



ProLight

Dialogues

Inspired by the interactions of different people, cultures and mindsets encountered when traveling for ProLight project, the project co-coordinator Michael Heidenreich wrote a series of dialogues in which science meets humor and where logic and intuition clash.

From these dialogues, the ProLight team used AI ("Magic Studio™" by CANVA) to generate accompanying images.

This collection of dialogues may not change the world, but they might help change how you see it!



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Two Minds, One Topic

This scene is inspired by the poster “Forging ideas”, which was seen at the Museum of Industrial Culture Osnabrück (MIK) in December 2024. Here Kik1, an old Swedish man, and Hans-Dirk, a farmer’s son, meet to exchange ideas about the future on the balcony of the “Idea Wagon”; a floating space without entrance or exit. Animated yet dignified, they converse as equals as they discuss their perspectives. But let us listen to the dialog between Kik1 and HD...



Kik1: Before we start our discussion, let us imagine looking through a facade window. It's like a small magical peephole into the past.

Hans-Dirk: Oh, a window – it's a big step to go from the red brick window of our farm to those fancy city house facades. But I'll just bite my tongue.

Kik1: Good! But this is a special window, behind it, everywhere grainy buildings covered in pretty colored stone, with smooth concrete connectors, some in mussel, snail shells or white pebbles. They form something like a passe-partout.

Hans-Dirk: Passe-partout? What is that? A French decorative picture?

Kik1: No, it's a frame that, for example, carves out the focal point of the photograph to highlight it.

Hans-Dirk: like removing a weed so that other things you want can grow better, right?

Kik1: I like weeds as a habitat for various micro fauna and flourishing flora. So, we'd better use a passe-partout that frames a window as our analogy.

Hans-Dirk: You know what? I'm just going to listen.

Kik1: Imagine that the window frame contains the unstudied Jura, an ancient floor of past horizons that were later tiled for building blocks. They will certainly cover rows of windows and frames as well.

Hans-Dirk: And if that's trimmed to a half-timber that would be cozy...

Kik1: From the appointed window to the MIK kitchen, as from the sheep's wool to the bleating eco-design over the course of change.

Hans-Dirk: You said it, now imagine that we think of something new and welcome all readers to the Lego league¹ with new digital building blocks. Let's assume we want to sharpen our thoughts. What comes to mind when you think of "less is more"?

Kik1: You mean the charming V, vinyl grooves of a satirical green turn? And that you don't always have to have everything?

¹ www.firstlegoleague.org



Hans-Dirk: Humid streams of thought dance together to form a source of creative blossoming. Real behavior, with non-inflationary conglomerates, is revealed in a real and tangible way. We're going to work on this stretched-out thought. It's about being smart with what we have - like the plants and animals on our farm. Everything is connected, isn't it?

Kik1: Corn meets Bitcoin, roots meet the mind, isolated solutions - like your farm - the solidarity community is waiting for such encouragement; like a small island of dreams where everything is in balance.

Hans-Dirk: Let's move on to the next picture and leave it to the other contributors to link economics and virtual behavior to finance...

Kik1: Yes, let's go back to what we just saw. A coal past follows the vinyl grooves in the exhibition piece. Framed by coal ruins, the industrial steam appears in the background of the era so named for it. A lot of things used coal, but now that is a thing of the past. Now we are trying to find other ways - like with our field rotating wind vortex.

Hans-Dirk: I remember relatives who used to work in the mine were given re-education courses. But, as far as I know,

miners do not easily turn into agents and merchants.

Kik1: Back to the wind, it sometimes whistles a song when it sails through the leaves. In the 80s, with the exception of a few salt mines, the last of the mines were closed. Underground coke was becoming a thing of the past, horizon by horizon.

Hans-Dirk: In agriculture as well, barns and farmyards were heated with oil instead of coal. But that is what was and is not enough for our children.

Kik1: My relatives were and are still housed in factories. Symbolically, a further exhibition piece shows a time clock that we passed.

Hans-Dirk: A time clock? Reminds me of old children's games with shops and stamping and erasing letters. But do you know how timekeeping came about? I read a newspaper article recently.

Kik1: Not really, what did you find out?

Hans-Dirk: Well - as the railways expanded, the synchronization of time and space became ubiquitous. As trains transported more and more people and cargo, a fixed schedule was needed, this gradually framed and determined our daily routines.

Kik1: And the sundial that used to show the time became less and less important, didn't it?

Hans-Dirk: But you know what? On our farm, the rooster still keeps time. When he crows in the morning, everyone knows that it's time for the cows to be milked. But my siblings take care of that, I haven't done that for a long time...

Kik1: How can our everyday lives go on without money? You know, we always liked to offer our old books and other things to other children and young people at the flea markets. They gave us the money they wanted to spend. It's like donating to a good cause or to a concert or, or..., somewhere everyone comes together for fun or something good.

Hans-Dirk: In the country we also lived with a little bartering. If I remember correctly, we used to grow corn and wheat alongside the flocks of sheep. My uncle made baked goods from it, and we traded them for eggs and sausages.

Kik1: Yes, this has now been taken over by dealers who give money for the sake of simplicity. But you know what? We're sitting here to talk about new ideas, completely unpaid. Like we used to; casually discussing new ideas from our past. In this way we give experiences of local currencies that further support the idea of neighborhood and giving small trade a chance. Giving interested co-writers the opportunity to expand on community banks that continue the original solidarity pact of small savings banks and lenders...

Hans-Dirk: Yes, let's go back to our memories. In my head I have a memory of not liking Camembert as a child. I don't know why, I like it now. But anyway, I remember feeling confused about the bread at my kinder-

garten and being outraged at the time.

Kik1: I agree with you! When you trade one loaf of bread for another, you're not just swapping bread—you're also sharing flavors, feelings, and what people want or need at that moment. But this is certainly easier than the huge sums of money that new products cost, which are currently only attainable by subsidies.

Hans-Dirk: Yes, I think we can both imagine that neighborhoods will have their own small currencies - independent of major political wrangling. They would strengthen cohesion and support small-scale trade. But that's assuming that the central banks allow it...

Kik1: The lower part of the sixth puzzle picture in the exhibition reminds me of the old Märklin days. I always wanted a new train, but as soon as I had it, I unscrewed it. After the gift was handed over, it turned out that some cable came loose or something, regardless that new train would no longer run. But that didn't matter, because we

preferred to play soccer, and I loved to read and listen to music.

Hans-Dirk: I had different kinds of presents. On the farm, other things were more useful, you know? Like when I was 13-14, I was given an air rifle, and later a moped. The rifle was to stop birds stealing cherries. With our mopeds, we could then easily visit our spots outside of the village. There were bicycles too, but they weren't that popular.

Kik1: Yes, I can also remember that we always had the mixture; a special fuel pump/column or we mixed it ourselves.

Hans-Dirk: Yes, every drop was important. Because it brought us closer to the people who turned heads. Our tractors now have computers in them, and all communication is digital. But you know, I like to just be out and about on my e-bike or just riding with someone - sometimes that's even nicer. I also take the train more and more for long distances.

Kik1: That's right, being out and about together is always the most fun, you're absolutely right. I'm getting word on my

cell phone now that at some point, our short dialogue will be broadcast. It's a bit like the puzzle we talked about: every little piece counts in keeping you thinking and inspiring you to make everything really beautiful.

Hans-Dirk: Yes, I found and still find it nice to chat with you. Sometimes the simplest things, like sharing, are the nicest things, even if they just make you happier. I'm glad we exchanged ideas and experiences.

Kik1: Exactly and in the process, you also learn things by finding the things you share, and maybe even question yourself a little. It is like this place has a time all its own.

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More Than Just Nerdy Talk

This scene is inspired by a summer school, organized in San Fidel of Guernica, Spain, in July 2024. “Study Visitors” arrive at the San Fidel School during the running of the bulls. Welcomed by female students gracefully moving in harmony to an unheard music, the “Study Visitors” greet the teachers in front of the school. A creaky staircase leads up to a bright room decorated with inviting pictures where Pupil, Teacher, and two Musicians are expecting us. They will accompany us lending their voices and occasional background music to help us better grasp the concept of new building cultures through listening. Additionally, we will hear the voices of the Speakers from offstage. But now, let us turn our attention to the dialog which, while fictionalized, accurately reflects the thoughts of the authors.



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Pupil: Who are all these people? Why aren't they at San Fermin² or watching the football match?

Teacher: They are friendly people from different countries, who are curious and want to know what it is we do here. They probably also want to know why we are voluntarily going to school even though it is vacation.

Pupil: Yes, I've been asking myself that same question. Why don't we just do what we always do during summer vacation?

Teacher: What do you always do for summer vacation?

Pupil: Well, I read, listen to a lot of music and miss my friends who live far away.

Teacher: Do you hear that music?

Author's comment: The musicians play a classical piece.

Pupil: Not as cool as hip-hop.

Teacher: Oh, I think it is, but no time for that now. They are going to start speaking.

The speakers have taken their seats. Some bullet points of the speakers are:

Speaker Jose Maria, Mayor of Gernika-Lumo, emphasizes his vision in Spanish for protecting the Urdaibai biosphere. He supports recognizing and scaling sustainability projects similar to awarding Lego League prizes for students, the energy community (TEK) of San Fidel, and other projects in Gernika-Lumo.

Speaker Mikel, Mayor of Forua, emphasizes the town's significant potential to contribute to sustaina-

² www.sanfermin.com/en/party-guide/what-is-sanfermin/#google_vignette

bility through nature-based solutions. He highlights examples of how Forua, located within the protected Urdaibai Biosphere, is addressing flooding issues in an environmentally friendly way.

Pupil: Is it true what they said? I still don't understand everything.

Teacher: It's not exactly what they say, but how they say it. Our old mayor makes it sound as though we have already done a lot for the environment, but he forgets that our public buildings still have a lot of free space for generating solar power.

Pupil: Doesn't the mayor know that? He's been in office for so long.

Teacher: True, but between all the meetings and events, he sometimes forgets about all the empty space available on all those roofs.

Pupil: The other mayor is my dad's age, but I still can't understand Basque very well yet.

Teacher: I'm sure you will in time. He also said that today we're going to have a look at the converted stream without using the old concrete plain.

Pupil: I think we need to be quiet now, but afterwards, please can you tell me why only one person ever speaks.

Teacher: Yes, of course.

The speakers have taken their seats. Some bullet points of the speakers are:

Speaker Javier, Business Developer for Energy Communities at Edinor, focuses on collective self-consumption with renewable energy facilities to reduce reliance

on the electricity market through Local Energy Business Communities (CEL). Across Spain, his company has established more than 5,000 CELs, ranging from individual buildings to micro-regions, that generate and provide renewable energy for various customers within a 2km radius.

Speaker Ugaitz, architect at View Arkitektura and professor at the University of the Basque Country, focuses on his research on energy efficiency and comfort in buildings ranging from old heritage structures to new constructions. He discusses heritage valuation studies that use analytical monitoring and parametric calculations to determine the optimal energy intervention strategies for buildings.

Speaker Alba, a researcher at the University of the Basque Country, presents the collaborative mural process conducted at the Living Lab in Pamplona as an example to discuss successfully engaging local stakeholders, raising awareness, building community, and empowering participants by fostering a sense

of belonging throughout the process.

Teacher: We've seen some pretty houses, and I think next winter it's a good idea to turn off my heating and invite my neighbors over for dinner. But you asked me why only one person ever talks at a time? Well, they are just playing teacher for a few minutes.

Pupil: Does that also mean they give grades for listening?

Teacher: Well, you heard that there were some questions from the audience. The more questions, the better the listening grade.

Pupil: Oh, then I should have asked my questions too. But my English is as good as my Basque.

Teacher: That doesn't matter. Just keep asking. Someone will translate it.

Pupil: Earlier, on the way to the viewpoint on the roof, I thought to myself, the dancers have it good. They don't need to know a language; they just need to have music to dance to.

Teacher: Yes, that's right. What could we do with more music in our stomachs when we dance. Then we could do more lessons in nature. I think the young

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mayor we heard from earlier would like something like that.

P (sighs): I like being outside too, and I decided to smile for the cameraman a little earlier when I was standing in a circle at the viewpoint. To be honest, I'm really hungry. Do you think we'll get something to eat?

Teacher: Sure, but first we'll have to bang on some tree leaves.

Pupil: Bang on what?

Teacher: Well, we're going to go down the beautiful wooden stairs...

Pupil: ...you mean the "constantly creaky stairs"?

Teacher: Yes, exactly. We're going to go into the art room and knock predetermined patterns out of leaves with brushes.

Pupil: What are these patterns?

Teacher: As far as I remember, they are dancers, for example, or our school excursion tree...

Pupil: Uh, our freedom tree?

Teacher: You've been paying attention. The art teacher will

help everyone to go home with beautiful leaf memories.

Pupil: I'm sure the visitors' children are already there waiting for a souvenir...



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More info about the summer school and its content here may be found here:

www.prolight-project.eu/international-summer-course-energy-communities-empowerment-through-sustainable-energy

Stealing the mail?

Scene: The author of these lines was sitting in a guesthouse and wrote: "Stealing the mail - every time I pass the yellow delivery carts I want to steal the mail. Of course, this is not because I want to read the letters or obituaries. I just want to fish out the advertising. The reason for this strange desire is that I want to distribute the advertisements to my neighbors with a smile, and without being asked to do so. With the strained-looking Mail Carriers, there is no time for smiling and everything happens anonymously. Who likes smiling at a mailbox that needs filling? I can happily do it, disguised in an FFP2 mask. Of course this is annoying, but it is subtle. Under the mask, the smile is conjured up by the eyes. When the Mail Carrier once again disappears behind the front door with the legendary post office key, I simply take a handful of advertising coupons out of his cart and, with a slightly flushed face, walk to the next street, then just a little further past the distribution route, and then I put on my mask and began my mission." This resulted in the following unusual dialog of neighborly help:



I: You know, whenever I pass your yellow delivery cart, I always have this crazy desire. I would love to steal the mail!

Mail Carrier: What? Really? But why is that? Do you want to read letters in secret?

I: No, no! Of course not! It's not about the letters or anything like that - especially not the obituaries. I just mean the advertisements!

Mail Carrier: The advertisements? Why those of all things? No one reads them.

I: That's exactly why I'm writing something about energy poverty, and I want to turn to my neighbors with a smile and make their day a little brighter. If available, I tick LED lamps, switchable power strips, sealing strips for windows and doors or water-saving shower heads.

Mail Carrier: That's right, we mail carriers aren't allowed to do that.

I: Well, mail carriers often seem so stressed out to me. They have so much to do that they don't have time to smile at every mailbox. And let's be honest, who likes smiling at a mailbox?

Mail Carrier: That's true. But how are you going to do that? Just hand out advertisements around the neighborhood?

I: Exactly! But with subtly a smile. I did this hidden behind my FFP2 mask during Corona, I imagine my neighbors are happy to find their advertising already pre-

sorted and marked in their mailbox.

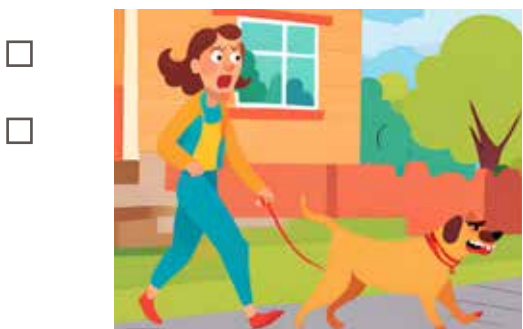
Mail Carrier: And how did you do that?

I: When the mail carrier disappeared behind the front door with his key, I took a handful of advertisements from the yellow cart. Then, in a mask I wandered the streets, a little further than just our neighborhood, and started fulfilling my mission. I imagine they felt it. A little moment of joy that might make the day a little brighter.

Mail Carrier: That sounds really nice. Maybe next time you can give us the mail carrier a smile too - with or without the advertisements.

I: Good idea! Maybe that's the real mission - to pass on an environmental smile where it's needed...

Although still a distance away, a neighbor walking a dog comes towards me:



I: Hello, Neighbor, I live next door and with the galloping inflation in mind, I would like to provide you with the best deals.

Neighbor: (Annoyed) Move aside, sir! Can't you see that you are disturbing my dog as she defecates?

I: (Embarrassed) Of course Madam. Please excuse me.

I carefully make room and

push past the dog, and I see a slightly nervous-looking man walking by.

I: Hello! I live just around the corner and would like to provide you with the best deals.

He doesn't even look up but walks past without saying a word.

I: (mumbling to myself) OK, maybe he was just lost in thought.

Then a cheerful-looking other with a baby carriage comes up to me:



I: Hello! I live right here and would like to provide you with the best deals – given the rising prices, I thought that could be helpful.

Mother: (Smiles kindly) Oh, thank you! You know, my husband doesn't like advertising, even though our income is quite modest. (Sigh) But I think neighborhood initiatives like this are really good.

I: Great, great – I'm glad you like it! Here are a few brochures, I marked the energy-saving products that you can buy anywhere. I hope you have a nice day.

And after handing over the advertisements, I happily walk on. A fierce dog barks at me and my good mood evaporates.

I: (To Dog Owner) Can you call your dog, please?

Dog Owner: Come on, Ener – come on.

At some point I'll give up my neighborhood initiative and put the remaining advertisements in the paper recycling container.

Summer School Together With Passathon³

I'm used to it. I had just been to summer school abroad, when by chance I received an invitation for a public transport excursion in my current hometown. Things got off to a bizarre start. With the promise of Sustainable buildings, my journey began with the subway, then an elevated train through a rural landscape, and finally into a civic district that had been built from scratch. Lots of concrete and many cranes lined the horizon, but in this part of town there were at least opportunities to quench a Saturday's hunger and thirst. Greeted by the Organizers, who pointed out the cafe to me while we waited a little longer for more Green Building Solution⁴ participants. This resulted in the following fictitious dialog...



Greeted with relief and joy by the organizing couple, the small group grew with the sporadic arrivals of public transportation.

I: Hello, I'm here for the excursion. We met by chance at BOKU. I was there together with some old passive housemates. I was just at a summer school in Gernika, an old important capital of the Basque Country.

Organizers: (Friendly smile) Hello and welcome. We are still waiting for a few more participants, but in the meantime you are welcome to have a coffee.

Digestion meant that we all had to find a public toilet. Fortunately, the toilet was being cleaned just as I was going to relieve myself and I had two minutes to piss without having to pull out any change.

I: (Looking around) But first, I desperately need to find a toilet.

Organizers: Oh, of course. The public toilet is right over there. We're going there too, but there's none in the cafe.

I: (Relieved) Phew, that's great. Thank you!

Organizers: (With an awkward smile) That's great. You know, it's always exciting to see how new districts are created. A lot of concrete at the beginning, but also a lot of opportunities. Ask our BOKU colleague to install the accompanying Passathon App for you later. There, you can find out more about the passive houses that have been cycled and built here with data on each.

I: (Cheerfully) So, now I'm ready for the excursion! (To Participant) There are cranes everywhere here - it looks like a huge playground for construction workers.

³ <https://passathon.at/>

⁴ www.oadstudenthousing.at/en/summer-universities/gbs/what-you-will-learn-at-the-gbs/



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Organizers: That makes the area much livelier. I'd like to introduce you to the others while we wait for some of our remaining colleagues to arrive on the next public transport.

I (In English): Hello, where are you from? Ah, from Pakistan and Egypt I've just been traveling to another summer school in Spain where I gave a talk.

Participant: That sounds exciting - let's talk about it later.

The small group gradually grew, with other participants arriving sporadically. Then we were off. We discovered little jewels of organic, plant microcosms in this concrete labyrinth which invited us to linger and to make contact with the local community. I talked to the Egyptian Woman, who came from Alexandria. She worked in the building sector and used the summer school to gather inspiration for sustainable urban development in Egypt. I talked about my trip 15 years ago and collaborating with the National Research Center in Cairo, and how during the trip I considered different

examples of which Egyptian solar architecture could be used elsewhere.

I: Even if it's not a passive house, look at these little gardens here in the middle of all surrounded by all this concrete. The children are not very shy here.

Egyptian Woman: (Smiling) Yes, I think they're beautiful too. They remind me a bit of the courtyards in Alexandria. There - next to the beach - we sometimes have little green oases for family gatherings in the middle of the city.

I: You're from Alexandria? That's great! About 15 years ago when I went to Egypt, I went there and Cairo. I was collaborating with the National Research Center in Cairo at the time.

Egyptian Woman: Really? What did you do there?

I: Solar architecture; we looked into how to combine traditional building methods with modern technology. I remember the impressive cooling bought through small water channels in the building and domed roofs

that provided natural ventilation and protection from the sun.

Egyptian Woman: The sun is so strong here that we urgently need sustainable solutions. The summer school here is a great opportunity to find new inspiration.

We rest in a small area with benches used for picnicking, while waiting for the Passathon cycling group. I spoke to a Pakistani Student who was attending summer school as part of her one-year internship in Vienna. I asked about how it was socializing with colleagues. My memories were marked by the difficulties in finding friends. Only through a Spanish language course was it possible to find a circle of friends outside of my former partner. The Pakistani Student confirms the same experience. The Viennese, like country people, are not very sociable and prefer to keep to themselves.

I: It's nice that we have a little time to chat before the others join us. Tell me, what are you doing in Vienna?

Pakistani Student: (Smiling) Oh, I'm here on an internship and then I will be staying for another 6 months. It's going well, but to be honest, it wasn't that easy at first. I didn't know how to approach my colleagues. It took a while for me to find friends.

I: (Nodding empathetically) I understand. It was similar when I moved to Vienna. I also had trouble making friends. It was only when I took a Spanish course that I got to meet people beyond my then partner's circle of friends.

Pakistani Student: Yes, it was similar for me too. Here in Vienna, I have the feeling that people are a bit like they are in the country - friendly, but they preferring to keep to themselves.

I: (Smiles) Exactly, I noticed that too. The Viennese are sometimes like a small, close-knit community. But I can introduce you to my children. We don't see each other very often, but they are open to meeting people.

Pakistani Student: Thank you, I think it just takes time. But I'm

also using the summer school to get to know new people. The program also includes a lot of leisure activities.



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More info may be found here:

www.oeadstudenthousing.at/en/summer-universities/gbs

<https://passathon.at/>

Moin, Moin, Kozani

Michael narrates a trip to Kozani, Greece. A city nearly in the middle of Western Macedonia reached by taking train, a boat, and a bus: "Moin, moin", that seems to me to be the appropriate German sailor's greeting to give on the big ship to Greece. It's a bit like being in a bubble. There are no supermarkets, no running around in the morning, but there are wonderful evenings with strangers, their lifestyle, and their memories. Apart from Rai on the on-board television, the only connection to the world, and apart from receiving a beautiful and touching text message from loved ones at home, everything here is just on-board service and everyday connections to everyday life with olives & herbs nearby.

Let's see if, at this snail's pace, I can make it in time to our online meeting on November 4th. Hopefully the bus and train rides accelerate the course. During a short visit to Kozani, Valentina, Thodoris, and Michael visited the ProLight demo district. Playfully, Michael: thought about the elections in the USA and compared them to the rooster from Asterix. With childlike clarity, Valentina and Thodoris described their hopes for a simpler future that is less about squabbling and more about honest joy.



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Michael: Moin, moin! You know, that's what you say in northern Germany when you're on a big ship like the one I was on. It feels like I'm in a soap bubble and an echo. No supermarket, no hectic mornings - just the vastness of the sea and evenings with strangers who share their stories and memories with me.

Valentina: That sounds like a little adventure! And you were completely free of everyday stress, weren't you? Just the sea, the smell of diesel, conversations and thinking about

the olives and herbs in Greece, right?

Michael: Exactly, I knew that soon I would be where they grow. But I remember that on board there was only Rai on TV and occasionally a message from home. It was as if everyday life was far away, and communication was offline...

Thodoris: And then after you arrived in Patras things sped up again - by bus and train?

Michael: That was my plan. I wanted to get to Kozani in time for our online meeting on November 4 and visit a demonstration.

Valentina: Oh yes, that was a special moment. We finally got the renovation permit beforehand. Do you remember, Michael? There was this man who decorated the Christmas tree with his everyday clothes - well, "decorated" is perhaps saying too much, he "dressed" the tree.

Michael: (Laughing) Yes, it looked as if Christmas was almost here!

Valentina: It's a bit like the English, who always drive on the wrong side, isn't it? Everything has its own time here. The man was so focused on what he was doing but somehow, seemed content. Maybe he was thinking about his family... or about the ouzo that awaits him after work.

Thodoris: (Smiling) That fits with Greece! But you know what's

even better? I finally got the permit for the construction work, but Valentina already said that.

Thodoris: Yes, let's put the paper with the stamp on our notice board in the building right away. It was such a good feeling when I held the stamp and signature in my hands.

Michael: You could say that. It's sometimes those small steps that feel like giant leaps, right?

Thodoris: Absolutely. Now we can really get going.

Valentina: This is the beginning of a simpler future, isn't it? One that has less to do with roosters - or Asterix, Michael! - and more to do with honest joy.

Michael: (Laughs) You're right. It's a good feeling when things are moving forward. But now, tell me about the Christmas tree again!



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Occupied Seats and Open Doors

ProLight Meeting in Matosinhos, Portugal

Scene: In Matosinhos, a demonstration neighborhood with 278 apartments and 690 residents shows what sustainable urban living can look like. Partners, including MatosinhosHabit, AdEPorto and EDP New, are working together to help residents and businesses adapt to the changing energy landscape.



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Arrival: I boarded the night bus from Madrid to Porto at the center door after showing my electronic ticket, but was unable to get on at first. A family, more precisely the Mother of three children, wouldn't let anyone pass her in the narrow aisle, so I couldn't get to my reserved seat either. The discord began to play out: She didn't want to sit in her randomly assigned seat next to a polite dark-skinned Man. In addition, the fact that the seat was separated from her child, by the width of the aisle, did not seem to be appropriate. The whole thing was completed by the fact that her partner had probably reserved the tickets for himself and his family online on his computer or cell phone (which is actually the same thing). So, the whole thing crescendos in the Mother's agi-

tated movements towards her neighboring passengers, the Bus Driver and her Husband. Slightly annoyed, the passengers straightened up and went to the back row of seats. Visibly relieved, the mother and her child sat down next to each other with the triangle stick. The Conductor was now able to ask the other "Orchestra Members" in the bus to join in and start singing the Largo of the bus ride.

The "Triangle Player" spoke briefly to her child, who was not very interested in a conversation, but instead fell into a cell phone trance, and after what must have been a decisive exchange, fell into a deep sleep which lasted until we neared our destination and the next symphony performance began.

Happily, I was able to spread both myself and my computer out on two seats, which I used to search for new sheet music for the "Bus Orchestra". At my transfer point, I got off without triangle hitches this time, and, fighting the strong wind and rain, tried to find a dry waiting room, or at least a waiting room on this busy road. The first opportunity in this maze of streets was a bar with no sockets accessible to guests for my nearly battery drained computer. So, soaking wet, I dragged myself, my computer, and my other luggage to an upstairs cafe in a train station. After about two hours of drying off and communicating with European project partners, I walked back to the bus stop through the wind and heavy rain. Arriving at the bus stop,

the second bus of the day was already waiting with a free choice of seats. Together with only three or four other travel companions, I felt like I was in a mobile apartment.

Despite a few language barriers, I understood that a Moroccan man sitting two rows in front of me wanted to use my cell phone charging cable and my headset. I willingly gave him both, and he was able to continue communicating hour after hour, either solemnly or tenderly (he proudly showed me the video of his girlfriend). I plugged my headset into my cell phone and the all-too-loud sound of the other passengers' conversations and music swept out of our shared bus apartment. As my computer lost power again, I wrapped myself in the blanket I had brought with me and thought about how and where I could lie down on the bus floor later. Lost in these thoughts, my Moroccan friend sitting two rows away said "Bon Giorno" to me and grinned broadly, three teeth in his mouth. He bought beer and offered me a can. Thanking him, I declined and offered him a pastry I had brought with me. When he realized that I could only offer a few slices of cheese to put on top, he turned back on his cell phone and continued chatting away.

I: (Tired getting on the night bus to Porto) Good evening. Excuse me, can I pass through? My seat is near the front.

Mother: (Blocking the aisle with her luggage and her three children) Wait, I'm just trying to sort out the seating arrangement. This isn't going to work! I'm supposed to be in this seat, but I don't like it, I can't leave my child sitting alone, and next to a stranger too...

Husband: (Slightly annoyed, briefly looking up from his phone) I reserved the seats randomly. I hope it's okay with you.

Mother: (Increasingly agitated) Well it's okay with me! Can't you do something? Maybe someone can swap? Excuse me, could you maybe...?

Man: (Standing up and leaving annoyed) No problem, I'll sit somewhere else.

Mother: (Sitting down with her child) Now everything's fine. Thank you!

Conductor: (Seeing if the way is clear) Please sit down, we have to leave.

Later the second bus will have free seating.

Moroccan: (Sitting two rows ahead) Hey, do you have a charging cable? And maybe a headset?

I: (Giving him both) Sure, here.

Moroccan: (Proudly showing a video on his cell phone) That's my girlfriend. Beautiful, isn't she?

I: (Smiling) Yes, very nice.

Moroccan: (Grining) Bon Giorno! (Offering a can of beer) Do you want one?

I: Thanks, but no. Maybe you would like a pastry?

Moroccan: (Taking the pastry) Hmm... well! (Turning back to his phone)

In light of the increasingly frequent "monsoon" rains, after arriving the final destination, we moved from our community meeting hall to a nearby building. This showcase community social building has been renovated in recent years. During a presentation led by architects and structural engineers, special attention was paid to the north-facing gallery facade. This design approach effectively insulates the apartments by creating a sort of "winter garden" effect along the corridors, thus improving overall energy efficiency and comfort for the residents.

Invited by the host, the Architects point out an important aspect of the accessibility of the building. For security reasons, the main entrance door is now locked, which is a change from earlier when the apartments were freely accessible and had less effective insulation. I asked why this is important to understand. One of the architects explained: This open access encouraged social interactions in the past, including welcoming visitors and hosting traditional Portuguese gatherings with wood-fired barbecues in front of the houses. The new security measures, while increasing security, inadvertently limit





these opportunities for social engagement, now that the front door to the house is locked, unlike before.

I: Why is it so important to lock the front door now? It actually sounds good for security.

Architects: That's true, security has improved. But you see, in the past this door was always open, and that shaped life in the buildings.

I: In what way? What has changed as a result?

Architects: When the doors were open, the apartments were part of a vibrant social

network. Visitors would drop by spontaneously, neighbors would meet in the stairwell, and sometimes there would even be small traditional gatherings where a wood-fired grill would be set up in the courtyard. It was a piece of culture and community as well. Now, with the door closed, these spontaneous encounters have become less frequent. It's as if we're isolating people from each other a little bit

I: I understand. It's like a tradeoff - security for openness. But isn't there a way to have both?

Architects: That is exactly the question we are asking our-

selves. Perhaps technologies like intercoms or simple community meeting points can bring some of that back. But it will never be quite the same as it was before. Buildings are more than walls and doors - they are also settings for people's lives and stories.

I: (Contemplating) Sometimes it is important to consider more than just the function of a building. Thank you for explaining that.

At the second demonstration site, we visited a 60 kWp photovoltaic system installed on the roof of our venue in Matosinhos. This PV system efficiently generates solar power to supply municipal services and thus contributes directly to our sustainability goals. Excess energy is fed back into the grid, while in times of higher demand some of the additional electricity is generated through the wind power plant, ensuring a balanced and stable energy supply.

