome Note
- Najmeh H.Viki (Webinar Coordinator). Introduction

### 5:15- 6:15 PM: PANEL 1.

- 5:15 - 5:30 PM: Howayda Al-Harithy (American University of Beirut, Lebanon).  
A Framework for an Inclusive People-Centered Recovery of Post-blast Karantina: A Case from Beirut, Lebanon.
- 5:30 - 5:45 PM: Camillo Boano (University College London, United Kingdom)  
From Integration to Urban Access: The Infrastructures to Support Migrant Life
- 5:45 - 6:00 PM: Lika Sharifi (Bauhaus-University Weimar, Germany)  
Role of City Planners in Handling Cultural Diversity - Case Study: Brunnenviertel, Berlin
- 6:00 - 6:15 PM: Samuli Lähteenaho ( University of Helsinki, Finland)  
Public Spaces or Coastal Commons: Some Notes on the Discussion in Beirut

[6:15 - 6:25 PM COFFEE BREAK]

### 6:25 - 7:10 AM: PANEL 2.

- 6:25 - 6:40 PM: Jala Makhzoumi (Professor of Landscape Architecture, United Kingdom )  
The Right to Landscape: Landscape as the Arena for the Practice of Citizenship.
- 6:40 - 6:55 PM: Elena Isaev (Exeter University, United Kingdom)  
Unarchiving Place Between the Camp and the City
- 6:55 - 7:10 PM: Pekka Tuominen (University of Helsinki, Finland)  
Historical Consciousness of Image, Reputation, and Stigma in the Urban Periphery of Helsinki

### 7:10 -7:30 PM: Q & A Session.

- 7:10 – 7:25 PM: Heidi Rautionmaa (Webinar Moderator)
- 7:25 - 7:30 PM: Najmeh Viki (Webinar Coordinator)

In conjunction with the webinar:

An exhibition focusing on Living Traditions installed at Helinä Rautavaara museum.



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## **A Framework for an Inclusive People-Centered Recovery of Post-blast Karantina: A Case from Beirut, Lebanon.**

On the 4th of August 2020, the huge explosion that detonated in the Port of Beirut killed more than 200 people and 300,000 homes and livelihoods were affected in several neighborhoods adjacent to the Port. The Beirut Urban Lab at the American University of Beirut mobilized in response to the blast to support efforts on the ground and to initiate its own work upon site visits and early assessment of the situation. Building on its experiences in urban policy advocacy, mapping, and post-war reconstruction studies, the Beirut Urban Lab initiated multiple interventions that challenge the dominant framework of post-blast reconstruction and redefine it along the lines of holistic and inclusive recovery. The Lab worked on three tracks, in coordination with multiple partners: The Observatory of the Reconstruction, neighborhood-scale Recovery Interventions, and Visioning the City in the Post-Blast Period. The Neighborhood-Scale Recovery focused on Karantina, which serves as a first case study for the initiation of a bottom-up, inclusive and people-centered recovery. This work, therefore, adopted the participatory CDS model and combined it with the training of Citizen Scientists to maximize the community engagement aspect. The lecture will share the work related to the strategic framework of recovery for Karantina and will reflect on the experience with community engagement towards an inclusive people-centered recovery.

*Dr. Howayda Al-Harithy is a professor and the chair of the Department of Architecture and Design (ArD), and the co-founder of the Beirut Urban Lab at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Her current research conceptualizes urban recovery in relation to processes of historical editing, urban trauma, and protracted displacement. Al-Harithy's research is advanced through her role as a research director of the urban recovery track at the Beirut Urban Lab and as a collaborator on the RELIEF (Refugees, Education, Learning, Information Technology, and Entrepreneurship for the Future) project with the Institute for Global Prosperity at University College London.*

## **From Integration to Urban Access: The Infrastructures to Support Migrant Life**

The presentation offers some reflections from the three-year project “EPIC”, funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and explores the diversity of responses to migration across eleven European urban spaces and the different strategies put in place by migrants to navigate and learn the city. It will briefly reflect on the urgent need to reframe the problematic notion of integration with a much just frame of urban access and the importance of recognizing diversity in trajectories of integration. The project advocates that policy design should focus on removing obstacles to integration with care, repair, and maintenance and avoid exclusive frames.

*Dr. Camillo Boano is a Professor of Urban Design and Critical Theory at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit-University College London(UCL), full Professor of Architecture and Urban Design (Icar14) at the Dipartimento Interateneo di Scienze, Progetto e Politiche, Territorio del Politecnico di Torino, Italy, and co-director of the UCL Urban Laboratory. His research has centered on the complex encounters between critical theory, radical philosophy, and urban design processes, specifically engaging with informal urbanizations, urban collective actions, as well as crisis-generated urbanisms.*



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## **Role of City Planners in Handling Cultural Diversity-Case Study: Brunnenviertel, Berlin**

While cultural diversity is increasingly becoming present in the landscape of our cities, planners and policymakers are still in hot debates over how to deal with it. There are contrasting views on whether cultural diversity is essentially a threat or an opportunity to the city. This presentation revisits the related literature in looking at the role of urban planners in handling diversity and their contribution to accommodating differences. In this regards the main planning approaches are reviewed parallel to five common models of diversity handling policies to analyze the evolutionary trend of dealing with diversity through planning policies and practices. This discussion is followed by examining social logics for facilitating a just diversity at the neighborhood level. Findings of ongoing research in a superdiverse neighborhood (Brunnenviertel in Berlin) will be presented to highlight the importance of encounters and contact in promoting social cohesion among a diverse population.

*Lika Sharifi Sadeghi is a Ph.D. candidate in the field of urban sociology at the Institute for European Urban Studies at Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany, and has two master's degrees in architecture and European Urban Studies. A key focus of Sharifi's research lies in analyzing diversity policies at the neighborhood scale in a case study in Berlin and observing the impact of such policies on promoting the community's social cohesion. Her further research areas are multicultural planning, superdiversity, and urban encounter.*

## **Public Spaces or Coastal Commons: Some Notes on the Discussion in Beirut**

The issue of public space has been a central concern in public debate and civil society activism in Lebanon since the post-civil-war reconstruction process. While the discussion has focused on the lack of green spaces in the city, new enclosures across the coastline and beyond, and the neoliberal reconstruction of downtown Beirut, public space has been a transversal theme cutting through Beirut's changing urban fabric. Based on ethnographic fieldwork related to Beirut's coastline, the presentation examines aspects of this discussion before the uprising of 2019. What were the multiple ways the idea of public space was floated and put into practice in civil society imaginaries, municipal policy, and beyond? What were the limitations and affordances these ideas of public space brought about, and what promise could the notion of urban commons hold? To paraphrase the Lefebvrian question common in critical urbanism, who is the public space for, the presentation argues the pertinent question of the right to space on the coastline of Beirut. Through a focus on a public beach in Beirut, the presentation suggests that the way public space is imagined has significance for the kind of space it composes.

*Samuli Lähteenaho is a Ph.D. candidate in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Helsinki. His wider research interests cover ethnographic theorizations of space, place, and*



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*location, alongside questions of ecology and social movements. Samuli's doctoral research focuses on the politics and poetics of the coastline in Lebanon, based on ethnographic fieldwork with civil society and volunteer groups engaged with the country's littoral. He holds a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Helsinki. Samuli's current research is a part of the European Research Council project Crosslocations - Rethinking relative location in the Mediterranean.*

## **The Right to Landscape: Landscape as the Arena for the Practice of Citizenship**

Beirut's turbulent political history has made the public landscape a center of struggle and activism. Public spaces in Beirut were conceived by Ottoman and French colonial regimes in their attempt to westernize colonized cities. Beirut city center was planned with plazas and boulevards which evolved in the decades that followed into sites for the lived practices of citizenship, vibrant and inclusive. Reconstruction following the Lebanese Civil War (1975-90) led by neoliberal, corporate developers transformed the Beirut city center into high-end, exclusive, and gated developments. The reconstructed city center amplified social and cultural disparities just as it encouraged two-tiered citizenship. On the one hand was a handful of privileged citizens that enjoyed the reconstructed landscapes of the city center, and on the other hand, the excluded majority that shied away from the corporate landscape, turning to informal, unplanned open/green landscapes that were culturally significant places of everyday life. The mass uprising of October 17, 2019, was a game-changer, as citizens marched collectively taking over the corporate landscapes of Beirut, protesting state corruption, social and economic injustice, and claiming their right to the city. In this talk, I will compare the two narratives and argue the significance of publicly accessible landscapes as places of empowerment and the practice of citizenship.

*Dr. Jala Makhzoumi is an adjunct professor of Landscape Architecture at the American University of Beirut, co-founder, and president of the Lebanese Landscape Association, and the 2021 Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Award laureate. In her practice, research, and teaching, Makhzoumi explores place and culture responsive designs that are ecologically sensitive and community-driven. Her areas of expertise include ecological landscape planning, landscape heritage conservation, sustainable urban greening, and post-conflict recovery.*

## **Unarchiving Place Between the Camp and the City**

The contribution will briefly explore the discourse on the rights to the city, and forms of egalitarian un/archiving practice, through contexts that encompass the ancient and current worlds. It will consider the way that people who are out of place of rights and protection, as the Suppliant Women of ancient Tragedy shape the very entity that they are excluded from, through requests for asylum. The discussion will then move to exposing the layering of city histories that reveal both acts of overwriting and erasure, as well as those of revelation of the multiple pasts and



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moments of inclusivity. Brought into dialogue will be the current efforts for rebuilding and return of Yarmouk camp, near Damascus in Syria, and the public history initiatives in Los Angeles, US, that counter the erased pasts of marginalized groups, that were instrumental in shaping the city's neighborhoods.

*Dr. Elena Isayev is a Professor of Ancient History and Place at the University of Exeter. She works with colleagues in Palestine, of Campus in Camps and Decolonizing Architecture, as part of UNDRR/ICCROM expert panel, and currently leading Imagining Futures through Un/Archived Pasts (AHRC). She is co-founder of AlMaisha - a communal learning platform that tackles urgencies such as displacement, diaspora, and citizenship beyond state practices. She is an expert on migration, hospitality, and displacement, particularly in ancient Mediterranean contexts. Isayev's research focuses on four interconnected strands: Community as Intersection of Mobilities; Hospitality, Asylum, Migration; Potency of Displaced Agency; Common and Public Space.*

### **Historical Consciousness of Image, Reputation, and Stigma in the Urban Periphery of Helsinki**

Kontula, a suburban estate at the margins of Helsinki, Finland, has been plagued by a notorious reputation since its construction in the 1960s. At different moments in history, it has reflected failed urbanity, with shifting emphases on issues such as rootlessness, segregation, intergenerational poverty, and unsuccessful integration of immigrants. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, the presentation explores how its inhabitants experience the complex social dynamics between the image, reputation, and the stigma associated with the area. The focus is on how historically formed and spatially defined senses of belonging and exclusion shape their everyday lives and how they have found ways to challenge the dominant perceptions about their homes and neighborhoods. The presentation emphasizes how these understandings employ complex historical trajectories to question and confront the territorial stigma and to establish new senses of social inclusion.

*Dr. Pekka Tuominen is a social and cultural anthropologist specializing in urban transformation, socio-cultural qualities of space, and citizen participation. He is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki, for 'Collective Intelligence Through Digital Tools' (COLDIGIT), and 'Tackling Biases and Bubbles in Participation' (BIBU) consortiums. His previous research concentrates on the rapidly changing urban spheres in Istanbul as well as on the peripheral areas of his native Helsinki. Since 2017, Tuominen has led a multidisciplinary research project in the Kontula district of Helsinki, a stigmatized suburban estate commonly associated with social problems and failed immigration policies.*



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