

Translation and consolidation

This section delves into the critical process of translating, systematising and representing research findings from the initial phases of collaborative activities and potential definitions as a preparatory step for the design phase. One of the essential skills of city-building professionals is their ability to synthesise and present complex spatial data in ways that are accessible and engaging for a diversity of stakeholders. This process involves not only interpreting the spatial, social and cultural elements gathered during the initial stages of planning and design but also reformatting them into comprehensible outputs that will facilitate active collaboration. The capacity to clearly communicate these findings ensures that all participants remain fully engaged in the decision-making process, making it possible to achieve inclusive and holistic urban transformations.

A critical aspect of successful communication is reflecting on the technical language and graphic materials typically used by architects, planners and designers. The challenge lies in making these materials legible and meaningful beyond the confines of these professional circles, as jargon can often be a barrier to participation. Planning and designing cities inherently involve imagining different futures, yet this process is often clouded by entrenched, colonial and Eurocentric frameworks. As Miraftab (2016) emphasises, decolonising the imagination of the future requires questioning the assumptions that underpin the planning process. This means acknowledging the diverse perspectives of those who inhabit the spaces being designed and making space for alternative visions that reflect local knowledge and lived experiences. By rethinking how we communicate spatial findings, professionals can support a broader spectrum of voices in co-creating the urban landscape.

The imagination of the future should not be confined to isolated design moments but should be seen as a continuous, iterative practice that is embedded in the everyday lives of urban communities. This shift in perspective empha-

sises the idea that planning and design are not ends in themselves but are on-going processes that respond to changing social, economic and environmental conditions. Therefore, the production of urban spaces becomes an open-ended dialogue that evolves through daily interactions, feedback and adaptations. Engaging communities in this fluid process ensures that their insights and aspirations are woven into the fabric of urban transformation, thus democratising the planning process.

To facilitate this continuous engagement, various tools and methods can be employed to make spatial data more accessible and actionable. For instance, 'problems and potential maps' are effective in visualising the challenges and opportunities identified in the initial stages of collaboration, as they help stakeholders to see both the constraints and possibilities of a given urban context. Additionally, using 'visualised narratives' and 'personas' can introduce the lived experiences of diverse community members into the design process. These personas help articulate the needs, desires and daily routines of different user groups, making it easier to translate abstract planning concepts into tangible, relatable terms. By grounding design decisions in these personalised narratives, city-building professionals can create spaces that are better attuned to the complexities of real life, thus fostering more inclusive and responsive urban environments.