



SOCIAL FURNITURE LIVING, COOKING, WORKING

Kitchen wall panel SF 09

Text: Elke Rauth

Quotations by EOOS

For though they made themselves masters of all the good inventions that were among us, yet I believe it would be long before we should learn or put in practice any of the good institutions that are among them.”

Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1516

Utopia is located in Erdberg, one of Vienna's oldest settlements. The Romans were at home here and the Celts before them, while archaeological finds stretch back to the Neolithic Age. Here, on Erdbergstraße, which was the terminus of line three of the underground for many years and is just seven underground minutes from downtown, the city unravels into the Zwischenstadt, with its typical jumble of administrative buildings, sports facilities, empty plots, corporate headquarters, residential buildings, logistics centres and traffic arteries. One doesn't come here for a stroll. One comes here to do something.

In one of these buildings, a largely disused administration block, EOOS have had their temporary atelier since February 2016. The designers describe their workspace, which has exactly the same dimensions as the rooms that are available to the regular residents, as their “Field Office”. Located in a former school for customs officers that occupies around 21,000 m² of a building complex measuring 68,000 m², *Haus Erdberg* has been accommodating refugees from the world's humanitarian crisis zones almost continuously since September 2014. Most come from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria,

Somalia and Iraq. Around 40 nationalities live here, washed up after fleeing from turmoil and war zones around the world, stranded for an indeterminate period on this secluded island, their Utopia. The lowest common denominator: the desire for a life without misery, a safe, peaceful and free existence.

“Our first task was to explain why we as designers were needed at all in this context. Crisis situations are dominated by emergency thinking and even experienced aid organisations are mostly overwhelmed with urgent needs which are principally pragmatic and scarcely aesthetic. However, the transformation of emergency shelters into accommodation for asylum-seekers creates a new situation: Everyday life requires other structures and opportunities if it is going to be feasible for residents to stay for longer.”

Managed by the NGOs *Caritas* and the *Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund*, the complex is now being trans-

formed from an emergency shelter into a primary care facility for families. The language of crisis and emergency should be replaced by an everyday normality which supports the act of arrival in the new homeland. This creates a need to adapt both the social and spatial structures of the building on which EOOS has been working in a number of ways since November 2015.

Similar questions are always arising in newly created care facilities such as *Haus Erdberg*: Much temporary accommodation for asylum-seekers is located in largely unsuitable office buildings which have been on the market for a long time due to their obsolescence or the sheer oversupply of office real estate – which is one of the many imbalances caused by speculation in cities worldwide. For, while the supply of affordable homes in growing cities continues to be squeezed, the office real estate market is dominated by dramatic vacancy rates. Experts estimate that 700,000 m² of office space stood empty in Vienna in 2015. A gigantic potential – and not just for accommodating refugees. This is why many architects and urban planners see the conversion of office space as offering a real opportunity for tackling the housing crisis. But this is not exactly easy: Constructional method, room depth, spatial programme, norms and legislation all mean that this theoretically logical reuse is full of pitfalls.

Hence, it is no surprise that Biennale Commissioner Elke Delugan-Meissl and the Biennale Curators Sabine Dreher and Christian Muhr from *Liquid Frontiers* cited “thinking in general about vacancy and temporary reuse” as just as central to their programme *Places for People* as “the development of forms of living together.” Because, alongside many other key aspects, the current refugee situation has also placed the spotlight on a number of long-overdue spatial questions: questions of spatial justice, affordability, sustainability and, thereby, urban resilience or, more specifically, the resilience of cities

and neighbourhoods in the face of crises – be these social, economic or ecological.

EOOS, one of the flagships of Austrian design with their prizewinning oeuvre stretching back more than 20 years, describe their interventions in *Haus Erdberg* as *Social Furniture*. Sub-titled *Living, Cooking, Working*, their Biennale contribution engages with central aspects of life in the accommodation while simultaneously testing social alternatives: *Living* includes the creation of spatial quality, orientation, security and the opportunity of self-organisation; *Cooking* understands the act of preparing food as an integrative, communicative and structuring element of daily life and the kitchen as an island of control over one's own existence as much as a place of togetherness; *Working* is dedicated to the key issue of work and occupation, analysing available resources and creating spaces for acting and sharing in the context of a moneyless barter economy.

EOOS' contribution to the Architecture Biennale materialises in a catalogue of simple DIY furniture, which is being built for *Haus Erdberg* with the help of residents in a specially installed workshop. The comprehensive assembly instructions have been published by the designers for non-commercial use as a creative commons in order to make the cheap and flexible furniture available for use in a variety of contexts.

Far beyond the current situation, EOOS' multifaceted contribution to the Architecture Biennale also serves as a laboratory for the investigation of potential solutions to looming social challenges and, thereby, the development of a viable model for sustainable living. The burning questions also open the window of opportunity to innovation, with architecture and design being seen as central disciplines in shaping social transformation. The declared objective: a good life for all.



Office building in Vienna Erdberg, the top four floors with a total of 21,000 m² are used as a primary care facility



Representation of Utopia. Engraved frontispiece from the first edition, 1516.

Prototype of the signage system SF 17



The only official activity in the building is cleaning.



LIVING

83. (1) Primary care comprises:
1. Accommodation in suitable facilities with due regard to human dignity and the family unit (...).
 2. Supply of suitable food and drink.
 3. Provision of a monthly allowance to people in organised accommodation and unaccompanied underage foreigners (...).

Extract from the Vienna Primary Care Law, 11.4.2016

Vienna's municipal authorities initially took over *Haus Erdberg* from the Federal Administration at the beginning of December 2015 for long-term use as a short-term temporary residence for refugees in order to reduce the burden on the initial reception centre for asylum-seekers in Traiskirchen, around 35 km away. It is almost ironic that a building for customs officers whose original purpose was rendered superfluous by the open borders of a united Europe is being reused as

accommodation for asylum-seekers just as new border fences are being built.

The mix of users in the 1980s building complex is heterogeneous and almost appears like a plot from the Theatre of the Absurd: Not only around 600 people in primary care but also the temporary premises of two grammar schools and a police training facility are grouped around the shared, courtyard-like circulation space. Directly opposite the entrance to the primary care facility is the entrance to the Federal Administrative Court which is also located in the complex and which, since January 2014, has been responsible for asylum decisions. Guiding the flows of all these different users in order to guarantee the smooth functioning of this mix is one of the design challenges which EOOS set themselves in the ongoing project.

"Poetical Analysis" is how EOOS describe the highly personal way of working with which they address such complex sets of questions: The beginning of every project is marked by a comprehensive examination which goes far beyond the consideration of the specificities of the situation itself. EOOS concentrate on exposing roots buried in the past and searching for intuitive images, myths and rituals which are inscribed to human behaviour and continue to support the organisation of social processes.

In the *Haus Erdberg* project, this stream of association led EOOS to the island of Utopia, the home

of the "ideal" society portrayed in the philosophical novel by the English statesman and humanist Thomas More which was published in 1516. The societal model written in Latin exactly 500 years earlier under the title *De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* is considered the first social utopia and describes the structure of a rationally-based state with democratic traits. The book was so influential that, to this day, socially positive, progressive worlds of ideas are described as utopian. In Utopia itself, the equality of citizens, the fair distribution of work, the aspiration to education and the abolition of private ownership are the pillars of this fictive state. The original wood engravings of the 1516 first edition show a largely isolated island empire, surrounded by the sea and only reachable by ship. The island is self-sufficient in everything of importance because every citizen of Utopia is obliged to work in the city and on the land for the welfare of all. A slight overproduction opens up opportunities for the few, essential trade contacts but money as a medium of exchange has been abolished. Everything that one needs to live – clothing, housing and food – is available, equally to all, reduced to that which is truly necessary.

Even if the isolation of Haus Erdberg is more a reflection of the will of the arrival society rather than the choice of the residents themselves, EOOS still see a number of analogies with Utopia: The hope of a life free of existential fear, the absence of money as a medium of transaction, the aspiration to education, the

reduction to the absolutely necessary and the idea of self-sufficiency belong to the reality of life in the accommodation for asylum-seekers and provide inspiration for any thinking about potential interventions in – and beyond – the building.

"What we are doing here is researching into social alternatives and experimenting with the possibilities of another society. For us, it is ultimately about working on utopias which lead to a collective transformation."

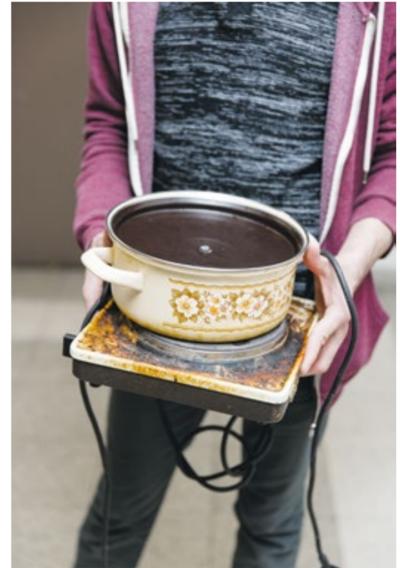
Seen in this light, there are also links between EOOS' work and the design ideas of Victor Papanek who, in his 1971 work *Design for the Real World. Human Ecology and Social Change*, called for design to be allowed to become an "innovative, creative and interdisciplinary instrument that does justice to the real needs of people". Design as a tool for creating a better world, in particular for socially marginalised people, and as a motor for social change. Despite their high design standards, these ideas – and this is classic Papanek –



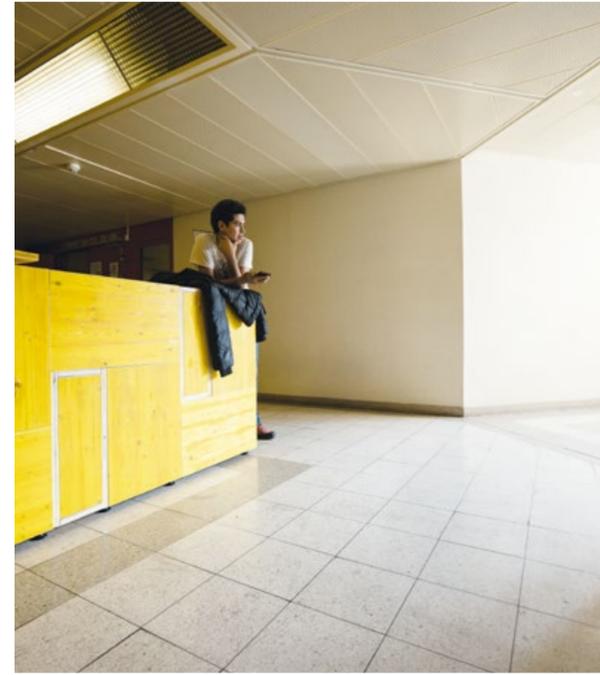
Poetical analysis by EOOS: Utopia, Thomas More (1516) and Nomadic Furniture, Victor Papanek, James Hennessey (1973)



The room of a Pakistani asylum seeker



Self-catering is forbidden in the rooms due to fire alarms and the inadequate electricity supply.



Newly created Caritas reception with the furniture SF 16

were fundamentally not about "beautiful form" but about impact. This is an approach to design which has opened up many new fields of activity in recent years.

This is also the spirit in which EOOS have been developing the *Blue Diversion Toilet* since 2011 in partnership with Eawag, the water research institute from the ETH Zurich and in response to the Reinvent the Toilet challenge of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The challenge: to create an innovative toilet for the 2.6 billion people in growing informal settlements around the world who have no access to safe sanitation. The *Blue Diversion Toilet* is a dry separating toilet with a high-tech and yet low maintenance washing and flushing process. It works independently of water pipes, the sewage system and electricity and creates work by recovering raw materials for fertilizer production. At the same time, the *Blue Diversion Toilet* looks so good that it is also suitable for the chic weekend house in the wilderness and was awarded a special prize for outstanding design.

The principle spatial challenge for EOOS in *Haus Erdberg* is the creation of communal space. While the typology of the former school for customs officers, with its two-bed rooms of 27 m² with cupboards, showers and washbasins, provides a comparatively good basis for long-term accommodation, there is a huge lack of both spaces for meeting and cooking and usable outdoor space. Between 130 and 170 people live on each of the floors which, as a result of fire

protection areas and escape stairs, cannot be clearly zoned, and around 35 per cent of the building consists of internal, windowless circulation space. In order to create amenity values within the existing space without intervening physically in the structure of the building, EOOS developed a catalogue of strategic furniture: This *Social Furniture* consists of flexibly usable and mobile furniture which enables space for meeting and communication to emerge. By introducing an alternative circulation concept the designers are creating interconnected zones focussed on the new cooking and living spaces. Furthermore EOOS are creating a range of modest interventions such as small steps in the corridors around chessboards set in the ground that offer playful possibilities for the appropriation of space.

In addition to this, measures are being introduced to enhance the sense of security of individual residents in the building. The eventual objective that families with children will move into the accommodation demands a locking system in order to protect private areas and a signage system in order to ease orientation. The basis of this new signage system is the *First Aid Kit – Icon based Communication for Refugees*, a language-independent, icon-based information system for initial accommodation which was developed by Viennese design studio buero bauer in cooperation with the Red Cross and Caritas, and which is available as a creative commons. Adapted for the specific requirements of *Haus Erdberg* by the graphic designers of

grafisches Büro, the pictograms on luminescent green paper in printer-friendly A4 format are fixed on sunshine yellow formwork panels. This ensures more attention for important information, but also a friendly atmosphere in the otherwise gloomy spaces of the administration building.

"We are 100% convinced that, basically, a building of this size also has very positive aspects. The size permits the creation of a more complex "operating system", more people are involved and more can be offered – and this increases resilience."

Quite in keeping with a design that sees itself as a social process, EOOS' analysis includes all the resources which are available in the building and its neighbourhood and which could be used in the development of alternative approaches: space and time as much as the abilities and knowledge of residents, aid organisations, voluntary helpers and neighbours. At the same time, many resources were also created –



external knowledge was imported and donations of materials and goods were organised, in order to ensure that the collaborative project becomes reality.

One of the things on offer is the specially created workshop in Haus Erdberg. Two man/woman teams take it in turns to supervise the furniture workshop and, together with around 60 residents, assemble the DIY furniture designed by EOOS. Inspired by Enzo Mari, one of the pioneers of the do-it-yourself movement, EOOS paid particular attention to the need to be able to realise the furniture with ordinary and inexpensive tools. This so obvious and yet largely unknown idea of the communal workshop in refugee accommodation makes one immediately think of the sociologist Richard Sennett: hand and head, body and spirit, physical and social environment work together. The holistic design approach of EOOS also encourages the workshop to function as a place where alternative practices and perspectives can be developed, as a process of social cooperation and slow arrival in foreign parts. To paraphrase Sennett very loosely: you don't have to know each other in order to create good together.



Kitchen wall panel SF09



Breaking through walls to improve communication



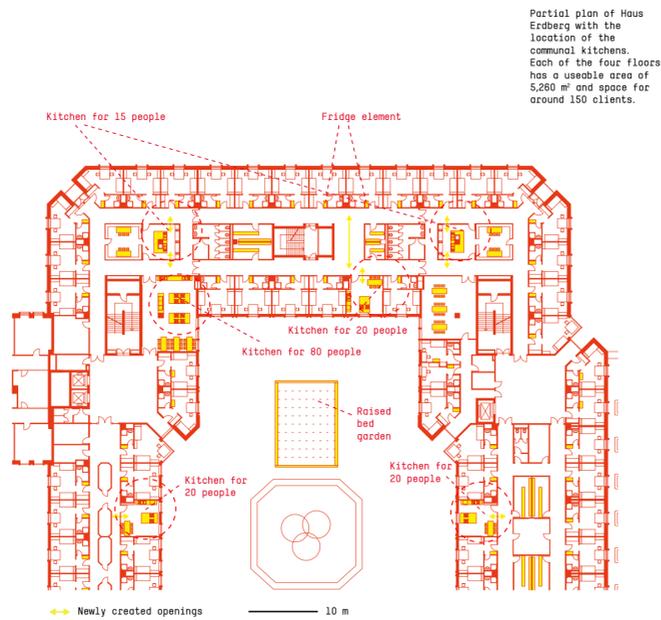
High table SF02 and stool SF05 which are used in the kitchen for preparation and eating



Mobile fridge element SF 11 for the rooms. The boxes can be used to transport personal cooking utensils to the communal kitchens



Cooking and eating together in the first model kitchen. A total of 30 kitchens for self-catering should be installed in Haus Erdberg. All furniture comes from EOOS's SF catalogue and was assembled in the in-house workshop. Iraqi, Afghan and Iranian cooks preparing their national dishes.



COOKING

"Through eating I celebrate my existence."
Peter Kubelka

One of the key requirements of refugee accommodation is the creation of opportunities for self-sufficiency. Yet while residents are almost always eager to cook for themselves, the appropriate kitchen infrastructure is also almost always lacking and the spatial framework has to be created. Around 50,000 breakfasts, lunches and evening meals are served in *Haus Erdberg* every month and aid organisations and residents are looking forward with equal intensity to the launch of a kitchen infrastructure. At the very latest, the building should be fully adapted to self-sufficiency by the summer of 2016 when the first families arrive. According to the law, 5.60 euros are available per person per day for self-catering.

EOOS describe their modular kitchen programme for the primary care facility as an "island of self-effectiveness" because "cooking" is about much more than the simple preparation of food: food is a piece of internal and external homeland, sitting together at a table creates proximities and relationships. The possibility to cook represents employment and a minor element of control over one's own life amidst the sea of uncertainties that asylum-seekers have to face each day.

EOOS have already intensively addressed the subject of cooking in the shape of their b2 kitchen workshop for luthaup, which was launched in 2008 and can be seen in the Design Laboratory of the Museum for Applied Arts in Vienna (MAK). The heart of the multi-award winning b2 is a two-door Kitchen Tool Cabinet that, upon opening, looks like a kitchen triptych and includes well organised space for all necessary kitchen tools and other items. The workshop kitchen is a typical example of the work of EOOS which always seeks to reduce things to their essence and lay bare their functionality and use. The research and development of the modular b2 lasted three years and the finished object consists of simple, mobile elements: A kitchen tool cabinet, a kitchen workbench with hob and sink and an appliance cupboard for fridge, dishwasher and oven. Overview, order and functionality are terms which one connects with the

workshop kitchen – and tolerance, because, rather than strictly prescribing how they are used, design objects from EOOS seek to invite their users to playfully appropriate them.

Much of the experience gathered during the development of the b2 is flowing into the creation of the kitchen infrastructure for primary care facilities in the context of the Architecture Biennale. The mobility and flexibility of EOOS' design is a reaction to the often short stays of refugees in temporary shelters, which has previously made it difficult to create cooking infrastructure for reasons of both time and money. The widely varying size of the selected buildings is another reason for creating adaptability. In addition to this, the execution of the kitchen as an actual working space signifies not only a reduction to the essential but also a freedom from cultural connotations – a key factor in places in which people from many different countries are generally living together under one roof.

Among EOOS' sources of inspiration for the concrete designs which appear in the *Social Furniture* catalogue which has also been published to mark the Architecture Biennale are the books of James Hennessey and Victor Papanek, who developed demountable DIY furniture for a sustainable and mobile lifestyle in

the 1970s in the form of *Nomadic Furniture I+II*. In *Haus Erdberg*, as in many projects, EOOS are combining their precise in situ analysis with a focus on the reproducibility of the measures and their applicability in a range of contexts.

"We are also concerned with the scalability of the furniture design. We want our "social furniture" to establish a standard – to both inspire and be used in further projects and contexts."

Hence, the kitchen furniture built from sunshine yellow 1 x 3 metre formwork panels is all designed for collective use. The smallest unit of the kitchen workbench with two hobs is equipped for feeding 20 people and fits in the standard 27 m² room in *Haus Erdberg* whereas the largest unit, joined together as a series of modules, will provide two communal kitchens for major events. As a free-standing workbench

the kitchen workbench resembles an island unit which people can work on from all sides – which also encourages communication. Cooking as an element of integration – a new model for accommodation for asylum-seekers to which operators are very open.

As in a classic workshop, walls of tools retain order in each cooking unit and permit the storage of collectively used utensils. Large pots and special forms offer the opportunity to create special dishes or cook collectively in addition to the normal individual equipment which is available to each resident for the equivalent of ten euros. Simple constructional measures such as the creation of transparent glass walls create connections between kitchens, in-between areas and corridors. The interconnection of areas on each floor creates common spaces at the heart of which the kitchen is located as a means of promoting social interaction.

A total of twelve such kitchens are being newly built in the in-house workshop in *Haus Erdberg* and a further 18 are being created by adapting the existing tea kitchens. In addition to this, each of the two aid organisations has their own large kitchen in order to be able to organise events and gatherings for all of the building's residents. The kitchen furniture is complemented by tables, benches and stools for eating, all

of which are built in the same friendly sunshine yellow raw material. All the elements are easily mobile within the spaces in order to permit a range of uses. The communal kitchen as multifunctional space – a solution for the generally rare resource of communal space in such accommodation.

EOOS work very intensively on the creation of very simple furniture. Because a lot of work is needed to ensure that such furniture, rather than being banal, is of the highest design quality while still working in the spirit of DIY.

All furniture designs are based on a limited number of typologies which can be flexibly used and combined as required. The tables and workbenches consist of the worktop and two forms of feet – a lightweight variant and a heavier, doubled execution depending upon where they will be used. There are also two va-

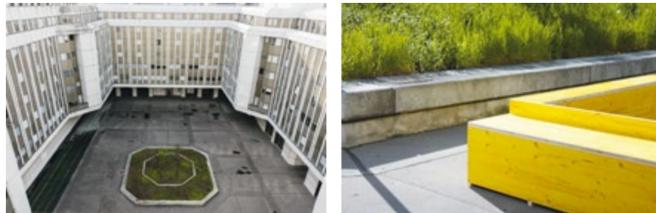
riants for the height of the table: computer and working tables are designed to be used in either a sitting or standing position whereas dining tables are lower and invite users to take a seat. Even the wall typologies are interchangeable and can be used as tool stores in the case of the mobile workshop and kitchen or as a coloured signage system or information panels to aid orientation. The simple and yet aesthetically highly sophisticated designs reflect in a very accessible way EOOS' area of activity between researching and developing prototypes in their own workshop and the serial production of furniture.

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This is also demonstrated by the fridge unit with which each room is individually equipped. Anyone who wants to cook also requires space in which to store food. Instead of the usual solution of simply putting a fridge in every room, EOOS have developed a small storage cabinet on wheels which incorporates both the fridge and a number of simple, removable food boxes. Anyone who wants to cook simply grabs their box and heads for the kitchen. As the fridge unit

is mobile it can easily be rolled out of the room and, combined with other units, creates a counter with cooling for communal festivities. 300 of these are being produced in the in-house workshop.

In EOOS' *Social Furniture*, DIY is a metaphor for taking things in one's own hands, empowering oneself – through both the building of furniture in the communal workshop and the range of applications and the openness offered by these designs to their users. For all their simplicity, numerous details hint at the meticulous way in which potential everyday use was addressed and, hence, at the quality of both the design and the functionality of the units. This was achieved by EOOS despite the extremely tight budgets available for equipping refugee accommodation. By meeting a given benchmark which actually refers to the lowest category of a low cost Swedish furnishing house, furniture is created that not only has design quality but is also repairable and reusable. EOOS' *Social Furniture* represents sustainable added value because it can be dismounted, easily transported, repainted and reused. And, in addition to this, the materials come from local companies and boost the local economy. Hardly a recipe for a crisis!



Internal courtyard of Haus Erdberg (2,300 m²). It is planned to create two raised beds for food production. Detail: raised bed SF18.

Learning centre, computer desk SF12



Components of the table SF02



Partial plan of Haus Erdberg. Standard floor with shops in the central areas. The ground-floor workshop is shown in the detailed excerpt.

WORKING

"So easy a thing would it be to supply all the necessities of life, if that blessed thing called money, which is pretended to be invented for procuring them was not really the only thing that obstructed their being procured. (...) Even poverty itself, for the relief of which money seems most necessary, would fall."

Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1516

Work is one of the key issues when it comes to the inclusion of refugees. As a determining factor for social security and social recognition it has a high significance in the organisation of a successful life. For people in primary care accommodation who legally shouldn't have to wait more than six months for their asylum notification letter but, in reality, often have to do so for years, work represents, more than anything else, activity and distraction as a means of escaping from the monotony of everyday life. In addition to this, opportunities to work which arise in organised accommodation such as Haus Erdberg can allow residents to earn a little money on top of their meagre

allowance of 40 euros a month: A maximum of 100 euros "remuneration" for 25 hours work on behalf of the community in the accommodation may be earned each month. This is why aid organisations such as Caritas offer residents the opportunity to volunteer to perform tasks which would otherwise be contracted out to external suppliers. This is a welcome opportunity to work which, unlike in Germany, is fortunately anchored in Austrian asylum law.

Therefore the creation of work within the accommodation for asylum-seekers is one of the three central areas which EOOS have addressed. The establishment of the furniture workshop in March 2016 in order to enable the residents to produce the necessary infrastructure themselves is part of this strategy: Instead of investing the available budget in cheap particle board furniture which would not have lasted very long, high quality local raw materials are selected and the furniture assembled with the help of the residents themselves. The amount of materials processed is in itself impressive: The yellow formwork panels required as raw material for all the modules

in the building would reach an estimated height of 68 metres if piled on top of each other. Ten tonnes of materials were processed just to create the 300 fridge units which are being built for each room, the orientation system and the almost 600 panels for numbering the rooms. The cost difference between buying cheap furniture for Haus Erdberg and self-building this furniture is enough to finance two workshop teams - each consisting of a man and a woman - and to pay for the work of 60 residents. However, probably much more important is the resulting relationship building - working together creates social cooperation, mutual respect, low-threshold acquaintance and the possibility of practicing freshly adopted language skills. The do-it-yourself furniture designed by EOOS has thus become a do-it-yourself arrival tool which demonstrates the importance of work in all its many facets.

"Identifying resources is an important part of our work: finding out what is available in the building by signalling to the residents: Tell us what you can do and where you want to get involved."

At the same time, the 60 residents who are currently involved are only the first step and the further aim is to offer as many people as possible the opportu-

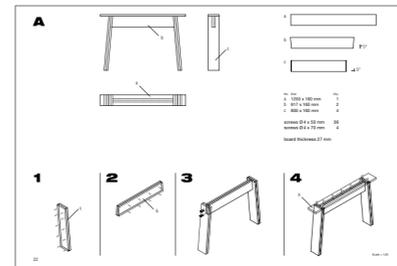
nity to occupy their time in the temporary accommodation usefully. The entire intervention by EOOS is driven by the notion of trying to do things differently, experimenting with new solutions and suggesting alternatives. Thomas More's *Utopia* of a moneyless society is also a starting point for thoughts about establishing a communal economy and a barter system for the accommodation.

In most primary care accommodation systems soon develop in which residents perform informal work in order to keep busy: Hairdressers offer their services, craftspeople offer help in keeping the accommodation in good shape, interpreters keep communication flowing, musicians provide entertainment. In order to create space for these activities and to make them accessible to everyone EOOS are planning the creation of shop systems through small-scale spatial interventions such as breaking through walls and creating shop windows as well as providing sales counters and shelves. The shop idea follows the creation of an informal, moneyless market system - for services, but also for goods from outside.

Inspiration came from the informal settlement in Torre David, a 45-storey office tower designed by the star architect Enrique Gómez in Caracas, which became an empty ruin shortly before its completion in 1994 due to Venezuela's economic crisis. Following this, the building was informally occupied by more than 750 families who, alongside a residential infrastructure and leisure spaces, also created shops to meet daily needs. The interdisciplinary design practice Urban-Think Tank researched the spatial and social

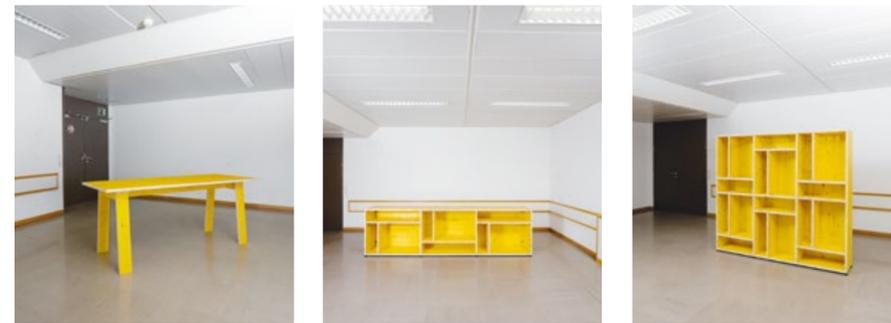


In order to activate the left-over space in the corridors and create work for the residents a number of shops are planned. For example, a cooperative food shop in order to support self-catering.



Social Furniture (SF) catalogue. A self-build catalogue edited by EOOS to mark the Biennale with 18 types of furniture in order to support self-determined, alternative collective living, working and cooking - not just in the refugee context.

High table SF02, shop counter SF14 and shop shelving SF15



organisation of the informal settlers for an entire year as part of a comprehensive field study; the conclusions about alternative uses and sustainable interventions were presented at the 2012 Architecture Biennale in Venice and published in *Torre David. Informal Vertical Communities*. In 2014, after around ten years of alternative use, the office tower was sold to Chinese investors and cleared by the police.

"Cooperation is something which must be developed together slowly; the openness of the structures that we are creating is the first step of this process of partnership. The key is to create a basis upon which these things can then be developed together."

The legacy of Torre David for Haus Erdberg is the idea of creating spaces for informal communal economies and places of production which enrich life in the building and permit useful activity. For example, a baker's oven could make it possible to homebake bread and workshops with external experts could enrich and share knowledge resources. The idea of a food cooperative and, thereby, the possibility of commu-

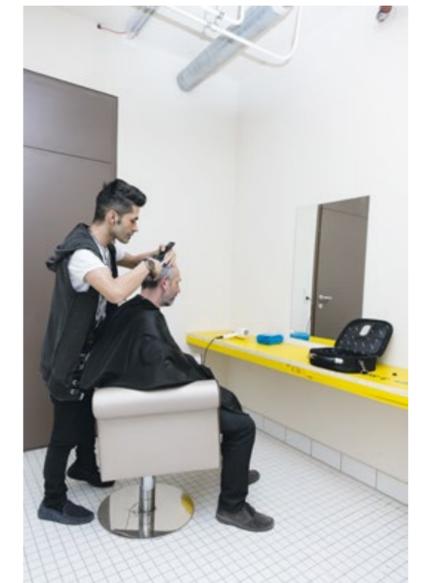
nal large-scale purchasing followed by the non-profit distribution of this food as already practiced in many cities could be another contribution to stretching the very tight self-sufficiency budget a little further.

In order to make these forms of self-organisation possible while still staying within the law, EOOS are experimenting with the introduction of a moneyless barter currency for which a digital platform is being developed in partnership with a large technology company. The scalability of the application is again being addressed from the very beginning, putting existing resources such as smartphones into use. The digital barter currency system should make it possible not only to exchange goods and services but also to do things for free and therefore once more represents an attempt to create a structure for encouraging social interaction.

A project of cooperation with the *Stadtlabor* of Vienna University of Technology, which will spend the next few years in temporary accommodation in the St. Marx development area close to Haus Erdberg, will most likely enable the first external location for the barter currency to be established. The *Stadtlabor* should become a home to knowledge and event spaces, a cycle workshop and community gardens in which students, initiatives from civil society and local residents will develop an *Open University*, a field of experimentation in alternative forms of urban production and, hence, a place in which diverse knowledge can be exchanged. Cooking lessons for language lessons, bicycle repairs for home-grown vegetables. The range of possibilities is variegated and will pro-



A local currency which can be accessed via mobile telephone. Services and goods will soon be traded cash-free in Haus Erdberg. This establishes an alternative economy in which work is also possible while the asylum application is being processed.



A hairdresser who worked in Baghdad before fleeing in his new salon in a left-over part of the corridor.

vide the residents in Haus Erdberg with an important extension to their area of activity in the neighbourhood.

"Ultimately, a primary care facility must be a place where you have learnt something and which you can leave, better prepared to face the next phase of your life, whatever this may bring: whether you can remain here or not."

The two large raised planting beds in the internal courtyard fully reflect the notion of empowerment as a key ingredient of EOOS' design strategy. Supported by the know-how of the Austrian landscape architect Maria Auböck who, together with her partner János Kárász, was responsible for the design of the courtyard of the Austrian Pavilion at the 2014 Architecture Biennale, subsistence gardens are being planted as a way of both supporting self-sufficiency and creating attractive open space. 45 tonnes of earth, 32 tonnes of gravel and 400 m² of filter fabric are required to fill the two raised beds. The earth comes from MA48, Vienna's municipal refuse department, who collect the city's garden and kitchen waste and recycle this locally into high-quality compost. The use of this as fer-

tile soil for the growing of vegetables in Haus Erdberg is a perfect example of an ecologically and socially sustainable organic closed loop economy. The 2,200 vegetable seedlings which are being planted in the first phase will not only transform the courtyard into a green space but also widen the range of food available to the residents as well as providing them with meaningful activity and a space for communication and community. Furthermore the courtyard will be a vital resource for the children who will be living in the building from the summer of 2016, providing a safe external space in which they can run around and play.

EOOS have invested vast amounts of time in developing their simple but highly sophisticated DIY furniture and social innovations. They want their project to be seen as a contribution to the discussion rather than as a 100 per cent solution, as a process with the objective of not only creating alternative ways of living for people in primary care facilities but also of testing more general alternatives for society. *Social Furniture* as a metaphor for researching the path towards a good life for all. Utopia is not a place. Utopia is a direction.



Intervention / Factsheet

The three initiatives launched as part of "Places for People" form the focus of the overall project and, correspondingly, of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion and in this publication.

The preceding pages, which were conceived and composed by EOOS themselves, contain not only the guiding themes, central ideas and inspirations behind their

intervention but also their working processes and results so far as well as an outlook on future developments. The term "intervention" was chosen because it appears to come closest to covering both the character of the various strategies and the breadth of their areas of action.

The text contribution is from Elke Rauth, a well-known Austrian architecture expert, who is particu-

larly familiar with the work and the approaches of EOOS and with the issues which they are addressing here.

This final page presents a summary of the most important facts and figures from the intervention in order to offer the reader both a quick overview and some means of comparison.

CREDITS

EOOS
Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohman, Harald Gründl
Project leader: Lotte Kristoferitsch

Team: Yuan Fen Chang, Liang Cheng, Maria Fröhlich, Elen Gavillet, Sabrina Höllriegl, Sabine Jansa, Jakob Schwarz, Hannes Stepic, Jens Wilhelm

Caritas
Concept development and project coordination: Clemens Foschi

Caritas building department
Hannes Schwed, Markus Zoller

Haus Erdberg

Caritas Building and team management:
Irmgard Joab, Mariam Vahanian
Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Building and team management: Manfred Erlbacher

Workshop Haus Erdberg:
Peter Kneidinger
Helmut Schabschneider
Nazanin Sunethic
Tina Wintersteiger

ARE - owner representatives:
Wilfried Erasim, Alexander Posch
BIG - building management
Gerald Kopp, Richard Rupp

Courtyard design concept
Maria Auböck, auböck+karasz
Landschaftsarchitekten,
Wien

Signage system
Adoption of First Aid Kit, developed by: buero bauver, Gesellschaft für Orientierung und Identität mbH
Adapted in partnership with: grafisches Büro, Günter Eder, Roman Breier, Marcel Neundörfer

Actors' network
connect.erdberg
Mobiles Stadtlabor of the Vienna University of Technology

Sponsors
UMDASCH GROUP, EOTA, INTERNORM, MIBA, RIESS



Photo: Elfie Semotan

The design studio EOOS was established in Vienna in 1995 by the three partners Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl.

With around ten employees and a prestigious, international clientele EOOS is currently one of the most productive and prominent design teams in Europe. Central not only to EOOS' design language but also to its self-image is a research and design approach which the designers themselves describe as *Poetical analysis* and which they apply to the entire spectrum of their activities – from the creation of products, furniture and interiors to social design. As the name suggests, this is an approach which combines strict analysis with poetic imagination. The results are reduced, highly functional and technologically innovative products which are not only anchored in a long cultural tradition but which also embody this same tradition in their form and purpose. The latest result of EOOS' intense examination of both the cultural and social dimensions of design and new and

sustainable technologies is a mobile toilet which, as it requires connection to neither a water supply nor a drainage network, is especially suitable for use in developing countries. The "Institute of Design Research Vienna" which was initiated by Harald Gründl in 2008 is also particularly devoted to the social and ecological aspects of the discipline. Projects such as the "Blue Division Toilet", together with the reflexive design approach which is embodied in all their work, formed the basis of the decision to invite the design team EOOS to participate in the 2016 Architecture Biennale and to develop a concrete intervention for "Places for People".

www.eoos.com

Type of shelter

Primary care facility 2015-2030

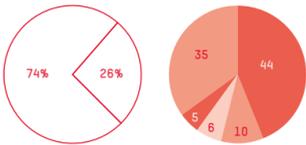
Title of Intervention

SOCIAL FURNITURE

Starting point

vacant 1980s office building
Usable space 21,000 m²
Roomtypes two-bed rooms 27 m² + shower & washbasin
External areas Internal courtyard 2,300 m²
Other no communal areas / no self-catering

User groups



04/2016 441 men (74% < 26 years) from 44% Afghanistan, 10% Nigeria, 6% Somalia, 5% Iraq, and 35% other nationalities
06/2016 families planned

Short description

Introduction of new functions such as communal kitchens, workshops, high planting beds and shops

Objectives

Catalogue of strategic furniture
DIY-manufactured on site.
Social design through the creation of work

Central features

Introduction of a communal economy facilitated by a specially developed app

Envisioned result

Scalable model of alternative living

TIMELINE :
PROJECTED USE
2015 - 2030

2015

November: first visit
1st December: Takeover by the operators Caritas and Arbeitersamariterbund

2016

January: Development of furniture, 1:1 prototypes
February: Field office in Erdberg
March: Operation of in-house workshop
Food deliveries March 2016: 48,050 portions (31 days, 3 x daily)
April (start): Sample kitchen - start of construction
April (end): Sample kitchen - start of operations

Timeline for future measures

June: Installation of locking system, rollout of 300 fridge units, kitchens
Switch from external provision to self-sufficiency
2 large communal kitchens
12 small kitchens
18 adapted existing kitchens
Raised beds in courtyard in support of self-sufficiency
Introduction of communal economy

Miscellaneous project information

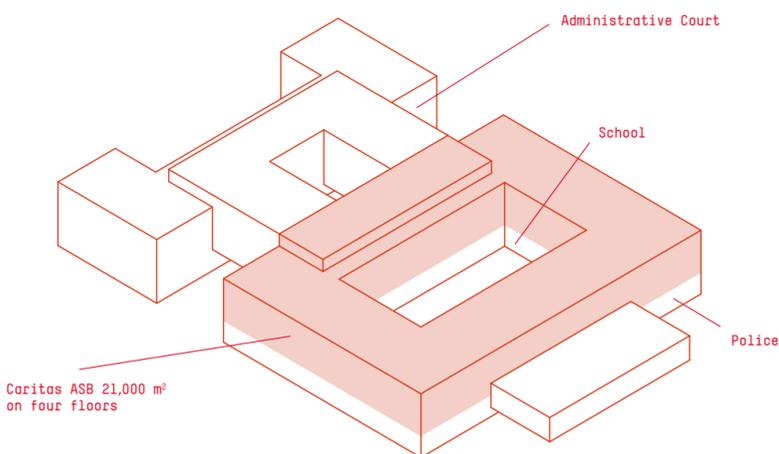
External areas
34 tonnes of earth for raised beds
32 tonnes of gravel
400 m² filtering fabric
2,200 vegetable seedlings
68 m high tower of panels (1x2 metres)
20 palletes - 10 tonnes of material to produce
300 fridges, 400 nameplates

ACCESSIBILITY



Budget information/resident

Daily payment for accommodation and care per person per day: maximum € 19
Monthly allowance: € 40
Daily allowance for self-sufficient residents: € 5.60
Hourly rate/ additional earnings limit for residents: €4 per hour / maximum € 110 per month



Caritas ASB 21,000 m² on four floors



1 b2 Kitchen tool cabinet for butthaup
2 Blue Diversion Toilet, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Field Test 2013, Kampala/Uganda together with Eawag.

