

# Research intentions document

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When looking at Bressoux and Droixhe through the lens of ‘the scarred city’, I found that the scar of this neighbourhood can be dissected into three different elements: the wound, the healing and the pain. The wound represents the issues (both historical and present) that this neighbourhood faces, such as: violence, drug problems, poverty, lack of housing, the loss of skill-specific industry. The healing stands for the way this area is, and could be, dealing with these problems. For instance: creating a stronger social network, finding new ways of ‘making’ and creating more opportunities for the next generation to develop themselves.

Lastly there is the ‘pain’ or in other words: the loss that comes with the problems in the area. In Droixhe and Bressoux, the description of ‘loss’ can be applied to many things, like the loss of human life due to violence, illnesses caused by mine-work or personal problems resulting in suicide. But also, the loss of building life resulting in many abandoned buildings or building decay.

During the multiple site visits to Droixhe and Bressoux with the research group of ‘invisible cities’ we have collected stories and information from over twenty/twenty-five people living or regularly visiting the neighbourhood. By discovering these social structures, we additionally saw and analysed that there is little footing for social spaces. There are multiple socially engaged organizations who initiate and offer workshops, events and other social activities, but there is a lack of good quality space to carry out these activities.

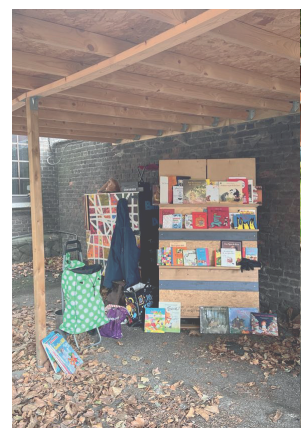
This is (as concluded within our own research) even more true for the younger inhabitants in Bressoux and Droixhe. The neighbourhood appears to offer little in terms of spaces for social activities for children. There is one, small playground in Bressoux and, for as far as we now know, barely any functioning inside or outside space to gather except for school.

The concept of ‘healing’ (connected to the scarred city) combined with the research on invisible cities triggered my interest in the new generation of Bressoux and Droixhe and what my project could mean for their development. So far, I have the idea that children in this neighbourhood are either at school or home, but in the upcoming research I want to find out more about the scope of their daily world. What happens between going to school and going to bed? How do they experience the neighbourhood and its possibilities for children?

Hence, the research question that arises is:

*‘How does the new, younger generation of Bressoux and Droixhe actively experience the neighbourhood, especially regarding leisure?’*

With the children in this area having various cultural backgrounds, maybe other ways of growing up than I did when I was a child and me not knowing whether they have places to hang-out or spend their free time (and if so, where they exist), I need to dive into their world and figure this out to create a stronger foundation for my upcoming design project. This means finding out what their perspective on the neighbourhood is and by doing so, discovering what is missing, or what is there for the younger inhabitants that is not visible to me yet (perhaps discovering creative ideas and wishes).



## Method:

### Fieldwork:

An important part of this research will be fieldwork. To be able to understand the world of the children in Bressoux and Droixhe I cannot solely rely on my own hypothesis, literary research or opinions of adults in the area. To dive into these children's minds, I'll have to directly interact and engage with them. I am planning to do this by interviewing and, if it is possible to organize this with the help of schools or organizations in the neighbourhood, creating a workshop in which I would want to invite the children to be more visual and creative.

### Interviews:

I want to contact schools in the neighbourhood (there is already a connection established with the School Core Communal Bressoux Porto).

Inès and I will be visiting Liège again with her focus being more towards the women in this area. Her interest and mine can overlap and aid each other. Through contact with schools Inès might be able to meet mothers, teachers, etcetera and I in return might benefit from Inès's potential contact with mothers and thus possibly get into contact with kids from the neighbourhood.

### *A brainstorm on possible questions:*

*what do they do after school? where do they go? what do their friends like to do for fun? what is their cultural background? what do they want to be when they grow up? what sports do they play? what sports would they want to try out? do they like to play games? Outside or inside? Is there a place in the neighbourhood that they really like? Or really dislike? Have they been on a vacation this summer? If so, where did they go?*

### Workshops:

The next few weeks I want to develop a plan and look for opportunities to organize a workshop with children. This might be in the form of drawing workshops in schools or during social activities (extracurricular activities) connected to certain social organizations. I want to contact Manu (who organizes these sorts of activities with children) if there is a possibility for me to hitch on with such an activity or to create my own.

### Observatory research:

While visiting the site and discovering the lives of children there, observatory research (using drawing and making notes) might help me to create a better understanding of how these children make use of their environment from a more distant point of view



## **Literary research:**

In addition to the fieldwork, I will also perform a literary research in which I want to focus on sociological research on children, immigrant children and for instance leisure and children. It might also be interesting to find out more about how children deal with 'pain' as an aspect of the scarred city theme. This entails the expression of 'negative' emotions, grief, stress, or difficult family situations.

## **Project ideas based on upcoming research:**

With my coming research on the children/ younger generation of Bressoux and Droixhe I am aiming to find out what type of a program and building could serve as a catalyst in the healing of the neighbourhood, with the specific focus on the new generation and their opportunities by having access to higher quality facilities. This can help to develop a higher social resilience in the neighbourhood.

Apart from the program, which I will develop from my research, there are already elements and ideas which I would like to incorporate in my project. My aim is to create a safe space (preferably both inside and outside) for the younger people of Bressoux and Droixhe to meet each other, play (and learn by playing), interact with their environment and to also be able to cope with difficulties they might be facing such as loss, sorrow, bullying, stress, etcetera.

With the choice of a plot, I would prefer a to find a plot which offers me both inside and outside possibilities. In that way I can have a range of programmatic possibilities and with having outside space be able to attract inhabitants (perhaps also parents and thus, adults) to publicly accessible spaces to support the improvement of social control and safety in the neighbourhood, since the outside space is now mainly used as a way of transport (of vehicles and products as well as people). Most active life happens behind the façade with almost all windows being permanently shut. This blinding border between inside and outside leads to the streets and public spaces not having a lot of passive security through the observing eyes from inside homes.