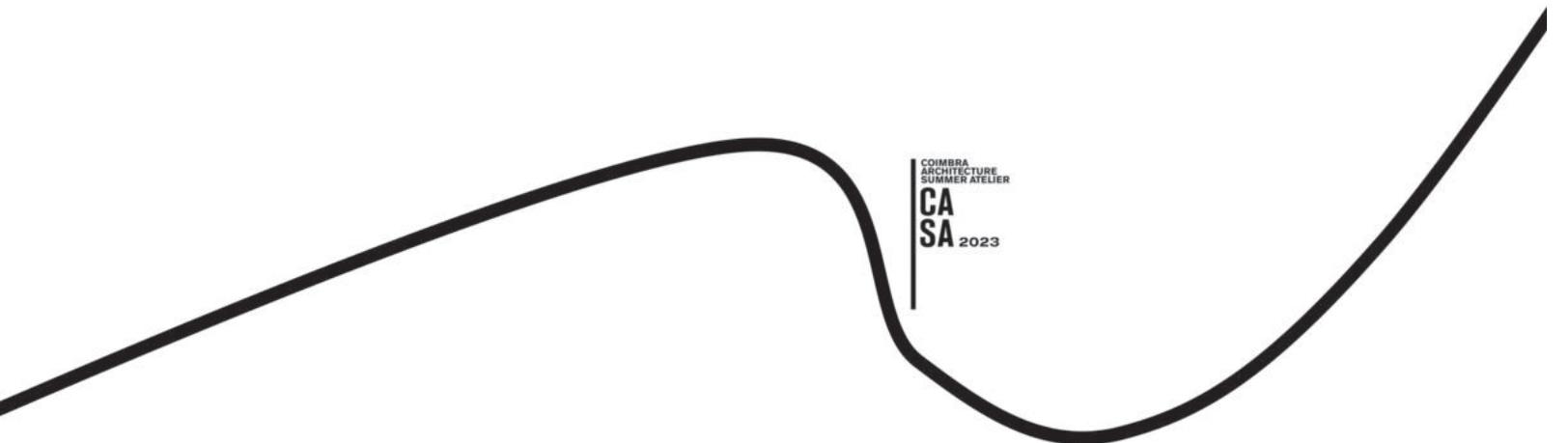


**HUMAN AND NATURE
BASED SOLUTIONS
FOR INCLUSIVE AND
INNOVATIVE URBAN
REGENERATION**

**COIMBRA
ARCHITECTURE
SUMMER ATELIER**

**URBiNAT
INTERDISCIPLINARY
SUMMER SCHOOL**

**HEALTHY
HOME**



COIMBRA
ARCHITECTURE
SUMMER ATELIER
CA
SA 2023

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FIG. 1

Introduction

URBiNAT COORDINATION
Gonçalo Canto Moniz
Nathalie Nunes
Isabel Ferreira
Beatriz Caitana

The co-creation of a healthy corridor in Coimbra: Connecting Choupal, Monte Formoso, Relvinha and Ingote

1 CITIES

In recent years, cities have been facing new challenges that require creative approaches to developing solutions. While urban centers are under pressure from the massification of tourism, peripheral areas remain fragmented by mobility systems that generate inequality and insecurity in public space.

Climate change and social justice are driving academia, municipalities, stakeholders, and local citizens to work together in order to co-create new models of inclusive urban regeneration. Public space lies at the core of this transformation, bringing nature, mobility, community, culture, education, and economics together in a dialogue to promote environments that enhance the quality of life for local communities — places that can truly be considered healthy homes.

2 COIMBRA

The aim of this summer school was to explore a healthy corridor for the periphery of Coimbra, co-created with the local community in the parish of Eiras, by testing and refining the methodologies developed within the EU-funded URBiNAT project. In this context, participants were challenged to design processes and products capable of transforming the healthy corridor into a “healthy home”, connecting the housing neighborhoods of Relvinha, Ingote, and Monte Formoso with the Choupal nature park.

This area underwent intensive urbanization during the second half of the twentieth century, shaped by the modern urban plans of Étienne De Gröer and Antão de Almeida Garrett, which combined industrial zones with housing neighborhoods financed by both public and private investment. As a result of these planning models, and reinforced by the area’s topography, the neighborhoods became disconnected from Coimbra’s urban core — a condition that persists today, despite the distinct identities of each area. Ingote is a public housing estate managed by the municipality; Relvinha, initially a SAAL program¹, is now largely private; and Monte Formoso has been private from the outset. All three neighborhoods, however, have strong residents’ associations actively engaged with local needs and challenges. The Choupal, in turn, is an urban park located between the Mondego river and the north–south railway line.

Currently, the area is undergoing further transformation with the planned construction of the high-speed railway and the new Coimbra station. These projects will add new connections to the city’s mobility system and introduce major infrastructures that will have a significant impact on the territory. While such transformations may pose risks — particularly for the Choupal — they also represent an opportunity to stitch together the urban fabric and reconnect communities living in a fragile and unequal territory.

The healthy corridor, understood as a public space that connects and links neighborhoods, while also engaging people and fostering empowerment², and further operationalized as a pathway that produces a dual effect on the environment and on people’s health and wellbeing³, has the potential to be one of these opportunities, integrating not only nature-based solutions but also human-centered ones.

Fig. 1

Site visits in Monte Formoso neighborhood



FIG. 2



FIG. 3

Fig. 2
Opening lecture

Fig. 3
Training session

3 URBiNAT

Healthy Home is the interdisciplinary Summer School of the EU-funded project URBiNAT (Urban Inclusive and Innovative Nature), which developed the concept of *healthy corridors* as drivers for the regeneration of social housing neighborhoods through the co-creation of social, environmental, and market-oriented nature-based solutions (NBS).⁴ Between 2018 and 2024, a consortium of 28 partners — including academic institutions, small enterprises, and eight cities (Porto, Nantes, Sofia, Høje-Taastrup, Brussels, Siena, Nova Gorica, and Khorramabad) — worked collaboratively to establish concepts and methodologies for the co-creation of healthy corridor urban plans together with local communities.

These living labs were activated in social housing neighborhoods through a co-governance strategy that fostered dialogue on local needs and potential (nature-based) solutions for the territory, within the framework of the healthy corridor. The urban plans co-created for the eight cities and developed in four stages (*co-diagnosis, co-design, co-implementation, co-monitoring*) demonstrate that material solutions for the territory must be complemented by immaterial ones — namely solutions that involve communities engaging with nature, culture, socioeconomics, education, and other dimensions.⁵

The *Healthy Home* Summer School expanded URBiNAT's collaboration by involving observer cities and testing its concepts and methodologies in diverse contexts. In this case, the summer school was designed to open the project to students from different disciplines and academic levels, harnessing their creativity, experience, and critical perspectives to enrich the co-creation process.

4 COMMUNITY

This summer school built on the experience of the CASA architectural design workshop, organized by the Department of Architecture at the University of Coimbra. In this edition, *CASA (HOME)* expanded architectural design beyond its disciplinary boundaries, opening it up to other forms of knowledge that must converge in public space, such as the social sciences, environmental sciences, and the humanities.

This interdisciplinary approach offered a significant opportunity to critically engage with the theory and practice of inclusive urban regeneration⁶, through the active involvement of URBiNAT partners and stakeholders who joined the 2023 CASA edition. Within this framework, students from different levels (undergraduate, master's, and doctoral), alongside citizens, practitioners, and local organizations, were invited to contribute with their knowledge and lived experiences. This collective engagement reinforced the dialogue between disciplines and between academia and society, underscoring the importance of integrating diverse perspectives to advance inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration.

The choice of the peripheral area of Eiras — in particular, the housing neighborhoods of Relvinha, Ingote, and Monte Formoso — enabled an effective dialogue to take place with the local community through their residents' associations, which actively contributed by organizing meetings and site visits, and other local associations such as Casa da Esquina, Associação Juvenil CódigAtomiko, CASPAE, and Projeto Trampolim. These encounters helped identify needs and explore potential solutions that could shape their healthy corridors.

The students were organized into four groups, each focusing on one urban area, and were guided by tutors from URBiNAT partner institutions, professors from DARQ, and researchers from CES: Choupal — Jorge Carvalho (DARQ/ANC), Teresa Novais (ANC), José Miguel Lameiras (BIOPOLIS) and David Campos (BIOPOLIS);



FIG. 4

Fig. 4
Final presentations

Monte Formoso — Andrés Spognardi (CES) and Colectivo ZÁS (Ivan Brito, Lara Reis and Gonalo Santos); Relvinha — Américo Mateus (GUDA), Cláudia Pato de Carvalho (FEUC/CES) and Márcio Moraes Valena (UFRN/CES); Ingote — Marco Acri (UNG), Andrea Conserva (IAAC) and Rita Campos (CES). In addition, Sofia Martins (GUDA), as artist performer, contributed with a creative artistic experience, transiting among the groups to raise awareness and capture the sensitive dimension of the co-creation process.

This multidisciplinary mentoring combined different fields and perspectives, with the goal of supporting the groups, promoting dialogue with the local community, raising awareness of URBiNAT concepts and methodologies, and fostering connections within the broader healthy corridors strategy.

5 PROGRAM

The summer school took place over seven days, from 6 to 12 July 2023, in the inspiring design studio *Projeto 1* at the Colégio das Artes, where the four groups worked together in a lively and collaborative environment.

Participants — including students, tutors, citizens, municipal technicians, and local organizations — engaged in a diverse program of activities: studio work, training sessions, site visits to the intervention areas and local associations, keynote lectures, and review sessions.

The first three days were dedicated to the co-diagnosis phase, enabling participants to familiarize themselves with the intervention areas as well as the URBiNAT concepts and methodologies. The final three days focused on the co-design of the healthy corridor, translating the knowledge gathered into proposals.

Four lectures offered valuable insights. José Ant3nio Bandeirinha examined Coimbra’s urban and architectural development; Luciane Lucas dos Santos explored the inclusive dimension of public space; Nuno Morais, Francisco Rodrigues, Maria Jos3 Brenha, and Isabel Dias, officials from the municipality of Coimbra, presented the city’s social housing policy and urban plans for the intervention areas; finally, Teresa Ribeiro, a landscape architect from the municipality of Cascais Department of Urban Green Spaces, presented the co-creation process used to implement several Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), most notably the Brejos urban garden, under the European project proGReg.

Two review sessions further enriched the debate by critically discussing the groups’ presentations. The co-diagnosis review, with contributions from Uta Pottgiesser (OWL) and Silvia Ferreira (FEUC/CES), raised the challenge of how to effectively engage the local community. The co-design review, discussed with Nuno Grande (DARQ/CES) and Claudino Ferreira (FEUC/CES), explored the tension between material and immaterial NBS, questioning how both can be articulated as part of the healthy corridor infrastructure.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The *Healthy Home* Summer School demonstrated the strong commitment of all groups to understanding the complexity of Coimbra’s peripheral territories. Through intensive collaboration with local communities, they explored the challenges and potential of Relvinha, Ingote, Monte Formoso, and Choupal. Their proposals for a healthy corridor extended beyond isolated interventions, to rethinking the articulation between the four areas and envisioning innovative and inclusive public spaces. In doing so, the summer school not only tested the URBiNAT methodologies but also expanded them, showing how co-created public space can become a foundation for healthier, more connected, and more equitable urban futures.

-
- 1 The SAAL (Servio de Apoio Ambulat3rio Local) program was created in 1974 to support the construction of housing.
 - 2 Moniz, Gonalo Canto, and Isabel Ferreira. “Healthy Corridors for Inclusive Urban Regeneration.” *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica*, no. 158 (2019): 51–59.
 - 3 Moniz, Gonalo Canto, and Jos3 Miguel Lameiras, eds. *Healthy Corridor Atlas: Roadmap for the Co-creation of Nature-based Cities*. Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.
 - 4 Grant Agreement ID: 776783
 - 5 Moniz, Gonalo Canto, and Jos3 Miguel Lameiras, eds. *Healthy Corridor Atlas: Roadmap for the Co-creation of Nature-based Cities*. Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2024.
 - 6 Ferreira, Isabel, Beatriz Caitana, and Nathalie Nunes, eds. *Urban Inclusive and Innovative Nature: Fundamentals and Practices for the Co-creation of Nature-based Cities*. Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2024.





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PARTNERS

As an international summer school, CASA prides itself on being an ambitious project with a very strong social concern. For CASA to achieve its goals, it is necessary to establish various partnerships to strengthen and widen the range of work in all fields with an interdisciplinary strategy, creating a vast and complex network. The purpose has been to establish relations between CASA and other institutions on a national and worldwide scale, providing the opportunity for knowledge transfer between Architecture, Art, Design and Urbanism schools and promoting a rich and multicultural learning environment.

These are permanent synergies established on various levels and involving public, private and social entities, such as institutional partnerships that support CASA's growth through a more extensive network of institutional entities and resources. Media partners are also involved, complementing the great prominence gained by CASA since 2019, with collaborations through magazines, social networks and online platforms, among others, which aim to publicise CASA through media content.

CONCLUSION

CASA-URBiNAT 2023 Healthy Home was a successful summer school. Both CASA and URBiNAT's team would like to extend a special thanks to all atelier tutors, session lecturers, guests, and participants for attending CASA, as well as to all the partners¹, sponsors² and other contributors³ that collaborated with us. Your contributions and presence is what made this event possible.

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ORGANIZATION



URBiNAT



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