PDC: Peace, Dialogue, Coexistence. Designing for living together.

Call for Hosts – PDC 2026: Places

The Participatory Design Conference (PDC) 2026 invites expressions of interest in hosting PDC Places—decentralised, place-based events that will run in the months leading up to the main conference in Milan.

What are PDC Places?

PDC Places are more than satellite events. They are local, situated spaces for reflection and experimentation, engaging with questions that matter—locally and globally. We envision these Places as thresholds where critical conversations around power dynamics, decolonial practices, intersectionality, and participation unfold in rich, situated ways.

These are not only spaces for academic dialogue but spaces that emerge from the lived practices, from struggles already unfolding, from gestures of resistance and care, and from ways of knowing that do not wait for institutional recognition. These spaces are shaped by the voices, practices, and struggles of activists, practitioners, and communities who are already engaged in this work, often beyond the boundaries of academia. PDC Places aims to listen to and learn from these situated practices. PDC Places is an act of listening to what risks going unheard in the everyday refusals of the dominant order.

Our vision is to challenge extractive and centralised models of cultural and knowledge production by grounding participation in place. We aim to acknowledge and interrogate the modern, patriarchal, colonial, and anthropocentric framework embedded in design practices—including participatory design itself—and to foster plural, embodied, decolonial, non-patriarchal, and more-than-human ways of knowing and acting.

What Can a PDC Place Be?

We use "Places" as an open concept. A PDC Place might take the form of a workshop, gathering, residency, walkshop, performance, publication lab, or something completely different. What matters most is that it emerges from

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situated concerns, speaks to urgent political and ethical issues, and builds contact zones between diverse actors, whether academic or not.

Each Place should:

- Create opportunities for local, situated conversations and actions that question participation, design, and power.

- Engage actors within and beyond academia: activists, community members, artists, organisers, and practitioners.

- Foster conversations that are contra-hegemonic, grounded in grassroots, intersectional, feminist, queer, decolonial, and/or pluriversal perspectives.

- Serve as a platform for knowledge-making grounded in place, rather than as a passive site of delivery.

- Connect back to the broader PDC programme, with outcomes and reflections shared in creative and dialogical ways (cf. "Technical guidelines" section).

Themes and Questions

The 2026 Places call focuses on power, place, and the pluralities of participation. We welcome proposals that explore questions such as:

- How do we acknowledge and disrupt power relations in participatory design processes?

- How do we acknowledge and engage with conflict, dispute and negotiation in participatory design processes?

- What does it mean to participate from the margins as sites of resistance, and how do we collaborate across differences?

- How can participatory design contribute to radical re-imaginings of the past and the future, beyond modernist, extractive, or techno-centric frameworks?

- How can we learn with and from places, recognising memory, knowledge, and cultural agency as inherently situated?

Who Can Host a PDC Place?

We welcome proposals from universities, research centres, cultural institutions, grassroots organisations, collectives, or informal groups. You do not need to be a formal academic institution to propose a Place; what matters most is your commitment to collaboration, situatedness, and care.

Timeline & Support

We aim to create a distributed network of Places that will unfold in the lead-up to PDC 2026. Places may occur from December 2025 up to April 16th 2026 (the main conference in Milan will take place on June 16th-19th, 2026), and their outcomes will feed into the main event (cf. "Technical guidelines" section).

The organisers are responsible for managing registrations to their *Places* and their *Places*' budgets, but they are encouraged to keep accessibility and affordability in mind.

Interested in Hosting?

We don't imagine Places as isolated or stand-alone events. Instead, they are part of a shared and evolving constellation, and we are building a collaborative process: in the months leading up to PDC 2026, we will host online gatherings with all selected hosts and the Places chairs. These sessions will serve as spaces for mutual learning, collective reflection on the themes at stake, and building relationships across contexts. We see this as essential: a network of Places grounded in shared urgencies and plural voices, rather than disconnected contributions.

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Important dates:

- **Submission of proposals:**
  ~~Midnight, October 07h, 2025 (CET)~~
  Midnight, October 16, 2025 (CET)

- **Notification of acceptance:**
  November 2025

- **Online gatherings with all selected hosts and the Places chairs:**
  December 2025 and May 2026

- **Places' activities:**
  December 2025 - April 15th 2026

- **Conference:** June 16th-19th 2026

Technical guidelines:

PDC Places should include a written submission of no more than 4 pages, including references, following the ACM templates (see details at the end of this document). The submission should describe the vision and intention behind the proposed Place with a *Place* Description and a Practical Overview.

The **Place Description** should articulate the theoretical and ethical grounding of the initiative, drawing connections to situated experiences in specific territories. It should explain who the organisers intend to engage with, highlighting the diversity of the groups involved, and outline the dynamics they hope to foster. The description should also frame the direction of the exploration, its relevance to participatory design, and any research lineage or critical discourse that informs it. We invite proposers to reflect on the significance of their Place as a contribution to the PDC 2026 overall topics.

The **Practical Overview** should offer a summary of how the Place will unfold. This should include the number and type of encounters planned (in-person,

online, or hybrid), the expected duration, a tentative title and programme, the anticipated number and type of participants, and any relevant logistical or organisational considerations. This section should give us a clear sense of how the *Place* will take shape on a practical level, rooted in its local context. We also ask each proposal to include a preliminary reflection on how the outcomes of the *Place* might be shared during the main PDC 2026 conference in Milan. We encourage proposers to imagine creative and situated ways to tell or show what has emerged from their *Place*, be it through a light exhibition or remote conversations. These formats will be co-designed collaboratively in dialogue with the organisers, with particular care for those who may not be able to physically attend the conference. Ensuring that all Places can find ways to make their voices heard—regardless of physical presence—is a key aspect of this initiative. More details on this process will follow, but please know that joining as a PDC Place means being willing to engage in this shared conversation as part of a community of situated and committed practices.

Finally, we ask proposers to briefly address any ethical considerations, including how they will approach consent, care, and data privacy.

Proposals must be written in English, follow the ACM recommended templates below, and will be reviewed by the PDCPlaces chairs (non-blind review). The review period will run from October 7 to November 7, 2025.

- **For Microsoft Word users**:
  Please follow *the ACM instructions for preparing your submission with Word.* In the section titled **"The ACM Article Template: Using Microsoft Word"**, you will find the link to download the *Word submission template.*

- **For LaTeX users**:
  Please refer to the *ACM instructions for preparing your submission with LaTeX*. In the section titled **"The ACM Article Template: Using LaTeX"**, you will find the link to download the *LaTeX template files*.