What is a safe space?

What makes a community?

People? Physical space? Shared values?

Common vision

Principles

Rules

Our common vision

Bringing people together and supporting them in the process of community building through:

1. **Empowerment** - strengthening the autonomy of the people for them to unfold their potential.
2. **Provision** of infrastructure and resources* for the community to come together.
3. **Commitment** to providing a safer space by preventing and challenging oppressive and threatening behaviors. We identify the struggles of the community and create support systems.

*By resources we mean: human resources, material resources, legal resources and other types of resources we find fit to bring to the table.
*By support systems we mean: designing inclusive policies to name, confront and address all forms of abuse and inequality.

Principles I

Common aid

offering unbiased support to people who have known or unknown struggles, without assuming their needs

Safer spaces

offering a common space where each will be treated without judgment or stigma

Reflexivity

being mindful of the experiences or prejudice we bring in the space and being committed to deconstructing them

Principles II

How do we define care? Is care enough to mediate?

Accessibility

ensuring paths are always reachable, that infrastructure is comfortable to use and communications are understandable for everyone in the community

Horizontality

organizing in a horizontal structure where community members have equal agency and equal opportunity in decisionmaking

Parity

challenging strong voices and dominance in terms of technocracy by ensuring that the voice of every member is heard

Care for nature

recogizing that we, as members of the community, are responsible for the shared environment by creating and maintaining a close connection to nature

Principles III

Where does humour fit into community building? Absurdity?

Equality

acknowledging that inside the community all the members are equal and they should be aware of their privileges and use their inherited resources as a way of uplifting the group

Inclusivity

welcoming all except fascists, racists, homophobes, transphobes, ableists, misogynists, sexists, xenophobes, harassers, and any mindset or ideology which bases on supremacy

Responsibility/Accountability

recognizing a shared responsibility to keeping the space we create functional

Community initatives: Helping Hands Blaue Brücke

The association offers a charity shop, German classes, documents help, humanitarian aid to Ukraine, mental health therapy, translation.

- reinventing the concept of resilience
- creating the physical space inside the community
- bureaucracy

Jump in and build your wings while flying

Community initatives: Fforst

Fforst is not only a shared household but also a self-organized, functional, and vital space. It embodies a common space founded on a specific structure of self-organization.

- sense of togetherness
- balancing community in the face of constant change
- flexibility of structure
- space bonding

(re-)Bridging the border: Adrian from the Kleist Museum

In the last years, the Kleist Museum has looked at different ways in which it could attract the community:

- gender inclusive language and references
- cultural accessibility and cooperation
- political art and activism
- learning from diversity

You have to learn from the city before changing it

(re-)Bridging the border: Jenny, Kulturreferentin in Frankfurt (Oder)

While bias about the Polish side continues to exist in the official administration of Frankfurt (Oder), the cultural scene acts as a binding space:

- cross-border cooperation
- digital transformations
- collaborative projects
- transactional component still existent

Events

Crossed into the
Balkans+ @ Fforst

Balkan Night

We enjoyed a night of
poetry from all around
the world and piano
music @ KUMA

Poetry Night

*We wanted to make people say:
"Oh, so this is how community
should feel like."*

being included and accepted

belonging

loved
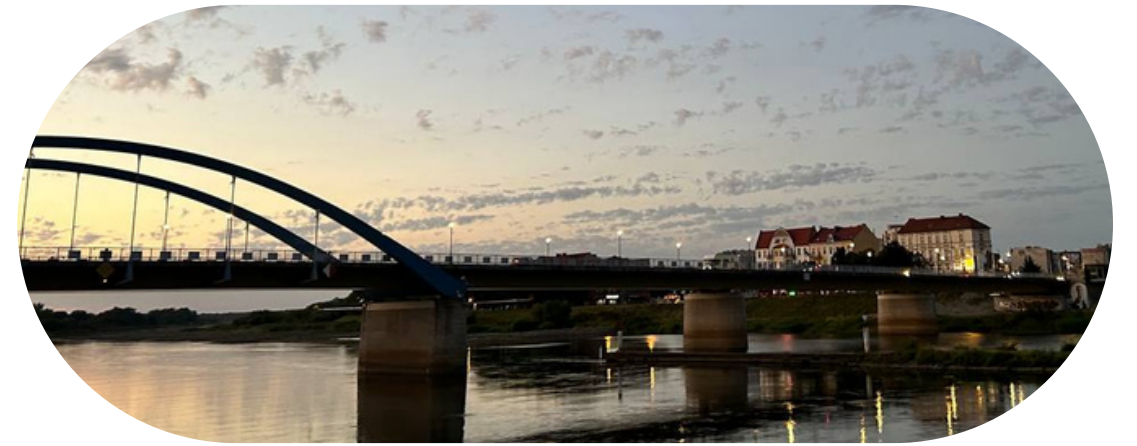
meaningful friendship

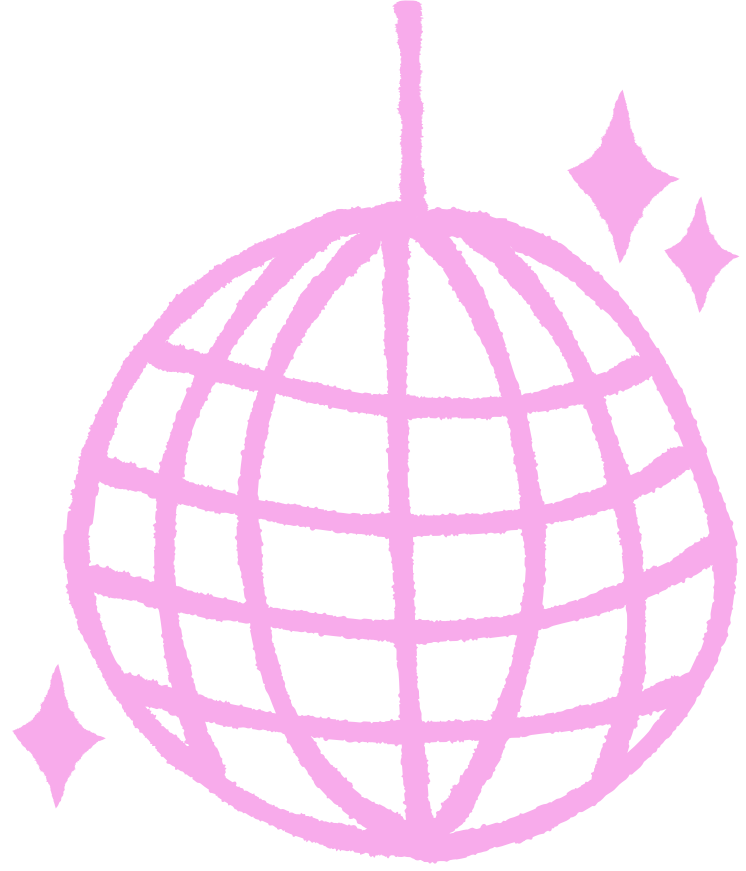emotional

relieved

relaxed

laughter

powerful

supported

care

How attached are we to the physical space?

So...what did we learn?

Biggest thank you from the Balkan Community Crew+