



Delft University of Technology

Reimagining Spatial Justice at TU Delft Summer School

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REIMAGINING SPATIAL JUSTICE AT TU DELFT SUMMER SCHOOL

The TU Delft Summer School Planning and Design for the Just City, conducted by the Centre for the Just City and the Chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy, recently concluded its eighth edition. A multi-disciplinary academic program that took place over two weeks from July 3rd to 14th, 2023, the summer school saw students from 44 different countries presenting a raft of innovative and future-oriented urban design solutions for the city of Dordrecht's Maasterras.

Established eight years ago, the summer school has grown into a vital part of the academic ecosystem of the TU Delft's Department of Urbanism. This year's curriculum was carefully crafted to ensure an engaging and immersive learning experience, not only rooted in the theories of spatial justice and sustainability, but also filled with practical exercises, such as understanding the concept of a 'spatial strategy' and developing proposals for a master plan design.



Kick-off @square, Pulse, TU Delft

THE MAASTERRAS CHALLENGE: SPATIAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The focus of the exercise this year was the Maasterras in Dordrecht, a region with the aim of becoming a future-proof space for living and working while also serving as a shelter. Students were challenged to create designs that encapsulated these ideals, and were guided through the process by faculty and staff. Over several sessions, students developed their strategic plans, incorporating elements like governance framing and a detailed timeline of implementation.



Workshop on the use of AI in Urban Design

The curriculum also included an empirical experience of water management in the Netherlands, an essential aspect given the changing water levels and its implications on urban design. Furthermore, a field trip to Rotterdam, highlighting key urban design features, allowed students to see urban planning in action.



A visit to the Maeslantkering



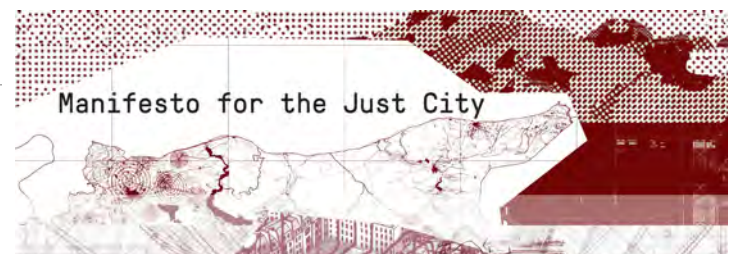
Fig. 4 Rotterdam walk



Fig.5 A rest at the Benthem (water) square

Two groups of students had the opportunity to showcase their exceptional manifesto projects. These groups were recipients of the Manifesto Award from the Centre for the Just City's manifesto event, and they shared their groundbreaking ideas during their presentations. These presentations served to inspire and provoke

thought among the participants. The first presentation, titled 'The City after Quarantine', was presented by students from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, and centred on the idea of moving away from anthropocentrism and embracing cooperation and mutual aid as core values for post-capitalist cities. The second presentation, "Manifesto for the Just City", was authored by an international group of students from the faculty of Architecture at the K.U. Leuven proposed the concept of a 'Cosmopolitan Institute for Beings and their Representatives'. The institute would serve as a civil society platform, fostering dialogue on human rights and needs on a global scale and on a personal level.



On the final day, students presented their final products, which included the presentation of their proposal for the Maasterras. These innovative solutions addressed critical aspects such as water safety, sanitation, energy, and creating inclusive and

accessible public spaces, all of which form the backbone of spatial development for the Maasterras.

The TU Delft summer school experience extends beyond academic growth. Festive opening drinks and a communal dinner are hallmarks of the program, celebrating the collective effort and camaraderie nurtured during the two-week journey.

All these experiences and learning moments embody the educational philosophy at TU Delft, especially in the MSc Urbanism programme.

PIONEERING SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN TRANSITIONS

Contemporary planning practices are undergoing a paradigm shift, with sustainability transitions necessitating a broader planning scope. The MSc Urbanism programme at TU Delft embodies this shift, successfully integrating spatial design and planning education based on interdisciplinary and comparative research. This distinctive feature of the department's curricula permeates all aspects of the summer school.

Students are encouraged to critically address the disparities resulting from the unequal distribution of spatial resources across communities and territories. This critical approach to planning engages students in a comprehensive understanding of urban development.



Developing the vision and strategy for the Maasterras



Developing the vision and strategy for the Maasterras

The idea of planning extends beyond knowledge collection and production to the creation of spatial development strategies and specific urban interventions. Planning is viewed as a social process, bringing together diverse actors, unique experiences, and dreams into a collective vision of development.

Participants learn to dissect spatial politics, navigate challenges to equitable and inclusive spaces, and design interventions addressing these challenges. They develop a planning approach that fosters inclusive spatial interventions, contributing to a more just urban realm.

The summer school experience, thus, is a microcosm of the larger commitment of the Department of Urbanism at TU Delft to spatial justice and sustainability.

For more insights into the Summer School Planning and Design for the Just City and the results of the student work, visit the [official website](#).

The results will be collected and made available on the website in the coming time.

For those interested in the philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum, explore related works at the [TU Delft Centre for the Just City](#) and visit the [Planning Complex Cities](#) and [Spatial Planning and Strategy](#) websites to understand how spatial planning is conceived at TU Delft.

RELATED WORK THAT TOUCHES ON SOME OF THE ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS BLOG POST CAN BE FOUND HERE:

- [The TU Delft Centre for the Just city](#)
- The Manifesto for the Just City: info on the website <https://just-city.org/manifesto-for-the-just-city/>.
- Download the books [here](#).
- You can watch the videos on the [YouTube channel of the Global Urban Lab](#).
- [Teaching, Learning & Researching: Spatial Planning](#) : an introduction to how spatial planning is conceived at TU Delft.

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