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**HERITAGE-BASED POST-WAR URBAN RECONSTRUCTION  
IN UKRAINE: PREPARING FUTURE EXPERTS  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Planning for the possible futures of Ukraine when the war is over means planning new, green, smart, livable cities, good infrastructure, and a productive countryside. Many experts are already working on this, and there is a lot to do!

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However, the past is always present, even when focusing on the future. What we build on and what we bring from the past defines who we are and where we go: our identities, our path dependencies, and what we prefer to forget. How do we deal with the legacy of violence and pain, reminders of difficult pasts, and the heritage and collective trauma this leaves us to work with? The past should not be neglected when making plans. We need to address it, and we can do this by including references to the past, such as heritage, in our future plans. Heritage can be seen as a ‘means to an end’ in this process; we have to collectively decide to what ‘end’ we will use it, and thus towards which future. New skills and knowledge of how to do this will be — or rather already are — needed for the current and upcoming generation of experts who will navigate Ukraine through the process of post-war reconstruction.

This is why we developed the course **‘Heritage-Based Post-War Urban Reconstruction in Ukraine’** which was advertised to students at Ukrainian universities as part of the Invisible University for Ukraine (IUFU), ran between October and December 2022. It aimed to offer knowledge and skills relevant to such questions as how heritage informs the future, what we can learn from other contexts in terms of making plans, and how to deal with the past in these plans. The Invisible University was launched by the Central European University (CEU, Budapest Campus) in the spring of 2022, as a response to Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine, to assist students in higher education whose studies have been jeopardized by the situation. IUFU runs a certificate program (offering ECTS credits) for undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA and PhD) students from Ukraine, whether residing in Ukraine or in refuge.<sup>1</sup> The online program is not meant not to replace or duplicate the existing educational opportunities in Ukrainian universities, but to support them by filling the lacunae that temporarily emerge due to the Russian invasion. The name “invisible university” was chosen to evoke the various nineteenth- and twentieth-century underground and exile educational initiatives such as the ‘flying universities’ in Eastern Europe, as well as the tradition of Invisible

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<sup>1</sup> IUFU is supported by the Open Society University Network, with co-funding from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), as well as the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For more information, see <https://www.ceu.edu/non-degree/Invisible-University>.

Colleges formed in the region after 1989. The program is implemented by CEU in cooperation with Ukrainian and international partners: the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, as well as the Imre Kertész Kolleg at the University of Jena.

The IUFU program is composed of courses addressing the role of Ukraine in changing European and global contexts, placing questions relevant for Ukrainian students into a transnational comparative perspective. The courses are taught by prominent Ukrainian and international scholars: faculty from CEU and the Ukrainian and German partner institutions, as well as other renowned global specialists in the topics from the academia and related practice. A course is composed of a series of weekly lectures combined with discussion, complemented by seminar-like conversations in small groups. The latter are also an opportunity for individual consultations for students related to their research projects, with their mentors — advanced PhD students or young professionals. Thus, IUFU broadens the international network of Ukrainian students and strengthens their ties within Ukraine, aiming not to contribute to the process of brain drain, but instead to create access to educational infrastructure and academic knowledge for Ukrainian students irrespective of their current location. The lectures and discussions are held in English, to help students strengthen their language skills and confidence in using English as an academic language in order to support them in building and maintaining their own international networks, and to contribute to their ability to critically engage with future international collaborative programs.

The courses are organized in thematic tracks on history, politics and law, society, and culture and heritage. Heritage, as we define it, is a reproduction of the past — and the future — in the present; it is about how the past is made to be active and alive in the present and how it frames the future. As such, heritage functions toward assembling futures and thus might be more productively connected with other pressing social, economic, political, and environmental issues of our time — heritage has a broader significance! The question is, which future would we like to help shape by drawing on elements of the past, and thus on cultural heritage as a strategic resource, so that the world becomes a better place? What role can heritage play in relation to that future? We addressed these questions with a group of 25 students from universities all over Ukraine such as Kyiv, Lviv, Berdyansk, Mariupol,

and Sumy, some of them operating in exile. The students also represented a broad range of disciplines: the humanities, social sciences, international relations, public policy, and art. This variety of backgrounds added great value to the common work, since there are no ready-made solutions for the problems emerging in this unprecedented situation. Even if there is much one can learn from similar experiences in different times and places, unique and specific solutions need to be found for how to create a better future for Ukraine. Such solutions must build on values and futures rooted in the country's past and cope with its resonant, vibrant, but also sometimes difficult heritage.

For this course, we aimed to look at heritage challenges in general terms as well as specifically in post-conflict situations. What does a monument, a historic building, a site, or a landscape mean, and to whom, and what does it do, and to whom? We always aimed to position heritage in its broader societal context, which also shows us we often have to adjust and differentiate our approaches accordingly. Our common responsibility is to reflect on shared realities and policy frameworks and make this an ethical and inclusive process rather than an extractive and exploitative one. If we think of heritage as a collective responsibility and as a 'means to an end', then we should be thinking about how to use heritage to address structural societal issues like discrimination, climate change, conflict, collective trauma, uneven development, and lack of diversity. It may reveal the need for radical changes to policies and practices, as well as for approaches that acknowledge that heritage is not neutral: it is a process of selecting, reproducing, and mobilizing certain values and histories, often at the expense of other values and histories.

This course invited participants to think together about the heritage-based post-war redevelopment of Ukraine by 1) addressing problems and approaches in a theoretical context, 2) examining and learning from case studies from conflict zones all over the world, and 3) exploring the implications in the Ukrainian context through the already existing initiatives for the post-war reconstruction of the country. Each thematic module included four sessions.

The first module addressed how heritage — understood both as a set of material remains and practices inherited from the past and as the way the past becomes active in the present — is relevant in the field of planning. By planning we mean the discipline known as 'planning' (e.g. urban planning,

or town planning) which defines and designs future living environments for society, as well as a discipline focused on the technical and social aspects of development in terms of land use, built environment, and infrastructure. The aim of this module was to set the scene for the discussions to follow in the second module and develop a shared understanding of some of the key concepts, such as heritage and planning. Iryna Sklokina (Lviv Center for Urban Studies) discussed in a historical perspective why it is important to turn to the past to develop the future, looking at previous periods of crisis and post-crisis reconstruction in Ukraine. Loes Veldpauw (Newcastle University, UK) talked about conservation as a socio-cultural practice of caring for heritage and, more broadly, the historic environment, which usually tends to concentrate on protecting very particular elements of our built environment. By integrating planning and heritage, she proposed an approach that tries to challenge this practice and looks more holistically at 'the world' of both heritage and planning, protection and development, nature and culture, tangible and intangible. She demonstrated how heritage is about the future as much as the past, and how important it is in planning and designing the future of our cities. The question she raised for the students to think about was, 'who do we care for, by caring for this heritage?'

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN in 2015 are very influential in terms of planning policy and galvanizing into action international and intergovernmental organizations and governments around the world. Culture, including heritage, is often presented as fundamental to addressing the SDGs: since 2010, the United Nations has adopted five major policy recommendations that assert culture's importance as a driver and enabler of development. The lecture by Sophia Labadi (University of Kent), building on her recent book *Rethinking Heritage for Sustainable Development* (UCL Press, 2022), assessed whether and how heritage has contributed to three key dimensions of sustainable development (namely poverty reduction, gender equality, and environmental sustainability), and also very clearly showed the problems inherent in many of the recently used approaches. Cornelius Holtorf (Linneaus University) offered a broader theoretical perspective for addressing heritage practices, by outlining a framework to understand how heritage has been repeatedly reconceptualized over the past two centuries, and how this is reflected in global policies, most

commonly related to the theme of sustainable development. He argued that, whereas for about two centuries cultural heritage was usually appreciated as a tangible token of collective histories, connected to ideas fostered by Romantic Nationalism, now we see a different paradigm gradually taking over: cultural heritage is increasingly valued in relation to the intangible impacts and uses it has for specific communities. The discussion addressed how research can contribute to changing policies and practices and push political bodies towards thinking about heritage as a resource to benefit future generations.

The second module was about sharing experiences from all over the world of how heritage has been, is, and can be addressed as a potential resource in post-conflict redevelopment and what the related challenges are, including how heritage can be misused in such situations. We invited speakers to talk about post-conflict redevelopment in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, about reclaiming, reconfiguring, and decolonizing urban heritage in Nigeria, about ‘peace and reconciliation’ in Northern Ireland and the Irish republic post-Troubles, and about how to deal with deliberate destruction in Syria and Yemen, especially as refugees. The Wars of Yugoslav Succession in the 1990s have been one of the pivotal points for the creation of the international justice system and a testing ground for codifying practices and theories of transitional justice, peace-building, and reconciliation. However, somewhat paradoxically, despite the diversity of actors and interventions that have focused on reconciliation, the post-Yugoslav space still lingers in ‘conflict time’ — a period in which conflict is not absent, but rather played out through competitive heritage interpretations, antagonistic memorialization, and memory wars. Visnja Kusic (EDUCONS University Novi Sad / University of Arts Belgrade) positioned heritage-led reconciliation practices within this paradox and deconstructed dominant approaches used by international and local actors in the name of reconciliation in the heritage field, pinpointing their underlying assumptions, effects, and challenges.

The lecture by, and conversation with, Tokie Laotan-Brown (Foundation for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Nigeria / Merging Ecologies) discussed how heritage can change and influence the socio-economic lives of an African metropolis, and how these processes can, at the same time, contribute to reclaiming heritage and decolonizing it. She demonstrated

that impact can be greater if properly triggered and what actions one could take (with a focus on stakeholders in African Cities) to do that, drawing on the experience of architectural heritage projects from Cape Verde and Nigeria.

This was followed by a conversation with a current and a former student of the Cultural Heritage Studies Program at CEU, Mahmoud Barakat from Syria and Nasser Al-Hamdi from Yemen. The discussion focused on heritage in war. The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in conflicts is a well-known phenomenon, often intended to erase the existence and history of a competing social or ethnic group. Syria's cultural heritage has been severely threatened during the decade-long crisis. While the destruction of monuments and heritage buildings has received the most attention from the international community, the war had a devastating effect on the overall built environment and social structures, including the damage and destruction of traditional residential areas and widespread displacement and poverty that have affected the demographic composition of neighborhoods and people's individual and collective identity and sense of belonging. While there are international efforts to document and save heritage in Syria, most of the world seems to have given up on Yemen, where the population is locked up in an ongoing war. The two speakers presented examples of how heritage — interaction with social structures, material remains, and practices inherited from the past — can help displaced people, including displaced heritage experts, cope with their situation and even come to terms with loss.

The role of heritage in peace-making and post-conflict social consolidation was examined through the case study of Northern Ireland. The signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a major step in the Northern Irish peace process, formally ending thirty years of ethno-national conflict between Northern Ireland's citizens and with the British state. Progress towards reconciliation between some of the conflict's actors has, at times, been slow, and attempts to preserve this moment in history in museum exhibitions and through various forms of official and unofficial heritage are often divisive. Nevertheless, twenty-four years since the Good Friday Agreement, a rich array of museums and heritage-based projects now tells the stories of those most affected by the conflict and offers new ways of thinking about this period of history. Katie Markham (Newcastle

University, England, UK) and Elizabeth Crooke (Ulster University, Northern Ireland, UK) gave an overview of the Northern Irish conflict and outlined some of the most significant developments in Northern Ireland's approach to its conflict-related heritage over the last thirty years, focusing particularly on the potential of heritage as an agent of reconciliation, community building, and, at times, division in the wake of conflict.

The last session of the second module took us back to Ukraine: Diána Vonnák and Victoria Donovan (University of St. Andrews) looked into heritage-making processes during the ongoing war in the broader context of documenting initiatives. Documenting and archiving the past can be done in many ways: state institutions usually manage this heritage, and this strongly affects what aspects of the past are visible and accessible, and which documents are available for public scrutiny and which are not. At the same time, communities often engage in creating their own archives and projects that document their past and present. Those who feel far from the realities of state-led, institutional archiving often self-organize to create and care for their own narratives and to resist erasure. We saw such an upsurge in documentary initiatives in Ukraine when the full-scale invasion started. The class explored various initiatives from Ukraine and the UK, ranging from grassroots local history archives in Donbas to the documentation of the state's crackdown on miners in Northeast England. We asked how, for whom, and why the local actors in our case studies felt the need to archive their experience. We discussed what makes archives and documents vulnerable, how institutionalized, official attempts compare to self-organized, grassroots archiving in different historical and political contexts, and what this means in situations of conflict.

For the last four sessions, we invited representatives of the initiative called Ro3kvit Urban Coalition for Ukraine (<https://ro3kvit.com/>). Ro3kvit is a coalition of experts, both Ukrainian and international with work experience in Ukraine, specializing in urban planning, regional planning, housing, heritage, and related topics such as the economy, law, energy, circularity, sociology, and policy making. The group came into being to develop a methodology for rebuilding Ukraine's (physical) infrastructure and cities and promote new, future-oriented ways of urban design, co-creative organization, and sustainable development. They run various projects



in the field of urban planning and design, housing, energy, and capacity building and cooperate with a range of municipalities and civic groups. The invited experts presented their work in the field of urban planning and housing in Ukraine, and the ensuing discussions explored the relevance and potential of heritage following the framework established by the previous two modules.

Daryna Pasyuta (Ukraine) offered an overview of the existing approaches in Ukrainian urban planning and the current situation regarding regulatory documents, community participation, and interaction between stakeholders. In the post-war context, one of the most burning tasks will be to modernize and transform the housing policy; to do that, the existing housing stock needs to be analyzed and understood first. Oleg Drozdov (Ukraine) and Philipp Meuser (Germany) offered a framework for this undertaking in the context of European architectural history. Daryna Pasyuta and Fulco Treffers (the Netherlands) talked about their experiences cooperating with municipalities in developing new approaches in urban planning. They discussed how a value-based approach can be a starting point for understanding the potential role of Soviet housing estates and the architectural heritage of constructivism in future redevelopment at the local level. Housing is not just an architectural problem, but part of a broader picture comprising the economy, quality of life, and human rights. Reforms in the housing market and the expected impact of the new Law No. 5655 were addressed by Oleksandr Anisimov (Ukraine) and Natalya Mysak (Ukraine and the Netherlands) in this context, connecting the trajectory of urban planning and architectural production to the notion of urban commons and its interpretations. Natalya Mysak demonstrated the potential of the housing crisis fueled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine to provoke — or accelerate — a commoning turn by presenting case studies of temporary housing for internally displaced persons and related developments in this sphere. The group discussion explored how tangible — mobile and immobile — and intangible heritage is entangled with people's right to maintain and negotiate their identities and control their own living conditions and environments, identifying parallels and learning points from the previously discussed cases in Syria, Yemen, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Northern Ireland. Finally, we explored how the concept of difficult and toxic heritage can contribute to working with the legacy of the Soviet

and post-Soviet past and help create a framework for dealing with the tangible and intangible legacy of this war in the difficult present and in the future, as a resource for the post-conflict, sustainable (re-)development of Ukraine.

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## **ПІСЛЯВОЄННА РЕКОНСТРУКЦІЯ МІСТ В УКРАЇНІ НА ОСНОВІ КУЛЬТУРНОЇ СПАДЩИНИ: ГОТУЄМО МАЙБУТНІХ ЕКСПЕРТІВ З ВИЩОЮ ОСВІТОЮ**

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