

3rd space

Empowering communities through collaboration



Rowan van der Kaaden
Veera Uusitalo

Aino Leppiniemi
Oxana Ivanova

Addressing the underlying issue

Having a sense of **community** in an urban area supports citizens **wellbeing** and increases the **livelihood** in the area, making it more **pleasant** for people who regularly spend time there, but also for those who just pass by. Creating a space that brings people together regardless of backgrounds, life stages and the different needs would have a strong effect on creating that **sense of belonging** and sharing. It develops and strengthens social ties between the people in the area, leading towards stronger connection and **diverse** community. Third places, informal public spaces that **allow** people to gather outside of home (first place) and work/study (second place), can often serve the goal of creating **social ties** and fostering a community. Third places and community centres contribute greatly to the knowledge sharing within the community. **Sharing** of knowledge and skills through workshops, along with other educational events, leads to the facilitation of a more **equitable** and **accessible** society where people have more equal opportunities to increase their quality of life.

The intention of the project is to keep the space non-profit and accessible to everyone, which will cause direct monetary losses compared to having the space in commercial use. However, the losses will be returned in the form of **increased social connections, acquisition of skills and knowledge, and health improvement**. Spending time in a shared space helps to develop social support system, and thus reduce stress and anxiety even when going through difficult times in life. Having people around you is one of the most important assets in life but cannot be directly measured in money, and therefore we should widen our perspective on what is profitable. On societal level, it becomes monetary wise to invest in people's health and wellbeing even if it does not produce immediate profit.

The space

The 3rd space is an open space that invites different kinds of people at different life stages. A leading principle is to keep it discrimination-free and safe for everyone. Otherwise, the space is not heavily regulated and over time, it changes according to the needs of the **community** around it. In day-to-day life, it can be something as small as having a permission to paint a wall in different colour. While most of the maintaining relies on the community, in the daytime, there are social workers present, offering their expertise to create **safe and supportive** environment. The space stays open for at least most of the night-time too, enhancing the citizens right to use the city in ways and times that fits to their lives.

The space supports **sustainability** in all its aspects. It is an opportunity to meet others outside school, work or home and strengthens the social ties in the area. It is free to be used in workshops, discussions, and other events. For example, there can be "repair-cafes", where people gather to repair their electronics and clothing, encouraging people to take care of what they already have. The tools can be shared in the space, decreasing the need to own everything by yourself. To make the events run smoothly, volunteers can help with practical matters.

The 3rd space is a platform for **support, learning and knowledge-sharing**. Everyone joining the community comes with their own experiences and expertise. Allowing people to use the space in different ways, and to make something by themselves but together with others supports creativity, which can have long-lasting benefits in individuals' lives. The shared platform and combined expertise are likely to lead to new insights and innovation.

Inspiration

The 3rd space draws inspiration from other places that have managed to combine the elements of safety, community, support, and knowledge-sharing. **Helsinki Central Library Oodi** is one case example that does all this by providing space for creative activities as well as studying, work, and spending time together.

Another benchmarking case are **hackerspaces** around the world. Usually, hackerspaces provide space and tools for everyone to use their creativity. The most important resource of any hackerspace, however, is the community of like-minded people who are willing to share their skills and help one another.

The third case, **Dodo's Turning table** in Pasila, Helsinki, represents a creative way to bring people together for learning, sharing, and facilitating culture. Dodo is an environmental organisation, and its Turning table is perhaps best known for the urban dinners that include talks and workshops as well as dinner made of foods in threat to be spoiled otherwise. Inspired by Dodo, 3rd space included opportunities for urban gardening.

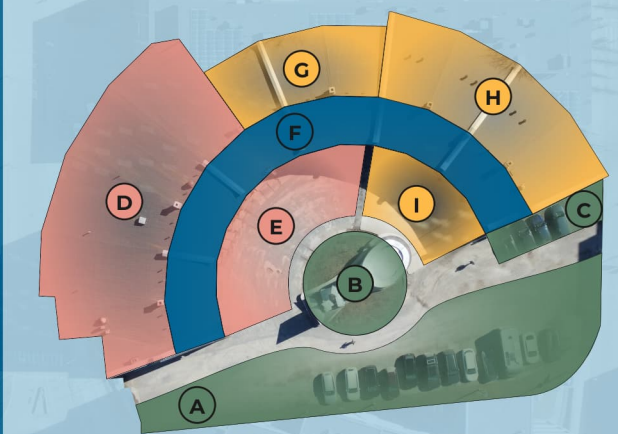
Workers

Residents

Marginalised

Students

Travellers



- (A) Urban garden
- (B) Greenhouse
- (C) Bicycle parking
- (D) Living room*
- (E) Terrace
- (F) Open hallway**
- (G) Kitchen
- (H) Workshops
- (I) Outdoor workshop

*Multipurpose: Workspaces, lounge, stage, etc.
**Meant to connect different spaces, and thus people, can also contain things like a gallery or workplaces