



# Continuity of Community Projects: The role of social actions, changing dynamics and lasting impacts

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# Continuity of Community Projects: The role of social actions, changing dynamics and lasting impacts.

'What separates the shallow from depth is the continuity.' Hilario Trigo

For Alejandra, in memoriam. Thank you for teaching me what love means.  
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# ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the idea of “continuity” and its role in community projects. It seeks to critically analyse the changing dynamics of a set of community projects over time in order to understand the conditions, relational aspects of continuity and the social implications that enable some projects to have tangible effects or lasting impacts on communities. Continuity is a collaborative process involving active citizens and practitioners (students, community, artists, and architects) moving toward a collective goal. It involves a set of uninterrupted or lasting yet nonlinear actions that continue to develop over time. Continuity promotes commitment to shared actions and outcomes, which depend on collaboration, motivation, temporality, and legacy for a community project to have a long-lasting positive impact.

The way this research approach continuity is through a set of community projects that exemplify these factors as case studies (Live Projects, Blackburn Is Open, Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life, Artist House 45, City School 1, Portland Works, and Tei Community Centre) located in different contexts (UK and Europe). The thesis has identified the circumstances that define each project and its trajectory, or its start, development, and onward journey, using theoretical analysis, ethnographic and participatory methodology (with reference to the work of Petrescu, Melucci, Manzini and Rizzo, Tuckman, Forsyth, Johnston and Klandermans, Della Porta and Diani).<sup>1</sup> Each case study is categorised according to the initiators of the projects with regards to their positionality: Student-led, Community-led, Artist-led, and Architect-led.

The research posits that practitioners play a crucial role in supporting and enabling community projects by strengthening social relations that reinforce collective identity and allow collective action to thrive. These actions together with the role of practitioners or collective actors as instigators ensure continuity in a number of ways which this thesis reveals. The thesis asks the key questions: What is continuity in a community project? This question explores the trajectory of community projects through seven case studies examined in this thesis. Followed by the question, what are the factors that enable continuity? analysing the theoretical and social context, instigators, and networks that sustain continuity in community projects provides an understanding of the complex dynamics that promote continuity and take forward community projects. What social actions are related to continuity? Through exploring the different theories related to social actions— understood in this thesis as collaborative endeavours towards a change – the thesis studies their complex dynamics and

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<sup>1</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Being in Relation and Reinventing the Commons', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017).

Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, *Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process*, *CoDesign International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, (2011).

Bruce W. Tuckman and Mary Ann C. 'Stages of Small-Groups Development Revisited', *Group facilitation: a research and applications journal*, 10, (1997).

Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th edn. (Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010).

Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, *Social Movements and Culture* (UCL Press, 1995).

Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

interrelations to sustaining continuity. These questions outline the complex dynamics that support, promote continuity, and take forward community projects.

Continuity occurs when groups engage in community projects because they feel identified with the project (civic engagement) and together they build a collective identity. Throughout the process they strengthen relations (community participation), and the collective identity is well defined. When they feel identified, they share a common vision, and for that reason, they act together toward the same objective (collective action). Once they have a clear structure, the group goes from acting together toward creating a formal structure that leads to the establishment of the group in which networks and associations with other groups, institutions, and organisations are created (social movement). When they have identified their collective identity as a group, they see themselves as “we,” establishing a clear structure and sharing a collective vision that allows them to expand their networks, forming partnerships with other organisations. The continuity of community projects is sustained by a well-defined collective identity followed by a set of actions; therefore, continuity is understood as a set of related social actions that are supported by a collective identity.

The research understands the processes that enables continuity through the examples of projects and initiatives in the case studies. It identifies collective identity as the principal factor that motivates people to participate and fosters a sense of agency that allows the projects not only to continue but to thrive. The thesis contribution is about paying attention to continuity as a way of both revealing the complex dynamics and interrelations of community projects and finding ways of supporting the ongoing efforts required to nurture the possibilities and opportunities of collective agency over time.

*Keywords:* continuity, common identity, interactions, civic engagement, group dynamics, collective identity, collective action, community engagement, social movement.

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# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with continuity in community projects. **Continuity** is defined as a collaborative process involving active citizens and practitioners (students, community, artists, and architects) moving toward a collective goal. It is a process which promotes motivation and commitment to shared actions and outcomes. This process happens continuously over time or through a series of connected interventions. Continuity, which depends on collaboration, motivation, temporality, and legacy, where form of engagement, activism, advocacy, acknowledgement, provocation, appropriation, and solidarity, are decisive factor for a community project to have a positive impact. In this thesis, community is understood as a product of social relations where individuals share and identify with a cause they advocate for, allowing the creation of networks that form alliances based on similar interests. This thesis analyses a set of community projects that are understood through the lens of continuity and are presented as initiatives that attempt to empower citizens to build relations, establish networks and undertake collective action.

The research seeks to understand the changing dynamics of community projects that enable some projects to have tangible effects or lasting impacts, endure, support, and enable a common identity, be sustained, and embedded in a locale, or be imbued with a sense of continuity. It explores the relational aspects of continuity and the social implications for community projects and in doing so the factors that create and sustain community projects over time. As a contribution to knowledge, it determines continuity as a complex dynamic involving practitioners as instigators and enablers for community projects to have a lasting impact (legacy). Therefore, paying attention to continuity in community projects allows a sense of the possibilities and opportunities required to nurture collective actions, enabling collective agency over time.

The investigation is framed by three key research questions:

1. **What is continuity in a community project?** This question prompts the analysis of the trajectory of a set of community projects (their start, development, and onward journey)
2. **What are the factors that enable continuity?** In order to understand continuity, it is important to examine the theoretical and empirical conditions, social contexts, actors, instigators, support networks that sustain the different community projects studied.
3. **What social actions are related to continuity?** Through exploring the different theories related to social actions – defined as collaborative endeavours towards a change that can include, for example the reappropriation on a space or to reclaim a collective identity – the thesis studies their complex dynamics and interrelations to sustaining continuity.

The overall objective of the research is to examine and analyse the important conditions of civic engagement, collective identity, community participation, collective action, and social movement as the main social actions that promote continuity and take forward community projects. It also examines why paying attention to continuity is important and what it brings to a community. These social actions, combined with the support of practitioners as instigators and other stakeholders such as public and private institutions and organisations, lead to the re-imagination of the city through temporal and spatial appropriation bringing a collective meaning and value to it. The thesis also considers the relevance of social actions to continuity for practitioners of architecture engaged with community projects. In this context, although there is a vast literature it concentrates on community ‘participation’, which seeks to identify why people get involved in community projects, and social actions are hence not explicitly addressed as contributions to their continuity. Therefore, there is an existing gap in the architectural community practice.

In general terms, continuity can be understood as an action occurring at an uninterrupted pace or one that is steady and ongoing over time. A focus on continuity helps to identify the circumstances that define a project and its trajectory. However, continuity in community projects can be interrupted, for example, by the changing dynamics of the group, when for example conflicts occur, new members join and others leave, resulting in other members not identifying with the group. A sense of continuity can be impeded and then later be resumed. This is a nonlinear process despite the fact that the trajectory of the project, as defined, seems linear. The thesis analyses the dynamics that both enable and sustain community projects through the practitioner instigators as positionalities: Student-led, Community-led, Artist-led, and Architect-led. To do so, the thesis analyses seven case studies (which are introduced in the Project Synopsis section, p. 44 and explored throughout the thesis chapters). All these instigators play different roles within community projects.

A study of continuity, therefore, includes the origins and trajectory of community projects, the different modes of civic engagement fostered and enabled with others, including practitioners, as well as the subsequent group dynamics and practitioner interactions. To visualise how social actions are understood as collaborative endeavours towards a change. A set of social actions explored in the thesis: Civic Engagement and groups dynamics, Collective identity, Community participation, Collective action, and Social movement (figure 1) contribute to the continuity of community projects because they empower community to take agency over time. To understand how it relates to continuity, it was key to consider theories related to feminist activism, community, and common identity, the role of practitioners to understand continuity as a nonlinear process.

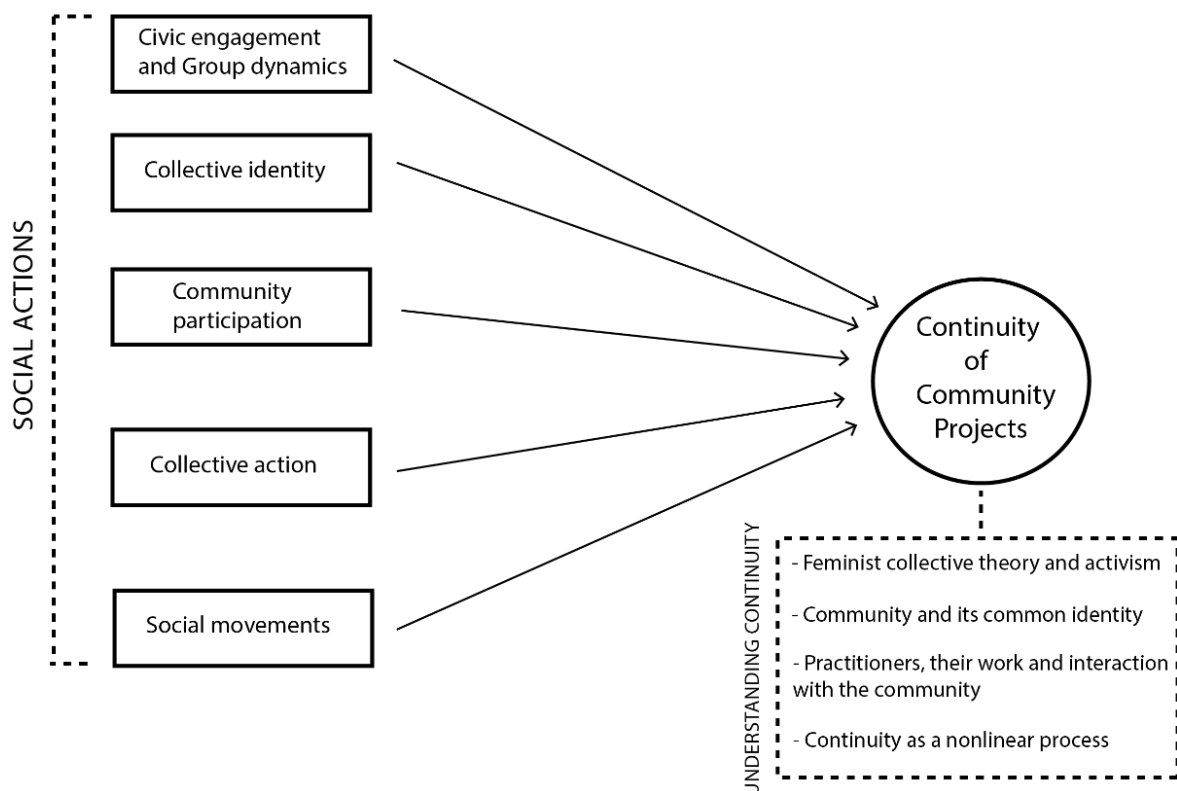


Figure 1. Conceptual and theoretical framework, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In order to understand the relational aspects of continuity and the social implications for community projects, identifying the existing literature related to architectural community practice such as feminist theory, and sociology was critical to build an understanding of the complex dynamics that sustain community projects over time. These theories (referring to the work of Petrescu, Melucci, Manzini and Rizzo, Tuckman, Forsyth, Johnston and Klandermans, Della Porta and Diani) include explorations and analyses of modes of civic engagement and group dynamics (figure 1).

A combination of social actions can trigger continuity for example, when groups get engaged in community projects (civic engagement and group dynamics) because they feel identified with the projects and together, they build a collective identity over time. Throughout the process they strengthen relations (community participation), and the collective identity gradually defined. When a group has a collective identity, they share a common vision and for that reason they are motivated to act together toward the same objective (collective action). Once they have a clear structure, the group goes from acting together toward creating a formal structure that leads to the establishment of the group by building a solid foundation that allows the group to develop a set of norms and roles and establish relationships with other groups.<sup>2</sup>

The research seeks to explore what continuity means in a community project, the factors that lead to continuity and the social actions that are related to it. Therefore, a collection of different interrelated theories is identified to build a foundation on which the research is set. These theories (referring to the work of Capra, Trogal, Lefebvre, Gehl, Petrescu, Schneider, Manzini and Rizzo)<sup>3</sup> show the interrelation that exists between the theoretical framework and the focus of the research, which aims to examine the continuity of community projects through the following three questions, what is continuity in a community project? What are the factors that enable continuity? What social actions are related to continuity? Mapping the relevant existing theory helped to construct the structure of the thesis.

## Understanding Continuity

The role of social actions in creating continuity involves a strong collective identity and set of social actions mentioned in Figure 1; these actions have qualities of continuity because of the way they empower citizens to achieve a particular result that will benefit the collective toward the construction of a just society over time. As Max Webber defines, 'action is social in so far as, by virtue

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<sup>2</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Fritjof Capra, *Ecology and Community* (2009) <<https://www.ecoliteracy.org/article/ecology-and-community>> [accessed 3 December, 2022].

Kim Trogal, 'Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 147.

Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 422.

Gehl Studio and Ministerio de vivienda y urbanismo Chile, *La Dimensión Humana en el Espacio Público* (2017), p. 80.

Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 4.

Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', *Delf Architecture Theory Journal - Agency in Architecture: Reframing Criticality in Theory and Practice*, .4, (2009), 97-111. (p. 99).

Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, *Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process*, *CoDesign International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, (2011).

of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.<sup>4</sup>

Collaboration, cooperation, co-production, right to the city, appropriation of the space, and the role of practitioners as collective practices are key terms in understanding continuity in architecture community practice engaged with community projects because they act as driving forces enabling citizens to reimagine the city. Therefore, continuity is not only about the temporality of the project or a timescale in which a project is set; it is also about social networks, group dynamics and relational ties that are created through social actions that sustain community projects over time where motivation and perseverance is required for a community project to bring a legacy. Through the trajectory of the project, participants develop commitment through exploring ways of community participation and creating a sense of civic engagement, learning how to organise and manage collective resources.

For that reason, continuity is concerned not only with the social production of space (in which values and meaning are given to space) but also with care as an action that sustain continuity because is viewed as an 'activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world (our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web) so that we can live in it as well as possible.'<sup>5</sup> Besides care, in the understanding of continuity, agency plays a significant role in creating a supportive network for continuity because it suggests 'power and freedom to act for oneself, but [...] it also involves the ability to act on behalf of others, bringing responsibility.' Thus, agency has the potential for a group 'to be active, engaged, and outward-looking because it implies change [...] stressing the word 'transformative' because it creates and responds to shifting conditions.'<sup>6</sup>

In order to define and understand continuity in community projects, this thesis looks at a set of case studies. It determines factors such as engagement, activism, advocacy, acknowledgement, provocation, appropriation, and solidarity (identified in the section Project Synopsis, p. 44) as elements that influence continuity through:

**Collaboration:** sharing knowledge (community expertise as a valuable resource) and learning through working together to accomplish a result that otherwise will be difficult to achieve in isolation are part of a mutual relationship built between a group of active citizens and practitioners, that in this thesis are defined as those who advocate and or framed their work around other people.

**Motivation:** in the continuity of community projects, motivation, which in this thesis is understood as the driving force or the reason why people participate (that could be for an individual or a group benefit) to achieve a goal, is an element of continuity that brings commitment to the project. Motivation, though, can drop along the way for many reasons (projects can stop and later resume, people leave and join at different times, project ambition demands time and effort). So, for continuity to occur, perseverance, which is understood in this thesis as achieving a goal despite difficulties, is a characteristic that needs to be nurtured in community projects because it will motivate the community to continue pursuing their collective goal. Therefore, for continuity to occur, motivation is not the only determining factor without perseverance.

**Temporality:** in community projects, the duration of a project depends on its ambition and what a group is trying to achieve or tackle. Community projects can be interrupted and resumed due to changes in group dynamics, which affects the structure of a group, leading to a project shift in the

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<sup>4</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (University of California Press, 1978), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring', in *Family: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, ed. by David Cheal (Routledge, 2003), p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Florian Kossak et al., *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures*, ed. by Florian Kossak, Doina Petrescu, Tatjana Schneider, Renata Tyszczyk, Stephen Walker (Routledge, 2010), p. 3.

initial intention or in another circumstance to drop motivation. It also means a project that appears to have been stopped can actually be reignited.

**Legacy:** For a community project to be considered meaningful, it needs to achieve a long-lasting impact, bringing to the community an enduring result. For example, this could be in the form of a festival that happens every year, an ongoing conversation that questions the future, the establishment of a social enterprise or a local business managed by the community, or a published work such as booklets that inform better practice and future projects for the community.

To define continuity in community projects, the theories set out below contribute to the understanding of continuity as a construction of interactions, collective endeavours, and meaning allocated to actions, including the role of practitioners. Therefore, the continuity of community projects suggests that collaboration, motivation, temporality, and legacy determine a project's long-lasting impact through form of engagement, activism, advocacy, acknowledgement, provocation, appropriation, and solidarity.

## Feminist collective theory and activism

Cooperation and collaboration have always been fundamental for human society in achieving collective or individual goals from working together. Cooperation refers to operating together through coordinated actions to achieve a desirable outcome that is not achievable in isolation. The operation could be a shared goal or for mutual benefit. So, as James Griesemer and Ayelet Shavit put it, working collectively can have a direct effect on the group structure and its member, for example, through choices of leaving or joining a group, engaging or not in groups interactions through work that could change the operation or characteristics of the group.<sup>7</sup> By recognising each other and becoming part of a 'we' (identity of the group), as Alberto Melucci states a collective goal is achievable so, even though the group have changed over time the collective vision will remain the same.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, collaboration is working together through exchange-based practices. The aim of the action performed is to achieve a shared goal. Thus, when the labour is in the context of community, it creates a sense of belonging and group identity based on trust and assurance that the group will perform actions to benefit the group.<sup>9</sup>

Feminist theory strongly advocates for the notion of care and argues against individual independence, observing that, as humans, we tend to support one another. As a consequence of it, as Kim Trogal unpacks, we build a relationship of interdependency.<sup>10</sup> For example, as Fritjof Capra mentions 'cooperation is when individuals work together to create a benefit for the entire group,' and consequently, 'nature nurtures life through communities' which means we are beings that rely on cooperation.<sup>11</sup> However, according to Michael Sampson, what sets us apart from other beings, is

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<sup>7</sup> James Griesemer and Ayelet Shavit, 'Scaffolding Individuality: Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration and Community', *Philosophical Transactions B*, 378.1872, (2023), 1-9 (p. 3).

<sup>8</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> James Griesemer and Ayelet Shavit, 'Scaffolding Individuality: Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration and Community', *Philosophical Transactions B*, 378.1872, (2023), 1-9 (p. 3).

<sup>10</sup> Kim Trogal, 'Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 147.

<sup>11</sup> Fritjof Capra, *Ecology and Community* (2009) <<https://www.ecoliteracy.org/article/ecology-and-community>> [accessed 3 December, 2022].

‘collaboration that means working with other people towards a common goal.’<sup>12</sup> According to David Boyle and Michael Harris, collaboration focuses on three particular aspects of human behaviour, which are, sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus. So, it can be argued that collaboration refers to a group of people exchanging knowledge to reach a common objective while simultaneously creating a community around their common interests. Beside cooperation and collaboration, sits co-production which means delivering an outcome in an equal and reciprocal relationship between practitioners or professionals and people or communities as David Boyle and Michael Harris mention ‘shifting the balance of power, responsibility, and resources from professionals to individuals by involving people in the delivery of their own services.’<sup>13</sup>

Feminist practice advocates for inclusivity, questioning the involvement of people in design and integrating the vision of those excluded from the design process. It looks at the community and people who are invisible to society and tells their stories to reflect on better practices to build a more integrated society. It explores civic engagement and community through spatial interventions that nurture the relationships in the community. Therefore, it invites us to re-conceptualise power and create opportunities for communities, such as restoring local economies or activating spaces to celebrate diversity.<sup>14</sup> According to Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk feminist practice seeks to build resilient communities, where “resilience” implies the ability to deal with change. These authors emphasise that feminist theory in architecture has the power to build communities moving from singular to collective practices for the appropriation of spaces giving new meanings to them, through the sustained act of resistance and mobilisation to produce a social change in the public realm.<sup>15</sup>

Helen Stratford et al. explores the role of artistic expressions in art exhibitions, events and documentaries that have the power to challenge the system through thematic discussions and critique as a mode of resistance promoted by individuals and groups in collaborative action that brings solidarity, mutual recognition and support.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the transformation and reappropriation of the space can take place through a series of actions that can take the form of a temporary installation, an exhibition or a public event as a tactic to transform and occupy spaces by identifying small-scale problems that represents the broader community. In this way, spaces are transformed into places that are inclusive and flexible and achieve not only physical but also participative transformations, generating possibilities for future projects and initiatives to emerge from participants’ involvement.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the production of space should not be limited to the state’s decisions, it should also include inhabitants and, in that way, shift the control over the people to make decisions and produce urban spaces that are accessible and occupied by its inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> It is fundamental that the space meets

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Sampson, *Defining Collaboration: Collaboration as "Human Behaviour" (Sense 1)* (2010).

<<https://michaelsampson.net/2010/05/04/collaboration-sense1/>> [accessed 3 December, 2022].

<sup>13</sup> David Boyle and Michael Harris, *The Challenge of Co-production, How Equal Partnerships Between Professionals and the Public are Crucial to Improving Public Services* (2009) <[https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/312ac8ce93a00d5973\\_3im6i6t0e.pdf](https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/312ac8ce93a00d5973_3im6i6t0e.pdf)> [accessed 4 December 2022].

<sup>14</sup> Lori A. Brown, 'Constructing the Feminist Practices Framework', in *Feminist Practices, Interdisciplinary Approaches to Woman in Architecture*, ed. by Lori A. Brown (2011), p. 1-12.

<sup>15</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, 'Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 139.

<sup>16</sup> Helen Stratford, Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, 'Form-Trans-Info: The 'Poetic' Resistance in Architecture', *Arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, 12.2, (2008), 149-158 (p. 151, 152).

<sup>17</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar) 'In Action: Searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 289.

<sup>18</sup> Supreeya Wungpatcharapon 'Making Places, Building Communities, Empowering Citizens: Participatory Slum Upgrading in Thailand', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 29. The term 'production of space' draws on Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991).



the desires and needs of its users, and for that to happen, people should play a central role in any decision that contributes to the development of urban spaces in the city.<sup>19</sup>

## Community and its common identity

Community is linked to the idea of ‘being in common’, which goes beyond the generic and restrictive term that communities recognise themselves through common rules and unifying characteristics such as language, race, or religion.<sup>20</sup> The concept of being in common is argued by Ioanni Delsante and Alessandro Zambelli ‘as places where commoners, through creative and spatial practices of co-production, are able to express their agency.’<sup>21</sup> Thus, community overlaps with the view of what is shared and has a common interest or what is accessible to everyone. Therefore, the production of space comes hand in hand with making community; they cannot be considered separately. As a consequence, practitioners (planners, designers and architects), when creating a project, need to consider the social and relational aspects of the community with the space.<sup>22</sup> According to Delsante and Zambelli, ‘reclaiming the right to the city means reclaiming the city as commons’ in which new agency and new forms of social organisation emerge, ‘making space for self-organising, experimental, creative alternatives, pitting visions of a more collective urbanity’<sup>23</sup>

Community is closely linked by relationships formed among people; people establish and maintain relationships to meet common needs. Therefore, community is a product of social relations between individuals.<sup>24</sup> Among those social relations, there is also segregation against people whose belief, gender, social status, and culture somehow seems to not fit in the community by not sharing similar characteristics with or being accepted by the majority. For instance, in a mixed cultural neighbourhood, those who are considered outsiders tend not to feel part of the place they live due to the disparity in the neighbourhood. In order to build a community as Davis Chavis and Kien Lee discuss, the sense of trust, belonging, safety and caring for each other is relevant, to having an individual and a collective sense that as part of the community individuals can influence their surroundings.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, as Krasny and Schalk mention ‘community is not a given, a readymade locatable entity; rather, community has to be produced and reproduced.’ Krasny and Schalk argue that building community is a complex process of becoming political through acting collectively, relying on transformative practices that involve sharing activities, counteracting, and connecting to come into being.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Supreeya Wungpatcharapon ‘Making Places, Building Communities, Empowering Citizens: Participatory Slum Upgrading in Thailand’, in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> Doina Petrescu, ‘Working with Uncertainty Towards a Real Public Space’, in *If you Can't Find It, Give us a Ring*, ed. by Public Works (ARTicle Press Publishers, 2006), p. 79, 80, 81.

<sup>21</sup> Ioanni Delsante and Alessandro Zambelli, ‘Architectural Agency and the Commons’, *The Journal of Architecture*, 28.1, (2023), 1-6 (p. 2).

<sup>22</sup> Doina Petrescu, ‘Working with Uncertainty Towards a Real Public Space’, in *If you Can't Find It, Give us a Ring*, ed. by Public Works (ARTicle Press Publishers, 2006), p. 79, 80, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Ioanni Delsante and Alessandro Zambelli, ‘Architectural Agency and the Commons’, *The Journal of Architecture*, 28.1, (2023), 1-6 (p. 3,4).

<sup>24</sup> David M. Chavis & Kien Lee, *What Is Community Anyway?* (2015) <[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what\\_is\\_community\\_anyway#](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what_is_community_anyway#)> [accessed 18 October, 2019].

<sup>25</sup> David M. Chavis & Kien Lee, *What Is Community Anyway?* (2015) <[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what\\_is\\_community\\_anyway#](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what_is_community_anyway#)> [accessed 18 October, 2019].

<sup>26</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, ‘Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities’, in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 140, 141.

Doina Petrescu in her work 'Community and Space for it', suggest that the term community tends to be defined in a generic way and not distinguished as a concept. Her understanding of community is introduced through time and space, as well as the relationships created between individuals, the act of being and sharing commonalities suggesting that the notion of community is linked with the politics of space. The term community in socio-politics overlaps with the view of what is "public." This generic understanding of community is related to what is accessible, public or of the common interest for people, leaving behind the idea of how space is socially constructed and used. In the production of space, there are still gaps in identifying what is the social relation between the user with the space, this understanding will provide a better notion of how to transform the user's needs into a brief and a proposal that will fulfil and fit accordingly with the lifestyle of multiple users allowing more inclusive space across cities.<sup>27</sup> This might sound challenging, as most public spaces tend to be located in privileged areas as deprived areas tend to be excluded from a government's masterplan. As a result, citizens might organise themselves into groups in an effort to transform their environment, as Krasny and Schalk mention 'united in a common political struggle of opposition to forms of domination that are not only pervasive but systemic.'<sup>28</sup>

As an example from a community that demonstrated an ability to create networks through shared experience, the work of *Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée* (AAA) developed in the La Chapelle neighbourhood in Paris with the support and collaboration of architects, artists, urban planners, landscape designers, students, and residents, conducted research that delineated a participatory urban action for the neighbourhood that consisted in the re-appropriation and reinvention of public space through collective activities such as gardening, cooking and debating. These day-to-day activities in an urban context created a network of self-managed or, better put, "group-managed" places by encouraging residents to take ownership of urban spaces and transforming them into "open-air hubs" for social activities.<sup>29</sup> It can be argued then that a community is a group of people that take active ownership: they share and feel identified with a common interest, concern, and vision for the future of the space they share and live in.

Community activities help residents re-imagine the neighbourhood they would like to see in the future. In order to seek changes, the effort to transform and create inclusive, open space has to be undertaken collectively. Groups formed in different communities could satisfy collective needs or members' interests in pursuing different goals. A group or organisation, either small or large, can work together to fulfil a common collective interest.<sup>30</sup> Many groups act informally or voluntarily, and they have taken action and mobilised to revitalise public spaces in response to the lack of management by the local government. As a response to the management slippage, groups started to emerge to revitalise and maintain public spaces.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, 'Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 140.

<sup>29</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Zofia Lapniewska, '(Re)claiming Space by Urban Commons', *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 49.1, (2017), 54, 66 (p. 49).

<sup>31</sup> Sheila R. Foster, 'Collective Action and the Urban Commons', *Notre Dame Law Review*, 87.57, (2001), 57, 133 (p. 96, 97).

## Practitioners, their work, and interaction with the community

The right to the city is more than merely access to urban facilities, resources, and fundamental human rights. It is a new way of thinking that empowers citizens to reshape the city according to their reimagined ways of living through the right to participation and civic engagement. As theorists such as Henri Lefebvre have long stated, every citizen has the right to be involved in the production of space.<sup>32</sup> Through the appropriation of the space the right to the city is exercised because the desires, needs and meaning people give to the space are taken into consideration. The production of space thus also refers to the way practitioners and designers of the space operate. As Lefebvre suggests, they should evoke community participation, work with people, and engage them in practices that include people in the design process, be activist and stand for what will be better for the community:

‘The transformation of society presupposes a collective ownership and management of space founded on the permanent participation of the “interested parties,” with their multiple, varied and even contradictory interests [...] It is a matter of producing the space of the human species—the collective (generic) work of the species—to create (produce) a planet-wide space as the social foundation of a transformed everyday life’<sup>33</sup>

In order to understand the production of space it is important to go beyond the physical construction of the buildings and look at citizens’ daily practices and representations that impact on and shape space. Urban production is conceived—alongside the policies, the development plans and political decision-making—by the activity of inhabitants through their everyday practices and common uses of the space. However, the appropriation of the space is linked to the desire to give a different meaning to the space in ways that are not necessarily connected to the users’ everyday lives. Inhabitants hence take actions to give meaning to the space by modifying the urban context. To exercise the “right to the city,” people can organise or join participatory activities that are accessible to everyone.<sup>34</sup> As Jan Gehl says in the process of building a fairer society, the integration between people of different socioeconomic position is significant in the creation of tolerance and empathetic society; the integration may result in generating new ideas and opportunities for a participative community.<sup>35</sup>

Involving different actors expands the chance for stakeholders to get involved with the resources available in civil society.<sup>36</sup> Actions such as improvised urban furniture, cleaning and gleaning are effective attempts to transform public space. Small-scale interventions add quality, strengthening existing networks and creating new relationships between participants in an effort to increase the liveliness of the place.<sup>37</sup> Gehl argues that involving the community in developing projects helps to increase the sense of belonging and identity within the spaces.<sup>38</sup> This means people recognise the space as their own because they have been involved in creating and transforming the space according to the community’s needs. It is also important to consider the time scales and maintenance of the

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<sup>32</sup> Chendan Yan, *Who Owns the ‘Right to the City’? Moving Towards Urban Inclusivity* (2016).

<<https://resources.environment.yale.edu/blog/2016/06/who-owns-the-right-to-the-city-moving-towards-urban-inclusivity/>> [accessed 14 April, 2021].

<sup>33</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 422.

<sup>34</sup> Mathias Lecoq, *The Right to the City: An Emancipating Concept?* (2020) <<https://metropolitics.org/The-Right-to-the-City-An-Emancipating-Concept.html>> [accessed 20 May, 2021].

<sup>35</sup> Gehl Studio and Ministerio de vivienda y urbanismo Chile, *La Dimensión Humana en el Espacio Público* (2017), p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Gehl Studio and Ministerio de vivienda y urbanismo Chile, *La Dimensión Humana en el Espacio Público* (2017), p. 80.

<sup>37</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Gehl Studio and Ministerio de vivienda y urbanismo Chile, *La Dimensión Humana en el Espacio Público* (2017), p. 80.

space because, after a period of time, it requires the replacement or removal of elements that shaped the space (for example, urban furniture, temporary parklets, repainting murals, et.) mainly if those interventions were defined to be temporary.<sup>39</sup>

Participation and community involvement show the creativity and vitality of the community toward the imposed urban policies. Often, as Gehl describes, these community potentials are not fully explored and utilised, due to the connection between different local actors and institutions lacking integration. The link between the two parts is key in the production of space for the community.<sup>40</sup> Petrescu continues, in the effort to look at architecture and urban planning from the community perspective, initiatives must start from collective and individual action (neighbourhood associations, informal teams, self-managed organisations, et.) within the public space and not only by governmental bodies. Thus, urban development policies need to anticipate a plan from such attempts.<sup>41</sup>

In their work and interaction with the community, designers can act as enablers, supporting ongoing initiatives. They can also act as catalysts, triggering new initiatives. At the same time, the role of the practitioner can operate as a collaborator in a co-design team with the community.<sup>42</sup> For example, residents of *La Chapelle* in Paris co-produced with the support of *Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée* members, designers and students flexible tools that can be used for different purposes such as, mobile furniture that functioned as catalysts in transforming the a community garden into an urban kitchen, a media lab for mini workshops and a library. The action did not only involve building a structure or an object, but the community also built a network of inhabitants in control of the outcomes delivered in the neighbourhood.<sup>43</sup>

Practitioners can also act as activists conducting socially engaged design initiatives for the community. Therefore, they play an essential role in the process of community participation. Thus, their capacity can be extended to other roles. For example, the practitioner can also act as a facilitator in participatory approaches. Still, the role of the practitioner can be expanded to initiator for starting initiatives that involve social interactions and prompt discussions about how to take a project forward using design as a way of expression.<sup>44</sup> However, it is not only about designing or representing the community which is the architects and planner conventional way of working but to involve people in the process of collaborating and co-producing as a way of “making community” through spatial interventions. As Petrescu says, ‘It is a performative shared experience of community.’<sup>45</sup>

For Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, a practitioner ‘is one who effects change through the empowerment of others’ thus motivating community agency.<sup>46</sup> Schneider and Till, argue that empowering others comes from a position of allowing others to step in and ‘take control over the space through tools that encourage participation ‘without being opportunistic; on the contrary, it is about being proactive instead of reactive.’<sup>47</sup> New ways of working with the community lead to a more collaborative and multidisciplinary way of doing design, which takes into consideration the user as the main figure for the project. As Vera Hale points out, the practitioner needs to make sure the design

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<sup>39</sup> Gehl Studio and Ministerio de vivienda y urbanismo Chile, *La Dimensión Humana en el Espacio Público* (2017), p. 80.

<sup>40</sup> Urbego, *Urban Pockets Reclaiming the Public in Left-over Open Spaces* (2015) p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process, *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 7. Issue 3-4: Socially Responsive Design, (2011), p. 211.

<sup>43</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process, *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 7. Issue 3-4: Socially Responsive Design, (2011), p. 211.

<sup>45</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', *Delf Architecture Theory Journal - Agency in Architecture: Reframing Criticality in Theory and Practice*, 4, (2009), 97-111. (p. 99).

<sup>47</sup> Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', *Delf Architecture Theory Journal - Agency in Architecture: Reframing Criticality in Theory and Practice*, 4, (2009), 97-111. (p. 99).

process is inclusive and accessible for the community to participate. The role of the practitioners in working with the community is to be seen as facilitators and mediators of the whole process.<sup>48</sup>

## Continuity as a nonlinear process

The continuity of community projects is motivated by shared interest, desires, and community network that grows in their trajectory to achieve a common goal. The combination of social identity, solidarity and division frames the complex spatial and temporal dynamics of the community. Thus, time and space are factors that can create conflicts, division, expectations, and experiences that intensify community solidarity.<sup>49</sup> In the process of setting and initiating a community project, crucial actors, such as practitioners, can help community groups to identify available resources such as funding, potential stakeholders, and partners to start a project or to continue with an existing project already established in the community. The “continuity” of a project is more likely to happen when the collective identity of the community is strengthened through participation, allowing the community to mobilise toward their common objective.

Social actions such as, civic engagement and group dynamics, collective identity, community participation, collective action and social movement foster continuity through relations and networking between members. Therefore, group dynamics influence continuity at two levels, “intragroup” relationship when interaction occurs within the group sharing a common identity fostering the sense of cohesion sustaining commitment over time. An intergroup relationship appears when the group builds an alliance with an institution and other groups come together to share resources and exchange information, building a solid partnership to take forward a common cause.<sup>50</sup> Thus, “continuity” links multiple actors such as individuals, groups, and organisations, and these dynamics reflect the constant changes a group undergoes and the different directions a community project can take. As Henry Jenkins mentions ‘unlike a path which implies one direction and one possibility, a trajectory suggests a general directionality with several possibilities and several start, interim and endpoints.’<sup>51</sup>

As an example of co-production, *Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée* (AAA) established R-Urban with local partners (researchers, students, residents, and local authorities). The project was initiated in 2008 and consisted in locating resilience hubs within Colombe’s neighbourhood in Paris. These hubs provided physical infrastructure for residents involved in resilience practices such as urban agriculture, waste recycling, ecological pedagogy, and local food distribution, creating a social network and a circular local economy. By 2013 two hubs (Recyclab) were built in Colombes, and in 2018 another hub (Agrocité) was set in Gennevilliers, and two more hubs were built in Bagneux. As a result, the implementation of R-Urban strategy took seven years.<sup>52</sup> The term resilience was used in R-Urban strategy to reflect the activities and practices that take place collectively in those spaces, over time.

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<sup>48</sup> Vera Hale, *Transdisciplinary Urbanism and Culture: From Pedagogy to Praxis*, ed. by Quazi Mahtab Zaman, Igea Troiani (The Urban Book Series, 2018), p. 162.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Kenyon, Time, Temporality and the Dynamics of Community, *Time & Society Sage Journals*, (2000), p.27.

<sup>50</sup> Melissa M. Teo and Martin Loosemore, Community-based Protest against Construction Projects: A Case Study of Movement Continuity, *Construction Management and Economics*, 29.2, (2011), 131-144. p. 218, 219.

<sup>51</sup> Henry Jenkins, Sangita Shresthova, Anna van Someren and Clement Chau, *Defining Trajectories from Cultural Participation to Political Action* (2022) <<https://sites.google.com/site/participatorydemocracyproject/community-trajectories?authuser=0>> [accessed 12 November, 2022].

<sup>52</sup> R-Urban / Networks of civic resilience, dir. by Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée (Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, 2021).

Broadly, the term resilience is linked to adaptation, which leads to finding strategies for mitigating an experience that is considered challenging. However, AAA adopted the term “resilience” as resourcefulness to empower the community in focusing on agency and encouraging citizens to be active. At the same time, assuming responsibility for the local economy of the neighbourhood is a way of relying less on local authorities, building a more resilient community.<sup>53</sup> In the project R-Urban resilience is linked with the idea of groups that challenges the dominant societal structure becoming active citizens and mobilising toward a common good.<sup>54</sup> For AAA, the notion of resilience has embedded in it complex spatial and temporal dynamics of continuity.

Self-organised citizens act as active agents in their community, interacting between them and organising themselves into group to carry out actions that will benefit the community in which they live. They are group of citizens that interact and reach agreements with other actors such as the local government, organisations, and institutions to build alliance, find support and exchange knowledge for future decision-making.<sup>55</sup> R-Urban enabled citizens to strengthen the existing social capital in the neighbourhood through participating in events and training programmes, allowing them to develop future activities to support and manage the hubs. As Petrescu, Constantin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac argues, ‘citizens are thus not only participants but also agents of innovation and change.’<sup>56</sup> Citizens run the hubs, generating services and products that are commercialised at the local level, generating income that is reinvested into the hub. The functions of the hubs were not pre-established, it emerged according to available skills making it flexible and adaptable. Therefore, specific goods and services generated different networks of people that recognised an opportunity in the idea of self-management and collective social organisation.<sup>57</sup> R-Urban intends to extend the hubs as the strategy was conceived to be replicated in other areas of Paris. In its trajectory, the R-Urban model allows citizens to develop the skills and capacities to enable the continuity of the initiative.<sup>58</sup>

## Social Actions and its Relationship with Continuity

The creation of the space must carry a collective meaning; therefore, citizen’s needs and desires add value to the space because it carries a collective identity defined by its inhabitants through the right to participation in the production of space. The production of space starts when people reclaim, care, transform and reappropriate the space for a collective good. In order to reclaim space, citizens should have the agency to act collectively, challenging the imposed system and, in that way, exercising the right to the city. The following theories are tied to the idea that citizens, with the help of practitioners of the built environment, act as activists to bring social change to the city through civic engagement and groups dynamics, collective identity, community participation, collective action, and

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<sup>53</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac, 'Co-producing Commons-based Resilience: Lessons from R-Urban', *Building Research & Information*, 44.7, (2016), 717-736 (p. 718).

<sup>54</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac, 'Co-producing Commons-based Resilience: Lessons from R-Urban', *Building Research & Information*, 44.7, (2016), 717-736 (p. 718).

<sup>55</sup> Elisabeth Schauppenlehner-Kloyber and Marianne Penker, Between Participation and Collective Action—From Occasional Liaisons towards Long-Term Co-Management for Urban Resilience, *Urban Resilience and Urban Sustainability: From Research to Practice*, (2016), p. 5, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac, 'Co-producing Commons-based Resilience: Lessons from R-Urban', *Building Research & Information*, 44.7, (2016), 717-736 (p. 772).

<sup>57</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac, 'Co-producing Commons-based Resilience: Lessons from R-Urban', *Building Research & Information*, 44.7, (2016), 717-736 (p. 725, 728).

<sup>58</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac, 'Co-producing Commons-based Resilience: Lessons from R-Urban', *Building Research & Information*, 44.7, (2016), 717-736 (p. 730).

social movements, which in turn contributes to continuity that occurs in pushing forward a community project.

## Civic Engagement and Group Dynamics

Civic engagement is related to the participation of citizens across their community to address issues and improve community life for a promising future.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, civic engagement has multiple definitions. According to Richard Adler and Judy Goggin, the definition of the term has been linked to specific realms and activities limiting the term to community or volunteering service. They mention civic engagement as community service in which the interested party, individual or group participate in voluntary works that strengthen community life. On the other hand, civic engagement can also be understood as collective action, referring to activities taken collectively by community members in collaboration with other organisations. Adler and Goggin argue that civic engagement can also take the form of political involvement in which activities, apart from being collective, also involve government action in addressing issues in the community.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, Adler and Goggin add civic engagement is recognised as a route to social change, as Thomas Ehrlich states 'working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make the difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.'<sup>61</sup>

For example, South African cities faced issues of rapid urbanisation due to socio-political transformations brought by the fall of segregation policies at the beginning of the twentieth century that prevented black Africans from settling in cities permanently. In the early 1980s, despite political enforcement, people moved to the periphery of cities, and authorities opposed it through forced relocation to homelands and evictions from such illegal occupation. In 1986, the enforcement of influx to the city was rescinded, and the flow of black Africans from rural areas to the cities accelerated, and, with this, the rise of informal settlement gained expansion.<sup>62</sup> Slovo Park, an informal settlement in Johannesburg situated in Region G, where over 1.600 households were established in the area in the early 1990s to seek job opportunities in the city. The land in which the settlement was built is publicly owned, and according to the City of Johannesburg's Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF), Slovo Park is in the category of informal settlement formalisation, which consists of upgrading the settlement and being recognised as part of the City of Johannesburg.<sup>63</sup>

A decade ago, Slovo Park residents established the Slovo Park Community Development Forum (SPCDF), a community group that has been formally enquiring about the implementation of a housing project that has been part of the government plan since 1994. Since then, the government's plan to upgrade the settlement has been delayed, resulting in non-progress regarding the

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<sup>59</sup> Richard P. Adler, Judy Goggin 'What Do We Mean by Civic Engagement', *Journal of Transformative Education*, (2005), p. 236.

<sup>60</sup> Richard P. Adler, Judy Goggin 'What Do We Mean by Civic Engagement', *Journal of Transformative Education*, (2005), p.238, 239.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (American Council on Education Series on Higher Education ORYX Press, 2000), p.vi.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Barry, 'Formalising Informal Land Rights: The case of Marconi Beam to Joe Slovo Park', *Habitat International*, 30.3, (2006), 628-644 (p. 629).

<sup>63</sup> Kate Tissington, 'Toward Greater Community Participation in Informal Settlement Upgrading: A Case Study from Slovo Park, Johannesburg', *GGLN State of Local Governance Report*, (2012), 50-61 (p. 50).

development of the settlement despite political promises and resources allocated.<sup>64</sup> Even though several studies have been conducted in the settlement, there is no official housing development in the area, and the SPCDF continues to deal with governmental processes to push their petition for development.<sup>65</sup> In the effort to support the Community Development Forum, 'Slovo Park Project' began as a studio project in the architecture course at the University of Pretoria in 2010, as an activity for masters students to experience an alternative way of practising architectural design that is socially engaged, while critically researching and producing design proposals for Slovo Park's community.<sup>66</sup>

The project involved the construction of a community hall for the existing community forum (SPCDF) to have a covered civic space to meet and continue outlining strategies toward the recognition as a formal settlement to get access to urban infrastructure in the City of Johannesburg, right that they have been fighting since the early 1990s.<sup>67</sup> In partnership with the SPCDF, master students that later established 1to1 Agency of Engagement, a social enterprise that focuses on actions that guide and develop strategies at the grassroots level to address spatial justice in South African cities, identified the organisational structure of the settlement and the existing social capital, for example, the community development forum, the housing committee, and the youth forum.<sup>68</sup> Besides a physical interventions, the project focuses on the exiting network of residents with the aim of supporting and guiding the community's group in governmental process to claim legal tenure and access to housing.<sup>69</sup> Students who have been exposed during their academic formation as architects to the reality of the living conditions in irregular settlements, shaped 1to1 Agency of Engagement approach regarding spatial justice by reinforcing the sense of civic duty through an architectural approach that encourages participation and co-design as an alternative strategy to address justice in informal settlements.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, civic engagement contributes to continuity in enabling the development of a social network that is involved in actions that aim to address city-specific issues. As a group interested in civic activities, individuals contribute to determining strategies that can be taken into consideration to enhance their neighbourhood, for example, in applying or seeking for funding to envision a new public space or renovating a building that has a collective meaning for citizens. According to Deborah Bobek, Jonathan Zaff, et al. the construction of civic engagement includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components. In this process, the individual will become an active and engaged citizen. It means that an active individual participates in civic activities, and an engaged individual focuses on civic duties, contributing to citizenship development. However, the authors describe five factors that influence in becoming an active and engaged citizen. The factors are related to reciprocity, trust, willingness to bond to others, the ability to be involved in civil society and democracy, and the eagerness of making a positive contribution to society and participation in activities that will enhance community life.<sup>71</sup>

In addition, civic engagement involves working collaboratively instead of competitively because it seeks to rediscover life in the city for the collective welfare. Consequently, it involves group

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<sup>64</sup> Kate Tissington, 'Toward Greater Community Participation in Informal Settlement Upgrading: A Case Study from Slovo Park, Johannesburg', *GGLN State of Local Governance Report*, (2012), 50-61 (p. 50, 51, 53)

<sup>65</sup> Kate Tissington, 'Toward Greater Community Participation in Informal Settlement Upgrading: A Case Study from Slovo Park, Johannesburg', *GGLN State of Local Governance Report*, , (2012), 50-61 (p. 55)

<sup>66</sup> 1to1 Agency of Engagement, *Slovo Park Hall 2010* (2023) <<https://1to1.org.za/portfolio/slovo-hall/>> [accessed 18 February, 2023].

<sup>67</sup> Waterborne, *a Moment Captured in Hope*, dir. by Alexander Melck, Ingmar Büchner and Jhono Bennett (Wessel Van Huysteen and Tin Rage Productions, 2012).

<sup>68</sup> 1to1 Agency of Engagement, *Slovo Park Project – SPCDF Support* (2012) <<https://1to1.org.za/portfolio/slovo-park-project-spcdf-support/>> [accessed 18 February, 2023].

<sup>69</sup> J. Bennett, J. Casson, C. Filipe and I. Van Wyk, *Slovo Park Project, a Process of Understanding* (1to1 Agency of Engagement, 2010), p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Jhono Bennett, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Appendix E, p. 196-200.

<sup>71</sup> Deborah Bobek, Jonathan Zaff, Yibing Li, Richard M. Lerner, 'Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioural Components of Civic Action: Towards and Integrated Measure of Civic Engagement', *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, (2009), p. 616.



dynamics due to citizens constantly interacting and acting collectively. To better understand how groups build solid relationships, researcher and psychologist Bruce Tuckman proposed a theory in 1965 that examined the process of group development, explaining five stages that most groups go through over time. According to Tuckman and other psychologist and researchers such as Mary Ann Jensen and Donelson Forsyth, in the 'forming phase,' members start to meet each other and define roles. In the 'storming phase,' conflicts emerge as members discuss positions and the objective of the group. Moving toward the 'norming phase,' conflicts start to settle, and groups become more structured and organised. In the 'performing phase,' the group reaches an agreement, and they are able to perform the work. In the 'adjourning stage,' the group continues to work together until it disbands.<sup>72</sup>

Despite Tuckman's contribution, the model has been generalised beyond its original framework and does not significantly address the changes that may occur in groups. It also does not discuss failures and abilities groups experience in performing tasks before achieving success. The original model was created for a group therapy setting, which limits it in terms of applicability for professionals working in other areas. Although it is a useful theory that explains the stages of development and group behaviour in small groups, the model suggests a linear path in which not all groups will follow. Some of them could start from other stages, not exactly following a linear order and showing a cyclical process. Furthermore, proposing a single model will not fit all group settings due to each group is a unique entity and certainly cannot be compared to other groups.

Conflicts in a group tend to occur in earlier stages when its members express their differences according to their values and perspectives. For that reason, the 'storming stage' (addressed by Tuckman's theory) is a significant phase in which teams go through to find and clarify roles.<sup>73</sup> During the interaction between group members, individuals have their way of thinking, dealing with conflicts, and even the way they perform the task will be different from other members. Personal behaviours can influence others, and it can affect other member's actions. Each member is unique, and the way they perceive reality is linked to their own values, cognitive and affective processes<sup>74</sup> that open up a gap for conflicts and group collisions. In the process of reaching agreements and harmony between members, it is essential to identify potential behaviours that are causing conflicts and discuss them as a group to establish their own rules and norms to minimise negative behaviours.

To work effectively, groups need practical methods to be able to work productively. Such methods include setting up clear roles within group members assigning specific tasks to each individual, defining a feasible time frame to reach goals, deciding a way to communicate with each other, determining how and when to get in touch when needed. In reaching a goal, members may face challenges along the way; therefore, empathy is important to create a comfortable environment where everyone feels safe to express their ideas and feelings. Once teams have successfully overcome conflicts, trust develops between them, leading to a higher level of cohesion and effectiveness.<sup>75</sup>

Decision-making and problem solving are also common challenges that groups face during their interaction. It is more effective and accurate if decisions are taken as a group due to different points of view can clarify and warn of the advantages and disadvantages that the individual or the group may face, which will lead to a better decision. Groups can also make mistakes during the decision process, especially if members experience conflict, poor communication skills, lack of

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<sup>72</sup> Bruce W. Tuckman, 'Developmental Sequence in Small Groups', *Psychological Bulletin*, 63.6, (1965), p. 384. Tuckman Bruce W. and Mary Ann C., 'Stages of Small-Groups Development Revisited', *Group facilitation: a research and applications journal*, 10, (1997), p. 43-47.

Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th edn. (Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), p.19.

<sup>73</sup> Bruce W. Tuckman, 'Developmental Sequence in Small Groups', *Psychological Bulletin*, 63.6, (1965), p. 384.

<sup>74</sup> Jeffrey A. Kottler, Matt Englar-Carlson, 'Chapter 3: Understanding group dynamics and systems', in *Learning group leadership: an experiential approach*, 2nd edn. (London, Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2015), p. 58,59.

<sup>75</sup> Amanuel G. Tekleab, Narda R. Quigley and Paul E. Tesluk, 'A Longitudinal Study of Team Conflict, Conflict Management, Cohesion, and Team Effectiveness', *Group and organization management*, 34.2, (2009), p. 171.

participation, interruptions, and/or egocentric behaviours.<sup>76</sup> In many cases, group interaction and communication is closely related to the quality of the decision-making agreed by the group.<sup>77</sup>

## Leadership in group dynamics

To successfully achieve their goal and maintain group unity, most groups require a figure of a leader, a person who will coordinate and guide the group towards the set direction. Leadership is defined by the act of moving people to accomplish their goal and reach collective satisfaction<sup>78</sup> and there are many ways that leaders obtain their positions: by election, appointment, usurpation, or spontaneous emergence are the most common types.<sup>79</sup> However, some groups can achieve their objective without a defined figure of a leader (although this role is usually the first to come about in the forming process of a group). A group “without a leader” occurs when groups are small in member quantity and in which members share and divide responsibilities between them. Whereas large groups require an organised structure to reach collective goals, they rely on coordinated actions guided by a leader that keeps the team united.<sup>80</sup>

As Douglas H. Sessoms and Jack L. Stevenson mention, leadership can also be understood as a process in which members share roles and responsibilities within the group. By sharing responsibilities, the group achieves its goal collectively. In that case, leadership has occurred without a designated leader to guide them.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the role of a leader is as a facilitator who helps the team reach its goal by bringing members together and coordinating the work group. In the process of achieving a shared vision, groups face disagreements that lead to disputes between them. In that case, the role of the leader is fundamental in maintaining the group balance and encouraging members to take an active role. A leader prompts discussion and invites members to engage actively, giving everyone a voice. Therefore, civic engagement is also an action that begins from the initiative of a single individual, and it spreads to others through activities that serve the community. As a citizen, engaging with the community is a form of action to target issues of public concern and enhance the community with activities that involve volunteering, empowering individuals, and the community to raise their voices, and reinforcing community participation.<sup>82</sup>

## Collective Identity

People take action when they feel they are part of a group, as the sociologist Alain Touraine mentions ‘which enables single activists and/or organisations to regard themselves as inextricably

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<sup>76</sup> Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th edn. (Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), p. 326.

<sup>77</sup> Marshall Scott Poole and Andrea B. Hollingshead, *Theories of Small Groups: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Sage Publications, 2005), p.25.

<sup>78</sup> Douglas H. Sessoms and Jack L. Stevenson, *Leadership and Group Dynamics* (Allyn and Bacon, 1981), p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Rupert Brown, *Group Processes*, 2nd edn. (Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 91.

<sup>80</sup> Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th edn. (Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010) p. 248.

<sup>81</sup> Douglas H. Sessoms and Jack L. Stevenson, *Leadership and Group Dynamics* (Allyn and Bacon, 1981), p. 5, 6.

<sup>82</sup> Jason T. Carbone, Stephen Edward McMillin, 'Neighbourhood Collective Efficacy and Collective Action: The Role of Civic Engagement', *Journal of Community Psychology*, (2018), p. 312.

linked to other actors, not necessarily identical but surely compatible.<sup>83</sup> Touraine argues that groups act collectively due to the compatibility that exists between them in terms of aspirations and in sharing common objectives. The sense of belonging comes when members pursue the same aspirations, thoughts, values, and objectives; these three aspects are responsible for creating a social relationship between members. As the philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist Melucci claims, 'Individuals acting collectively construct their action by means of "organised" investments: they define in cognitive terms the field of possibilities and limits they perceive while at the same time activating their relationships to give a sense of the "being together" and to the goals they pursue.'<sup>84</sup>

LGBTQ community have been excluded from the built environment due to their gendered and sexual aspects throughout history, where meeting either in clandestine or gay-friendly clubs was seen as the only option to socialise. Disapproval of homosexual behaviour in society still exists even though, in some cultures, it is seen as tolerated. In the effort to resist discrimination and repressive acts of intolerance, technology (e.g., queer meeting apps and LGBTQ online groups) has played an important role in the LGBTQ community in facilitating the discovery of other people that identify themselves as part of the LGBTQ community, allowing them to reconstitute urban locations. For example, queer people move from an online space to inhabit particular locations that are seen as stable, such as gay villages and clubs and also temporary locations across the inner-city (queer carnival performances and gay parades). Events such as Pride and Mardi Gras continue to take place in gay villages, bringing people together. Therefore, how space in an urban setting is perceived closely relates to identity and social relations, especially for LGBTQ communities.<sup>85</sup>

In western society, collective identity is understood as elective, people are considered free to choose which group they would like to belong to, and that matches with their belief and values. Consequently, collective identity has been seen as an alternative explanation for understanding why people participate and what tactical choices activists make.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, collective identity can be understood when individuals recognise common interests, experiences and solidarity, creating a sense of unity shaping the "who we are," it is also an alternative answer to understanding why people participate, get involved in groups and in social actions that can involve protests, signing petitions and campaigns. For example, in 1958, in the UK, the Homosexual Law Reform Society was established, claiming that 'homosexuality, in limited circumstances, should be decriminalised' due to untenable events of imprisonment and chemical castrations men and women were facing for their sexual orientation.<sup>87</sup> In the US, rights groups were founded in 1950 to portray gay people as 'just like everyone else' with transgender celebrities such as Christine Jorgensen (1952 first known for her gender reassignment surgery) and later during the 1960s, April Ashly (dancer and activist) and the playwright and poet Maureen Duffy, leading to lesbian rights and social organisations. Still, it was in 1967 in Los Angeles that a group established themselves as 'Personal Rights in Defense and Education' (PRIDE) after an incident in a bar where the police initiated a violent raid arresting LGBTQ people. After the incident, the group created a newsletter advocating for human rights, becoming the first gay publication officially done by a movement.<sup>88</sup>

It can be argued once the collective identity is well defined, it can persist over time due to the network created among participants generating ties and building commitments with other members

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<sup>83</sup> Alain Touraine, 'The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements'. (1981) quoted in Donatella Della Porta, Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn. (Blackwell Publishing, 2006) p. 21.

<sup>84</sup> Alberto Melucci, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in *Social Movements and Culture, Protest and Contention*, ed. by Hank Jhonston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 43.

<sup>85</sup> Catherine J. Nash and Andrew Gorman-Murray, 'Digital Technology and Sexuality in Urban Space', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, ed. by Gavin Brown and Kath Browne (Routledge, 2016), p. 404, 405.

<sup>86</sup> Francesca Polletta, James M. Jasper, 'Collective Identity and Social Movements', *Annual Reviews of Sociology*. (2001), p.283.

<sup>87</sup> Matthew Todd, *Pride: The Story of the LGBTQ Equality Movement* (Welbeck Publishing Group, 2019), p. 8, 21, 22, 29.

<sup>88</sup> Matthew Todd, *Pride: The Story of the LGBTQ Equality Movement* (Welbeck Publishing Group, 2019), p. 8, 21, 22, 29.

of the group, establishing their means and their ends, which will lead to active participation due to the emotional investments of the involved providing a base for unity and continuity in an emerging group. That is, Collective identity is the core characteristic of a group to remain together and continue with the cause they advocate; for that reason, collective identity is part of a collective action structure. The interaction created among individuals will influence the individual's decision to be part of or not in a collective mobilisation. As the sociologist Alessandro Pizzorno argues, 'a social movement process is in place only when collective identity develops, which go beyond specific events and initiatives. Collective identity is strongly associated with recognition and the creation of connectedness.'<sup>89</sup> Therefore, the interaction created among individuals will influence the decision to join specific groups.

Whereas the lack of identity in a group can lead the group to disband in the future because they no longer recognise themselves as a group. This is because a movement relies on the identity of "who we are" in the decision-making process and establishing criteria defining the movement's objective.<sup>90</sup> As Melucci states, 'collective identity ensures the continuity and permanence of the movement over time; it establishes the limits of the actor with respect to its social environment. It regulates the membership of individuals and defines the requisites for joining the movement and the criteria by which its members are recognised.'<sup>91</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that collective identity shapes individual participation in a group organisation, determining the individual's association with a group, so, it is considered a public pronouncement of status and an individual announcement of affiliation and connection with other group members.<sup>92</sup> Without an collective identity, the individual does not feel committed to pursuing a cause collectively because the sense of belonging to the group is unclear.

## Community Participation

Participation allows citizens to make decisions in the production of space that leads to the right to access, occupy, use, and potentially create new spaces that meet people's needs. For example, through co-design and collaboration with other actors, that advocates for the production of space to be inclusive. In his book *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre discusses citizens' participation in the use and production of space and considers participation as an action to transform and renew the city in which its inhabitants actively take part in the decision-making process toward a just society.<sup>93</sup> In the 1960s social movements initiatives in Western countries against the lack of planned urban zones played an important role in protesting against 'the inhospitality of the cities' and to raise concerns about the lack of planned urban development, quality and cost of housing, public transport, among other public services and the limited opportunity to participate in the design of the city.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Alessandro Pizzorno, 'Mutamenti Istituzioni e Sviluppo dei Partiti.' (1996) quoted in Donatella Della Porta, Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn. (Blackwell Publishing, 2006) p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> Melucci Alberto, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in *Social Movements and Culture, Protest and Contention*, ed. by Hank Jhonston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 43.

<sup>91</sup> Melucci Alberto, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in *Social Movements and Culture, Protest and Contention*, ed. by Hank Jhonston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 49.

<sup>92</sup> Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam, 'Collective Identity and Activism, Network Choices and the Life of Social a Movements ', in *Frontiers in Social Movements Theory*, ed. by Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (1992), p. 157.

<sup>93</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 421, 422.

<sup>94</sup> Lee Stickells, 'The Right to The City: Rethinking Architecture's Social Significance', *Journal Architectural Theory Review*, (2011), (p. 215).

In a participatory process, people are voluntarily involved meaning participation cannot be implied or forced. Therefore, participation is intrinsically linked with collective identity because people need to feel identified with the project, initiative, or cause to feel motivated to participate. On the other hand, participation can vary over time in terms of how often people are engaged in community projects, affecting the structure of a group, where resilience is one of its main characteristics, showing adaptability to change. In community participation, continuity can be seen as collaboration in which people share knowledge and experiences with practitioners and other stakeholders. For continuity to occur, commitment must be consistent within solid social relationship to sustain people's participation.

As an example of collaboration between practitioners and citizens, the project ECObox (led by AAA, *Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée*), allowed residents from *La Chapelle* in Paris to temporarily reappropriated a vacant plot transforming it into a self-managed space, adding meaning to it through 'actions' that involve trespassing boundaries on how space is accessed in neighbourhoods through proposing activities that are not included in urban regulations (such as gardening, recycling, and cooking). On the other hand, negotiating space is linked with temporality, and it means the project (as was the case of ECObox) is expected to last a specific period, but what made ECObox sustainable over time was its movable characteristic when the land is no longer available, allowing users to follow the project by reinstalling it within the same area. In this way, the project has constantly questioned and revised governance rules, with new users joining at each location.<sup>95</sup>

People's involvement and participation are linked with civic engagement and the sense of contributing toward a just society, both either to fulfil an individual satisfaction or collective goal. In order for participation to take place, a collaborative relationship is established between a diverse range of actors such as, government institutions, individual housing, urban users (citizens), community-based organisations, private enterprises, and non-governmental organisations. The level of participation is reached when citizens have control over their decisions.<sup>96</sup> As Jonida Meniku points out, the power is distributed through negotiations between citizens and power holders, thus planning and decision-making are shared. Partnership is more effective when citizens are organised into groups, have a leader and a committee responsible for managing the financial resources. Ideally, participation is when citizens have control over their decisions and are in charge of negotiating with others to ensure that the outcome of the plan meets their requirements.<sup>97</sup>

In some cases, the theory and the practice does not always coincide and in which participation is seen as an invitation to citizens to express their opinions and comments without actually getting involved in the elaboration of the plan and the implementation of the design.<sup>98</sup> According to social worker Sherry Arnstein in these scenarios, decision-making tends to be a manipulative activity in which people do not get involved and enables advisory committees to persuade and advise them. Other ways which are not considered participation is when the information from officials to citizens are one-way flow. This degree of tokenism frequently occurs when the information is delivered at a later stage in the planning programme, leaving people with no opportunity to influence the programme for their benefit. However, inviting citizens to express their opinion is a step toward participation but if the consultation is not combined with other participation methods it is not a legitimate step due to there is no assurance that citizens' concerns and ideas will be considered.<sup>99</sup>

In practice participation tends to be "manipulative" or it often takes the form of an activity for "extracting" knowledge from people known as consultation. In these two scenarios, participation only occurs in a one-way direction. Alternatively, co-design and co-production is a participatory

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<sup>95</sup> Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, 'Tactics for a Transgressive Practice', *Architectural Design*, 83.6, (2013), 1-136 (p. 60, 61).

<sup>96</sup> Jonida Meniku, 'Promoting Community Participation in Peri -Urban Infrastructures', *D Design 2012/DOOEL*, (2016), (p. 1).

<sup>97</sup> Jonida Meniku, 'Promoting Community Participation in Peri -Urban Infrastructures', *D Design 2012/DOOEL*, (2016), (p. 1).

<sup>98</sup> Jonida Meniku, 'Promoting Community Participation in Peri -Urban Infrastructures', *D Design 2012/DOOEL*, (2016), (p. 1).

<sup>99</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35.4, (1969), (p. 217 - 224).

engagement, designers and citizens work together to develop a design proposal. As Maria Eggertsen Teder argues 'in this interaction, a sense of partnership should be established from the beginning.'<sup>100</sup> Designers and non-designers have to lay the foundation for co-creation. Therefore, Maria Foverskov and Kristina Dam argue, 'the professional designer may be the most competent person at the drawing table, but in co-design, sketching has to take place in collaboration between designers and non-designers'.<sup>101</sup> Both citizens and professionals become equal in the decision-making from the beginning of the project to its completion.

For that reason, from the perspective of the practitioner, community is seen as the experts in the area they live in, this relationship helps the practitioners to understand the context of the area, adding a layer of depth to the analysis of the site. Therefore, in collaboration with the community, practitioners can identify the available resources and, with that in hand, work on a project that is designed based on the community's expertise and knowledge. For example, the modular garden (ECObox) promoted forms of association based on exchange and reciprocity rather than focusing on the architectural design of the space. In that way, the project considered social relationships the main factor in shaping a common space. Although ECObox was made of recycled materials that were easy to assemble and dismantle, it gave residents the perspective of what they could achieve in terms of building a space for the community with accessible and cheap devices, offering a platform for urban encounters, building a community around activities such as gardening and compost making.<sup>102</sup>

This approach maintains a certain autonomy in the negotiation process with private and public bodies. However, it also has its risks, as Petrescu highlights 'when everything depends on the presence of all involved. Sometimes this presence is conflictual, for people's desires change along the way, and one should learn how to deal with tension, contradictions, oppositions, and failures [...]'<sup>103</sup> A participative structure does not always imply mutual agreements, sometimes it has to be revised and started over if necessary.<sup>104</sup> Following Petrescu's argument about tensions that might occur in community participation, Fabrizia Buono, Kalliope Padiaditi and Gerrit Carsjens argue public meetings help clarify misunderstandings about roles and objectives among participants. On the other hand, as a challenge in participative processes, the lack of community engagement or loss of interest is prevalent; apathy is the factor that affects participation, and people only get involved if the issue affecting their community is relevant to them. Another barrier is inappropriate participation procedures and ineffective information, resulting in a lack of engagement and a loss of participants' motivation.<sup>105</sup> Adding to Buono, Padiaditi and Carsjens' argument on participative processes, community participation is dynamic in which people are involved at different times and can adopt various roles. For example, participation could be voluntary: a person actively participates because of a strong sense of civic engagement attached to the duty of feeling valuable in society. It could be short-term participation: a person committed to a project for a determined period in which their engagement is constant or sporadic. It could be a longer commitment: a person involved in the decision-making process and actively engaged in an initiative; here, a potential community leader could emerge.

Hence, when developing a participatory approach, it is necessary to identify and define the objectives and use the appropriate method to achieve an effective result. Such purposes could include generating ideas, identifying attitudes, disseminating information, identifying conflicts, measuring

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<sup>100</sup> Maria Eggertsen Teder, 'Placemaking as Co-Creation – Professional Roles and Attitudes in Practice', *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 15.4, (2018), (p. 291).

<sup>101</sup> Maria Foverskov and Kristina Dam, 'The Evocative Sketch', in *Rehearsing the Future*, ed. by Joachim Halse, Eva Brandt, Brendon Clark and Thomas Binder (2010), p. 44.

<sup>102</sup> Karin Bradley, 'Open-Source Urbanism: Creating, Multiplying and Managing Urban Commons', *Footprint*, 11.16, (2015), 91-108 (p. 98).

<sup>103</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Losing Control, Keeping Desire', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, 1st edn. (London Spon Press, 2005) p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Losing Control, Keeping Desire', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, 1st edn. (London Spon Press, 2005) p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> Fabrizia Buono, Kalliope Padiaditi and Gerrit J. Carsjens, 'Local Community Participation in Italian National Parks Management: Theory Versus Practice', *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 14.4, (2012), (p. 202, 204).

opinion, reviewing a proposal, or as a method to express desires and views for the future.<sup>106</sup> Possibilities may vary according to the issues the community is facing. For example, Buono, Padiaditi and Carsjens in their study that involved local residents' participation in the management of the Italian National Park, highlights people involved in the participatory activities identified that participation is an opportunity to share values, build trust, mitigate conflicts, and reach a general agreement for the benefits of the community.<sup>107</sup> That is to say, continuity is linked with the theory of community participation because it occurs when power is distributed evenly through negotiations between citizens and power holders to give citizens agency in planning and making decisions that involve design processes in urban settings—switching positions of typical top-down approaches to grassroots initiatives.

## Collective Action

Collective actions involve groups of individuals linked by similar values, aspirations, principles, experiences, and memories. The individual feels identified with the group pursuing the same common goal. As Melucci argues 'collective action is a set of social practices involving simultaneously a number of individual groups, exhibiting similar morphological characteristics in contiguity of time and space, implying a social field of relationships and the capacity of the people involved of making sense of what they are doing.'<sup>108</sup> Therefore, collective actions are complex processes of interactions and not just a simple expression of irrationality. Thus, Melucci continues 'there is a logic in relational structures, the presence of decision-making mechanisms, the setting of goals, the circulation of information, the calculation of outcomes, the accumulation of experience, and learning from the past.'<sup>109</sup> For example, in shantytowns in Buenos Aires, various groups of residents emerged that sought to solve urgent collective necessities. Most groups were formed and stayed united while reaching an agreement to target a collective issue. Over time, stable groups such as neighbourhood committees emerged.<sup>110</sup> It is usual that in shantytowns, facilities such as schools, nurseries, public water taps, and street lighting, among other infrastructures, are funded through football matches or public events. However, building efforts relied on negotiation with local authorities to acquire materials, machinery, and technical support to build schools and nursery facilities. These facilities, most of the time, relied on residents' unpaid labour with the support of volunteer professionals and the paid city council's staff.<sup>111</sup>

The construction of collective identity is crucial for collective action to thrive and for continuity to arise. Once a group establishes their collective identity, they consolidate a solid structure within their network to act together toward a desired change in its neighbourhood. A group act together once they have defined its collective identity and a set of joint objectives. Even though collective action arises deliberately, cooperation between members or any other group facilitates collaboration to achieve a shared interest.<sup>112</sup> As the social psychologists and researchers, Roderick Kramer, Marylenn

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<sup>106</sup> Henry Sanoff, *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning* (John Wiley & Sons, 2000), p. 11.

<sup>107</sup> Fabrizia Buono, Kalliope Padiaditi and Gerrit J. Carsjens, 'Local Community Participation in Italian National Parks Management: Theory Versus Practice', *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 14.4, (2012), (p. 202, 204).

<sup>108</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 20.

<sup>109</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 17.

<sup>110</sup> Adriana L. Massida, 'Villas, Residentes Villeros y Planes Estatales de "Erradicación": Transformaciones Urbanas en Buenos Aires Durante 1959-1976', *1er Encuentro Nacional de Arquitectura Comunitaria, Tucuman – Argentina*, (2013), 1-11 (p. 2).

<sup>111</sup> Adriana L. Massida, 'Utopian Visions for Buenos Aires Shantytowns: Collective Imaginaries of Housing Rights, Upgrading and Eviction (1956–2013)', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 37.2, (2018), 144–159 (p. 148, 149).

<sup>112</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 92.

Brewer and Benjamin Hanna argue, 'although most people recognise that failure to cooperate with others can lead to collectively undesirable outcomes, they also realise that isolated acts of cooperation are not likely to have much impact on the collective action.'<sup>113</sup> For that reason, to support each other, members' actions should be voluntary to distinguish from hired labour. Contributions from members can take several forms, such as money, labour, an in-kind donation such as food or any other material assistance.<sup>114</sup>

In Brazil specifically in cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, informal settlements known as favelas identify themselves with the motto "We for Us". The term is used for residents to describe the urban collective actions undertaken in the area as a response to the absence of public policies to supply services to the settlement. As a reaction to the unstable state's support in the periphery areas, community organisations act collectively to compensate for the local government's omission to meet residents' needs regarding protection and rights for the well-being of the population.<sup>115</sup>

Neighbourhood based mobilisations are common in disadvantaged communities to protest inequalities and lack of opportunities for effective democratic voice.<sup>116</sup> Even though, neighbourhood association groups were forbidden during the dictatorship period (between 1964-1984), neighbourhood groups, specifically in the favela Rocinha, resumed their work in 1997 with a group of women that campaigned for access to formal sanitation infrastructure and education for their children. The settlement emerged during the 1900s after the slavery abolition (1888), with the first lands occupied by low-income families in 1920. In the same year, the first streets outlined the settlement and later, in 1993, the settlement was officially recognised as a neighbourhood.<sup>117</sup>

The presence of community solidarity groups in the Rocinha has been politically interceding and operating in the neighbourhood since 1961, with the first association being established as 'Pro-Improvement Union of Rocinha Residents' *União Pró-Melhoramentos dos Moradores da Rocinha (UPMMR)*.<sup>118</sup> Women worked collaboratively and established thirteen nurseries in the area with the help of NGOs that support the development of marginalised areas. To continue with children's education, the group sought to establish teaching training courses to fill the existing gap in public education in the settlement.<sup>119</sup>

Therefore, collective action is easy to identify when there is a clear-defined group, allowing members to recognise other members' roles within the group. Similarly, in some instances, collective action groups are not necessarily well defined by specific boundaries set. Hence, some people might participate once or twice, not knowing who is involved but identifying with the action.<sup>120</sup> Ruth Meizen-Dick, Monica DiGregorio and Nancy McCarthy explain, 'neighbourhood clean-up activities may be done periodically without clearly defining who is in the neighbourhood. Thus, there is a grey area between organised and bounded collective action and action within an amorphous social

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<sup>113</sup> Roderick M. Kramer, Marilyn B. Brewer and Benjamin A. Hanna, *Trust in Organizations, Frontiers of Theory and Research*, ed. by Roderick M. Kramer and Tom R. Tyler (SAGE Publications, 1996) p. 358.

<sup>114</sup> Ruth Meizen-Dick, Monica DiGregorio and Nancy McCarthy, 'Methods for Studying Collective Action in Rural Development', *Agricultural Systems*, (2004) p. 200.

<sup>115</sup> Sonia Fleury, 'We for Us: Collective Action in the Favelas During the Pandemic', in *Equity in Health and Health Promotion in Urban Areas Multidisciplinary Interventions at International and National Level*, ed. by Alessandra Battisti, Maurizio Marceca, Giuseppe Ricotta, Silvia Iorio (Springer International Publishing, 2023), p. 175.

<sup>116</sup> Bryan R. Roberts, Austin Alejandro Portes, 'Coping with the Free Market City, Collective Action in Six Latin American Cities at the End of the Twentieth Century', *Latin American Research Review*, 41.2, (2006), 57, 69 (p. 57-83).

<sup>117</sup> Rachel Coutinho Marques da Silva and Fernanda Sobreiro e Cruz, 'The Role of Women in Solidarity Actions in the Rocinha Slum, Rio de Janeiro, in Times of Pandemic', *Cadernos de Pós-graduação em Arquitetura e Urbanismo*, 21.1, (2021), 63-77 (p. 66).

<sup>118</sup> Rachel Coutinho Marques da Silva and Fernanda Sobreiro e Cruz, 'The Role of Women in Solidarity Actions in the Rocinha Slum, Rio de Janeiro, in Times of Pandemic', *Cadernos de Pós-graduação em Arquitetura e Urbanismo*, 21.1, (2021), 63-77 (p. 66).

<sup>119</sup> Rachel Coutinho Marques da Silva and Fernanda Sobreiro e Cruz, 'The Role of Women in Solidarity Actions in the Rocinha Slum, Rio de Janeiro, in Times of Pandemic', *Cadernos de Pós-graduação em Arquitetura e Urbanismo*, 21.1, (2021), 63-77 (p. 67).

<sup>120</sup> Ruth Meizen-Dick, Monica DiGregorio and Nancy McCarthy, 'Methods for Studying Collective Action in Rural Development', *Agricultural Systems*, (2004) p. 200.



network.<sup>121</sup> In this case, collective action has a close relationship with civic engagement, in which residents participate in community activities to improve the condition of the surrounding environment. On the other hand, social movements are considered a form of collective action. It differs from collective action due to its unique characteristic: social movements seek to make a change in society by challenging the system already established. Whilst other forms of collective action lack a set of frameworks as they arise spontaneously.<sup>122</sup>

## Social Movement

The term social movement is used to define and explain the phenomenon of collective mobilisation in society. In the late 1960s, several events were taking part worldwide for example, Della Porta and Diani points out the 'American civil rights and anti-war movements, Mai 1968 revolt in France, student's protests in Germany, Britain and Mexico, The worker-student coalition in 1969 in Italy, the pro-democracy mobilizations in diverse locations such as, Francoist Madrid and communist Prague the growth of critical Catholicism from South America to Rome, and many more.'<sup>123</sup> As a concrete example of social movement in Western society that join the act of protesting and appropriating a space, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo '*Las madres de plaza de mayo*' is a movement formed in 1977 in Buenos Aires, Argentina by a group of women during the regime of dictatorship Jorge Rafael Videla that demanded information from their disappeared sons, daughters, and husbands. United by a collective grief their action started when a group of fourteen mothers began to report and seek answers about their missing children.<sup>124</sup>

After the absence of a response from the local authorities and support from international organisations that advocate for human rights, they decided to meet by their own means at the public square, Plaza de Mayo. As it was strictly forbidden to meet in large groups, especially in public spaces, the first *ronda* occurred which consisted in circling the square in groups of two wearing a white kerchief to identify themselves. The military forces acted against the mothers' regular meeting and in the attempt to stop the group several women from the group disappeared. Despite the violent acts performed by the police against the group, none of the actions could stop the mothers from meeting in the plaza to continue with their collective fight in searching for their missing children.<sup>125</sup>

This example illustrates how the mother's spatial appropriation of the plaza de mayo has become an act of activist space occupation. As Suzanna Torre highlights, the mothers transformed the way public spaces were perceived back in the 1970s in Buenos Aires by taking the plaza as a place of opposition by imprinting their stories on carboards carried on their bodies as a collective rebellion against a regime.<sup>126</sup> Their courageous acts represented their love for their children, and they are seen as actors who transformed an existing public square by giving a symbolic meaning of collective resistance by established a strong movement that continues advocating for human rights.

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<sup>121</sup> Ruth Meinzen-Dick, Monica DiGregorio and Nancy McCarthy, 'Methods for Studying Collective Action in Rural Development', *Agricultural Systems*, (2004) p. 200.

<sup>122</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 14, 15.

<sup>123</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn. (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> Memorias de la Memoria: Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora, dir. by memoriaabierta.org.ar (Memoria Abierta, 2019).

<sup>125</sup> Memorias de la Memoria: Madres de Plaza de Mayo Línea Fundadora, dir. by memoriaabierta.org.ar (Memoria Abierta, 2019).

<sup>126</sup> Suzanna Torre, 'Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo', in *Gender Space Architecture an Interdisciplinary Introduction*, ed. by Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden (Routledge, 2000), p. 140-145.

A second example to understand how groups operate is Guerrilla Gardening, a group of volunteers that, with its actions, reveal that public spaces are socially produced and, as a consequence, can be socially changed, giving a new collective meaning.<sup>127</sup> Guerrilla gardening movement spread across the United States during 1970, adopting agricultural techniques to appropriate public spaces in response to the municipal disinvestment and abandonment of public spaces. The movement has also appeared in Canada and Europe, and its approach was inspired by the American allotment gardening established during the Second World War and the Great Depression.<sup>128</sup>

However, the first act of guerrilla gardening started in England in 1646, during the reign of King Charles I, with his imposition on draining the fens affecting fertile lands, causing villagers to lose their livelihood due to recurrent floods.<sup>129</sup> As a form of opposition, local villagers known as the Fens Tigers acted against the drainage by sabotaging dams and destroying dykes in the effort to save the fens from being lost.<sup>130</sup> It can be argued that guerrilla gardening started as a resilience practice in the attempt to restore green areas that were losing their ecological characteristics, bringing back cultivation as an activity that can be integrated into the life of the city rather than seen as an activity that would happen only in rural areas. As a consequence, the purpose of transforming spaces into resilience sites led to recomposed community gardens as a strategy to address food justice in urban communities, allowing areas for food cultivation while building a community around sharing knowledge and skills in agriculture.<sup>131</sup>

These mobilisations have successfully achieved common objectives that have shaped both the present reality and future possibilities.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, a social movement is a group of people that form an alliance united by their shared aspirations, and interest. Cooperatives, neighbourhood action groups, pressure groups and other collective organisations that share a common vision can be considered social movements.<sup>133</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill argue that 'the term covers various forms of collective action aimed at social reorganisation. At the early stage, social movements arise from spontaneous social protest directed at specific or widespread grievances' after acting together, they built a formal structure that will define the movement.<sup>134</sup>

The concept of social movements had been generalised and applied to a range of collective actions, from political protest to disruptive social behaviour, Melucci suggests three analytical dimensions should be met in order to define a social movement. 'A movement is the mobilisation of a collective actor (1) defined by specific solidarity, (2) engaged in a conflict with an adversary for the appropriation and control of resources valued by both of them, (3) and whose action entails a breach of limits of compatibility of the system within which the action itself takes place'.<sup>135</sup> The theory proposes that a movement is united by an agreement among participants with a common interest to change their reality through actions that seek solutions to the conflict they are experiencing.

For that reason, social movements are goal driven, and they are formally structured as they go through different stages. First, they identify a situation that is bringing a group discontent. This stage is identified as 'social ferment', in which unorganised ideas and actions arise and is crucial for

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<sup>127</sup> Donnie Johnson Sackey, 'Without Permission: Guerrilla Gardening, Contested Places, Spatial Justice', *Review of Communication*, 22.4, (2022), 364-377 (p. 367).

<sup>128</sup> Gina Badger, 'Digging, Sowing, Tending, Harvesting (Making War-Fair)', *Public*, .41, (2013), 123-135 (p. 124).

<sup>129</sup> Richard Reynolds, *On Guerrilla Gardening: A Handbook for Gardening without Boundaries* (Bloomsbury Pub Plc USA, 2008), p. 10,11.

<sup>130</sup> Ely Museum, *How Were the Fens Drained?* (2023) <<https://www.elymuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Drainage-who-drained-the-fens-1.pdf>> [accessed 7 December 2023].

<sup>131</sup> Donnie Johnson Sackey, 'Without Permission: Guerrilla Gardening, Contested Places, Spatial Justice', *Review of Communication*, 22.4, (2022), 364-377 (p. 367).

<sup>132</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn. (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> James Fulcher and John Scott, *Sociology*, 4th edn (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 788.

<sup>134</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, 3rd edn. (Penguin Books, 1994), p. 389.

<sup>135</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.29-30.

acting, meaning the social condition of the participant leads to a disagreement with the current situation and the individual acknowledges the issue without any organisation to overcome it.<sup>136</sup> Subsequently, the discontent shifts from a general dissatisfaction to a clear and organised collective concern known as 'popular excitement.'<sup>137</sup> As Jonathan Christiansen mentions 'at this point leadership emerges, and strategies for success are worked out [...] most importantly, this is the stage at which the movement becomes more than just random upset individuals.'<sup>138</sup> Once the group is established with a clear objective the 'formalisation' of the group takes place and the strategies are formed and coordinated to achieve the common goal.<sup>139</sup> At this stage, the group could rely on trained staff and volunteers to coordinate plans and operations of the organisation.<sup>140</sup> Finally, 'institutionalisation' is accomplished with a solid structure and the movement becomes part of society.<sup>141</sup> Once their common objective is reached they must change their goals, or they risk to disband. Therefore, it can be argued that social movements are complex structures due to how they operate, their form of organisation, and networking within and outside a group organised. Ruth Wineclaw and Alexandra Howson mention, 'social movements not only raise awareness of specific issues but also challenge authority and those in power to enact legislation and regulation to enforce social change.'<sup>142</sup>

Therefore, social movement theory have provided important insights into identifying social matters that inspire people to act collectively encouraging continuity, and to establishing strategies to mobilise participants in creating social networks that can facilitate collective actions.<sup>143</sup> Social actions such as, civic engagement and group dynamics, collective identity, community participation, collective action and social movements are complex interrelations that lead groups to the appropriation of space through collective mobilisation. These actions contribute to the continuity of community projects because allows people to reclaim a space they consider having a collective value. In order to understand the relationship that exists with the continuity of community projects, the thesis has developed the following methodology.

## Methodology and Approach to the Thesis

In order to understand the continuity and changing dynamics of community projects over time, three key research questions (figure 2) frame the research and aim to analyse the trajectory (its start, development, and onward journey) of a set of community projects by exploring the factors that create, enable, and sustain community projects to have a lasting impact on the community over time.

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<sup>136</sup> Herbert Blumer, *Social Movements, Principles of Sociology*, (Barnes & Nobles, 1951) quoted in Donatella Della Porta, Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 150.

<sup>137</sup> Jonathan Christiansen, 'Four Stages of Social Movements', *Research Starters Sociology*, (2009), p. 14-25.

<sup>138</sup> Jonathan Christiansen, 'Four Stages of Social Movements', *Research Starters Sociology*, (2009), p. 14-25.

<sup>139</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 150.

<sup>140</sup> Jonathan Christiansen, 'Four Stages of Social Movements', *Research Starters Sociology*, (2009), p. 14-25.

<sup>141</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 150.

<sup>142</sup> Ruth A. Wienclaw and Alexandra Howson, 'Major Social Movements ', *Research Starters Sociology*, (2018), p. 37.

<sup>143</sup> Christopher Ansell, 'Community Embeddedness and Collaborative Governance in San Francisco Bay Area Environmental Movement', in *Social Movements and Networks Relational Approach to Collective Action*, ed. by Mario Diani and Dough McAdam (Oxford Press, 2003), p. 124 and David Westby, 'Strategic Imperative, Ideology, And Frame, ' *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 7.3, (2002), 287-304 (p. 287).

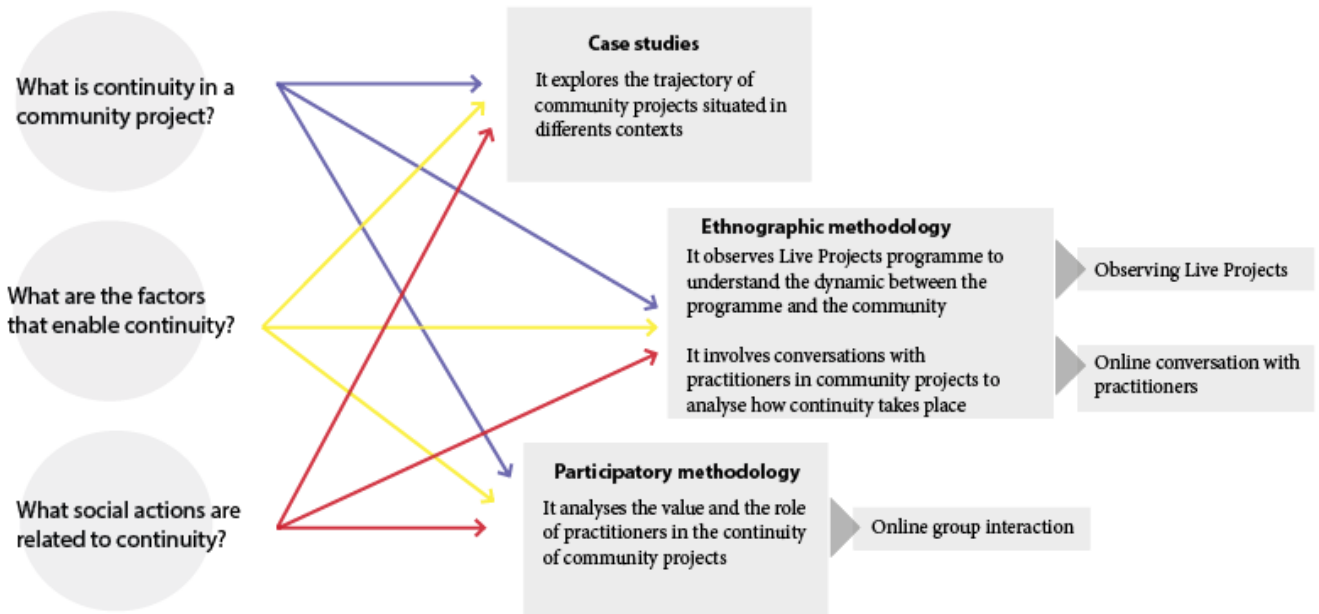


Figure 2. Methodology mapping, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. The methodology adopted in this research helped to answer the three research questions through the case studies, ethnographic methodology and participatory methodology.

In framing the methodology for this thesis, the Sheffield School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield played a significant role in shaping my practice in questioning the role of the practitioner and who they are through the various talks and lectures delivered at the school of architecture giving rise to my research on continuity. For example, observing Live Projects, a student-led programme set up at the school of architecture that involves students in developing a project with community groups as clients, contributed to identifying and defining the case studies selected in this thesis, either because some of the case studies were part of a Live Projects or as a lecture.

The selection of the seven case studies are linked with Live Projects and the Sheffield School of Architecture as follows:

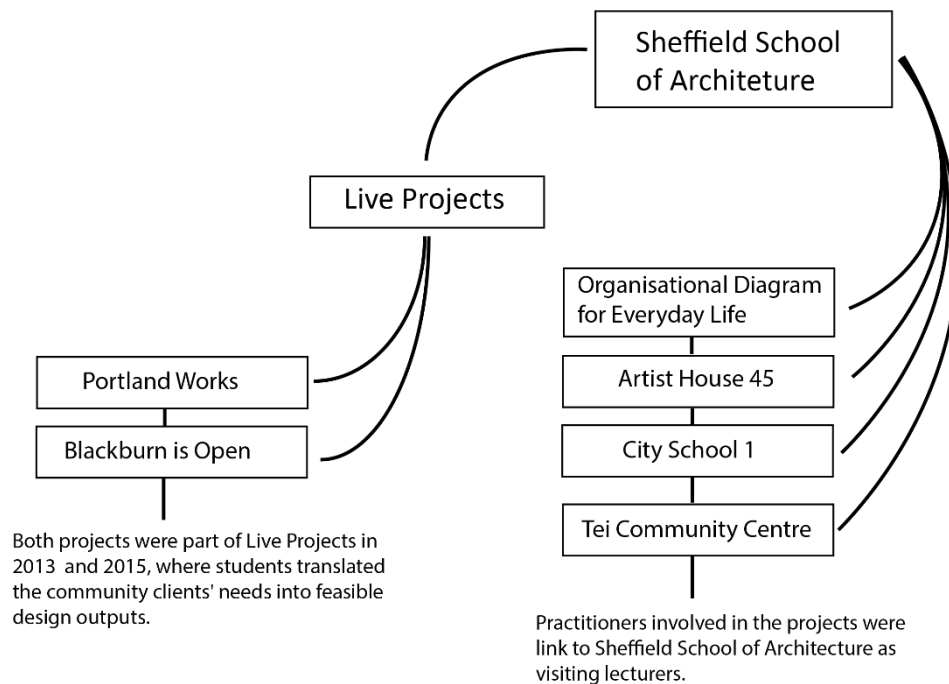


Figure 3. Case studies selection, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. The diagram shows the existing connections between Live Projects (the Sheffield School of Architecture programme) and the school of architecture in the selection of the case studies.

The research methodology comprised an approach to analysing a set of case studies of community projects located in different context. The case studies located in UK, Live Projects, and Portland Works (Sheffield), Blackburn is Open (Blackburn), Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life (Middlesbrough), Artist House 45 (Leeds), and in Romania, City School 1 and Tei Community Centre reveal the cause each practitioner, together with the community, advocates for. Therefore, to understand how continuity is seen, perceived, and defined by practitioners whose work is framed around different geographical context and circumstances. The case studies analysed in this thesis are from the practitioners' point of view revealing their experience in working with community projects. Followed by an ethnography that involved observation and conversation with architecture students and practitioners involved in community projects, and a participatory approach to elucidating practitioners' engagement with community projects. The reason for framing the methodology around the practitioner experience is because they play an essential role in advocating for community projects through actions that involves activism that can include supporting and starting initiative while facilitating collaboration with the community and other organisations. They are advocates, and through the trajectory of the project, their role could be expanded or changed, acting as initiators, enablers, mediators, facilitators, collaborators, activists, and curators. Throughout the practitioner's narrative, the community's voice is present, capturing the practitioner's experience in community projects.

## Case study

The thesis looks at seven case studies with the aim of understanding how community projects operate under different practitioner positionality. Each case study is organised according to the mode of practice and situatedness and roles of practitioners in the projects: student-led, community-led, artist-led and architect-led. In addition, each mode of practice led to identifying the type of continuity, expanded in the following section, Case Studies Synopsis. Throughout the case studies, I examine how continuity occurs, considering each initiative is unique, because of the existing complex network that exists within communities and practitioners. Each case study explores how continuity might arise through the role of the practitioner as follows:

- **Student-led:** Live Projects (the University of Sheffield School of Architecture programme) is student-led because it civically engages master's students in current cities' challenges (for example, social and environmental issues). This requires them to actively apply their knowledge and design skills while interacting with a designated community client to develop strategies that consider the client's desires and motivations.
- **Community-led:** Portland Works and Blackburn is Open (UK) are community-led because of their collective efforts to reclaim a building or reactivate public space. The community initiates both projects and reveals the role of practitioners (architects, designers, artists, citizens) as advocates of a collective identity in arts and crafts by supporting the existing community of artists.
- **Artist-led:** Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life and Artist House 45 (UK) are artist-led because they encourage the expression of ideas and opinions through artistic practices to initiate a conversation that critically analyses issues in public realms (for example, social segregation and politics of the space). They facilitate community participation in identifying needs in their neighbourhood in which an individual's knowledge counts as valuable.
- **Architect-led:** Tei Community Centre and City School 1, both located in Bucharest, are architect-led because they reveal the practitioner's (architect) role as an activist in organising and leading activities with the community. They engage a group of citizens in activities to achieve a collective vision of reappropriating a space (e.g., a local library or a space in a park), creating a network of people for the project to be sustained over time.

Each case study allows the research to explore continuity in different locales under different circumstances rather than just focusing on a specific context, limiting the understanding of continuity. The way I used the case studies is not only to provide descriptive information about the projects but to understand each case by analysing its trajectory (their start, development, and onward journey) that will draw conclusions in understanding the factors that promotes and sustain continuity in community projects. Therefore, I situate the case studies as explanatory, holding meaningful characteristics of real-life events of the initiatives driven by a group of people willing to bring a positive change in their reality.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th edn. (Sage Publications, 2009), p. 4.

## Ethnographic Methodology

In order to examine the idea of continuity, its role, and to the changing dynamics of a set of community projects, ethnographic methodology such as conversation with practitioners involved in community projects and observing the University of Sheffield School of Architecture pedagogical programme Live Projects were conducted to analyse how social actions such as civic engagement, collective action, collective identity, community participation, and social movements are the driving forces that take forward community projects and therefore promoting continuity. Identity, voices, and viewpoints provide a powerful vision to rethink the values that enact spatial practices toward constructing a just society. This could be achieved through new activism forms involving educational institutions, transforming pedagogy, expanding dialogues, engaging materialism, and projecting alternatives.<sup>145</sup>

I interviewed practitioners involved in different initiatives with the purpose of exploring their civic enthusiasm to work with communities. Therefore, the people I interviewed were crucial actors in the trajectory of the process, from the start, the development, and the continuity of the projects. The interviews were semi-structured, which allowed the conversation to flow naturally but at the same time to follow a set of questions planned beforehand to use as a guide avoiding changing the course of the conversation. The aim was to facilitate the conversation to be a friendly encounter where the participant feels comfortable exposing their experiences rather than a formal interview with a set of questions and answers, signposting the participant to the next question resembling a day-to-day conversation.

The conversation was initially planned to take place face to face with personal interaction with the participant, but due to the 2020-22 COVID-19 pandemic, the interview was held online. The pandemic restricted my visiting the cities where the projects were located, affected how the interviews were conducted. The methodology was subsequently completely redesigned according to the newly available resources. The interviews that were planned to be face-to-face had to be moved online, limiting my interaction with practitioners. During the conversation, I started briefly introducing myself and the research focus as a way of starting the conversation. As a result, the participant began by introducing themselves and the project they were involved in. Then, they started relating their experience, point of view and roles within the project, which formed the base of the conversation to evolve into the next question. The conversation was based not only on explanatory events but also on individual emotions, preferences and experiences that are valuable information in producing knowledge.<sup>146</sup>

Each ensuing narrative from the practitioner's perspective, was rich and informative, despite the limits of online interaction and contains detailed passages of being immersed in facilitating, initiating, developing, and supporting a network of people working for a common interest, including the challenges and turnouts the projects had and capturing the process of re-appropriating and reclaiming the space as part of continuity and commons. The processes described required new forms of management and governance where actors take agency in the space setting up an infrastructure that involves the creation of connections and links that are accessible and sustainable through cooperation and shared values.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Meike Schalk, Ramia Mazé, Thérèse Kristiansson and Maryam Fanni, *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 13, 14.

<sup>146</sup> Nel Janssens, 'Collective Sense-Making for Changes: About Conversations and Instructs', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 153.

<sup>147</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Being in Relation and Reinventing the Commons', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 102.

The Live Projects programme at the University of Sheffield School of Architecture operates and has significance, not only in the School of Architecture but also in the community, by supporting students and the community in experiencing architecture from the perspective of activism and care, which requires listening and understanding the current need in the community.<sup>148</sup> The Live Projects programme is a six-week project at the beginning of every academic year run for postgraduate MArch and MA in Architectural Design course students of architecture. I began in the first year of my research by observing it for six weeks as a passive observer. During my observation, I attended lectures, seminars, meetings, reflective reviews, and the Live Projects final presentation. All these events I observed helped me understand Live Project's format and how it is set to be a completely student-led approach in which students are organised into groups of around twelves for each community project, plan following steps, and meet with their assigned clients before they work toward an outcome of the project.

My observations were from a distance while students made decisions, discussed, and reflected on their current project. I followed different groups of students while working and meeting with their clients and mentors. During my observations, I took notes and recorded the process for further analysis of the programme and how students collaborate and work during an intensive six weeks. In research, everyday experience, observation, and personal aspects tend to be overlooked, giving more attention to theoretical and technical frameworks where quantifiable data is considered reliable. At the same time, observations are considered mere indicators of lived experiences. However, observation proves to be a powerful tool that values personal experience as an essential basis for building knowledge.<sup>149</sup>

## Participatory Methodology

In order to build an understanding of the different theories related to social actions that outline the complex dynamics that sustain the continuity of community projects, an online group interaction was conducted to analyse the roles and values of practitioners of the built environment and institutions through the lenses of pedagogical approach, government institutions, community, organisations, in the continuity of community projects. Groups that share experiences demonstrate the ability to connect and therefore build networks and communities by sharing knowledge and resources, creating solidarity and unity.<sup>150</sup> These agents play a different role within the community in strengthening social relations and reinforcing collective identity enabling collective action.

The main idea of the meeting was to generate a conversation about the research themes, social movements, group dynamics and civic engagement, collective identity, collective action, and community participation. Each speaker had a theme to relate to their work, visions, and experience of being a practitioner with the role of developing, initiating, and supporting networks that emerged

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<sup>148</sup> Sara Brolund de Carvalho and Anja Linna, 'Urban Caring: Fostering relationships, Foregrounding Diversity and Building Subsistence economies', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 256.

<sup>149</sup> Sara Brolund de Carvalho and Anja Linna, 'Urban Caring: Fostering relationships, Foregrounding Diversity and Building Subsistence economies', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 256.

<sup>150</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, 'Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 139, 140.



around different activities in the community.<sup>151</sup> At the beginning of the session, I introduced each speaker, what they do and their work. The event was open to postgraduate research students to participate as an audience and ask questions to the guest speakers after the presentations.

The event was set up to exchange ideas, and my role was to facilitate and moderate the group interaction. I use the word interaction in an attempt to bring people together because it suggests a form of communication and is an action that happens in our daily life.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, the meeting aimed to start a conversation that departed from a non-linear way of thinking, and it was more based on sharing experiences than exchanging arguments.<sup>153</sup> It was not a debate but rather a way of sharing different perspectives and points of view about the proposed themes allowing participants to question its social and political dimensions.<sup>154</sup>

The speakers that participated during the conversation on the theme of group dynamics, civic engagement and community participation were: Sam Brown, Live Projects coordinator at the Sheffield School of Architecture and a specialist in community-led housing and self-build projects; and Carolyn Butterworth, Director of Live Works, the externally facing project office for Live Projects. Butterworth advocates the value of 'liveness' and the arts in architectural education. Her teaching approach includes agency outside the university, encouraging students to explore collaboration with others to make the built environment more inclusive.

The contributors to the theme of social movements, collective identity, and collective action were Helen Stratford, whose work includes live art, visual art, architecture, and writing. Stratford works with artists, curators, and diverse communities to develop site-specific interventions, live events, and speculative writing that expand and critique architectural conventions; and Jhono Bennett, 1 to 1 Agency of Engagement co-founder. His practice and research interests include inclusive design approaches, spatial justice, critical positionality, and urban planning in South African cities. This interaction helped to understand the role of the practitioner of the built environment in the community and how their role can create continuity in a community project because their skills can be extended beyond the design approach and act as a nexus for establishing different partnerships and expanding the community network.

## Thesis Structure

The following diagram, figure 4, shows how the different chapters of the thesis are structured according to the research framework of different practitioners' modalities in investigating collective effort in the continuity of community projects. I start with **Chapter two** Student-led as the first stage in which groups get engaged in community projects. This is followed by **Chapter three** Community-led which describes how groups perceive themselves as sharing the same aspirations, values, and belief, defining a collective identity of the "we." **Chapter four** Artist-led shows how groups then move towards relations being strengthened, so they take agency to take projects and initiatives forward that will benefit the collective. **Chapter five** Architect-led describes how once they feel identified and share

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<sup>151</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Being in Relation and Reinventing the Commons', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 107.

<sup>152</sup> Nel Janssens, 'Collective Sense-Making for Changes: About conversations and instructs', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 152.

<sup>153</sup> Nel Janssens, 'Collective Sense-Making for Changes: About conversations and instructs', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 152.

<sup>154</sup> Liza Fior, Elke Krasny and Jane da Mosto, 'Making time for Conversation of Resistance', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 160.

a common vision, they act together. Once groups have a clear structure, they go from a loose group that acts together to a formal stage where the establishment of the group occurs, forming alliance and building partnerships with associations, other groups, and institutions. Figure 4 shows continuity is seen as entangled and cyclical process in which collective identity is the main factor that contributes to the continuity of community projects due to the existing networks that build solidarity and will sustain commitment over time. Groups can develop and establish their collective identity at any stage; therefore, the diagram shows different threads intertwining each stage, and groups can crossover each step, showing changeability.

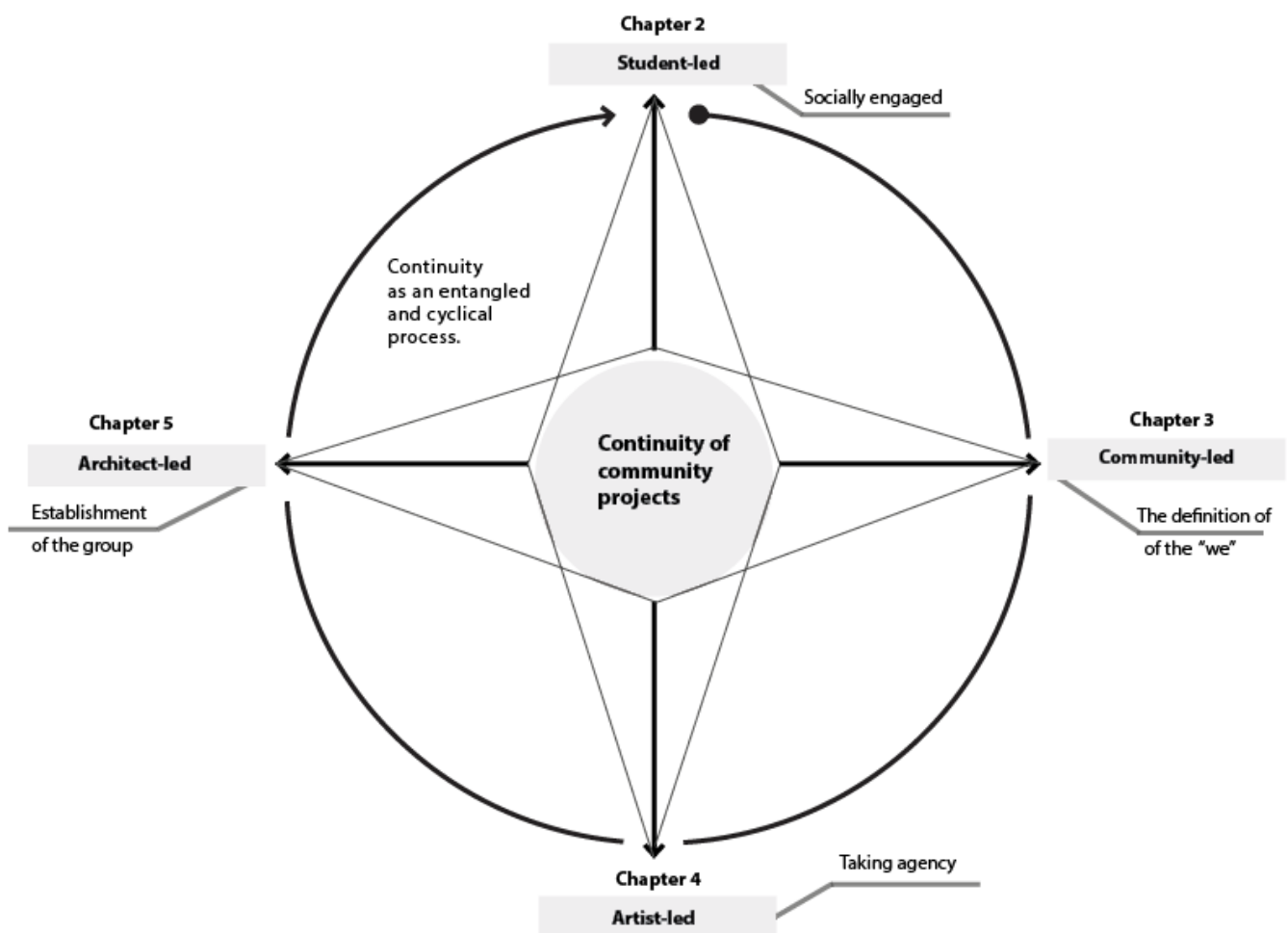


Figure 4. Structure of the chapters, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Continuity is seen as a nonlinear process in which groups can crossover actions.

In order to understand continuity in community projects and the collective efforts attached to it. The chapters are expanded through a series of case studies described below:

**Chapter two** (Student-led) looks at Live Projects as a pedagogical approach of a two-way learning process; students learn how to practice architecture in a real setting, and a community group gets useful outputs to continue working on changing their reality. In addition, Live Projects enable students and the community to start a conversation and make their common interests visible. The programme civically engaged students in exploring architectural practices that align with current cities' issues.

For common interest to thrive, a collective identity needs to be shared building a strong foundation for collective effort to take place. **Chapter three** (Community-led) analyses Blackburn is Open and Portland Works. It explores community-led initiatives identifying art and crafts as a collective identity in a community of artists and how practitioners supported the community of artists to reclaim a space that holds a collective meaning in artistic practices. The chapter argues Blackburn is Open is an initiatives that advocates for an existing community of artists through a manifesto that aims to make the community of artists visible and to invite people to exchange knowledge and expertise in the field of creative outputs. The project resulted in a network of people who came up with the idea of creating the Festival of Making as a commemoration of the town's art and craft identity. However, the project Portland Works in Sheffield, the community campaigned to save a building that hosts workshops for artists, and it was at risk of losing its industrial characteristics. In an effort to keep the historic building that accommodates artists with unique skills, the community of artists organised themselves and established a partnership with community shareholders to purchase the building.

Practitioners support and advocate for the community to recognise and reclaim their collective identity so they can take agency and make decisions. **Chapter four** (Artist-led) analyses community participation through two artist-led projects, Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life and Artist House 45. Both projects facilitate community participation through artistic practices and with the support of organisations that see arts as a powerful tool to question social issues, such as East Street Art and Saabat Gallery. These two artists-led projects embed artists' practices to identify communities' issues, skills, and resources, allowing people to experiment with tools that require self-expression as a means of participation.

As an existing network of people that work together toward a common goal, **Chapter five** (Architect-led) analyses, Tei Community Centre and City School 1, and how practitioners of the built environment support and guide a group of citizens in reappropriating public spaces. The project Tei Community Centre emphasises taking over a public space at risk of privatisation. It originated from a civic group known as Lacul Tei. As active agents in their community, the group established a partnership with two local architects (Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan) who advocate for spatial practices, creating a temporary installation for the community to start a conversation about the preservation of public spaces in the city. However, the project City School 1 underlines a collaborative work that identifies a local library situated in Military neighbourhood, as a 'community hub' for exchanging knowledge that is open and accessible to everyone. Both projects reveal the work of citizens and practitioners in finding resources to reclaim a space that holds collective value.

Finally, in **Chapter six** the thesis concludes with the summary of the findings highlighting the relevance of the research. It also sets out the contribution to knowledge on continuity and further research on the topic.

## Case Studies Synopsis

In this section, I unfold the reason for the seven case studies (figure 5) and discuss them throughout the chapters of this thesis. I explain their general aims and identify the form of continuity present in the projects. The various initiatives all supported local communities in developing strategies to achieve their shared vision and where design had a role in defining and shaping their reality. Throughout the projects, the continuity occurred differently, considering each initiative has different durations, aims and contexts. The case studies analysed in the thesis chapters are: Live Projects, Portland Works, Blackburn is Open, Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life, Artists House 45, Tei Community Centre and City School 1.

### Live Projects

Live Projects is an educational programme that has been part of the academic curriculum for architecture master courses (MARCH and MAAD) at the University of Sheffield School of Architecture since 1999. Through the Live Projects approach (which is student-led), students work in collaboration with local community groups, charities, and regional authorities as clients to envision design projects that translate community clients' needs and vision while practicing live architecture. What clients obtain from LP is a set of feasible outputs that reflect users' intentions and needs that could be used to argue, propose, and oppose to the City Council regeneration plan with a possibility to shift to an approach that indeed integrates citizens' vision into a more inclusive design. As a form of continuity, Live Projects established Live Works, an Urban Room where community clients can continue discussing their design proposals. The value of LP, besides designing outputs, is its reflective approach that encourages students to critically reflect into different modes of practising architecture.

Practitioner positionality: Student-led

Initiators: Prue Chiles, Jeremy Till and Carolyn Butterworth. As part of the University of Sheffield, School of Architecture programme

Year: 1999 – present

Location: Sheffield, England

Funding: with the support of the University of Sheffield

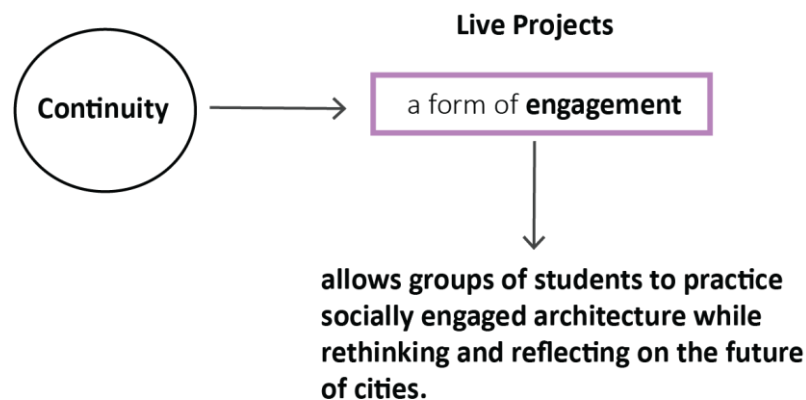


Figure 5. Live Projects continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Live Projects as a programme that civically engages students in architecture practice.

## Portland Works

During the Industrial Revolution, skilled workers developed an independent way of working that has been passed on from generation to generation. Portland Works is an initiative that reveals resistance and activism in defending an industrial building. Resistance because tenants and volunteers opposed the planning application set by the City Council and activists because of the solidarity events they organised to save the building from being converted into housing units. Due to the building was at risk of losing its industrial characteristics and history of 'making' campaigns were organised to show the value of the building in terms of skilled jobs and as an existing collective network that relies on in-kind activities such as sharing artistic skills, informal training, and swapping tools. As a continuity, tenants purchased the building as a community asset, securing its tenure.

Practitioner positionality: Community-led

Initiators: Julia Udall and Colin Harvard. The project was part of Live Projects, Sheffield School of Architecture in 2011, 2013 and 2014.

Year: 2011 - 2014

Location: Sheffield, England

Funding: volunteers

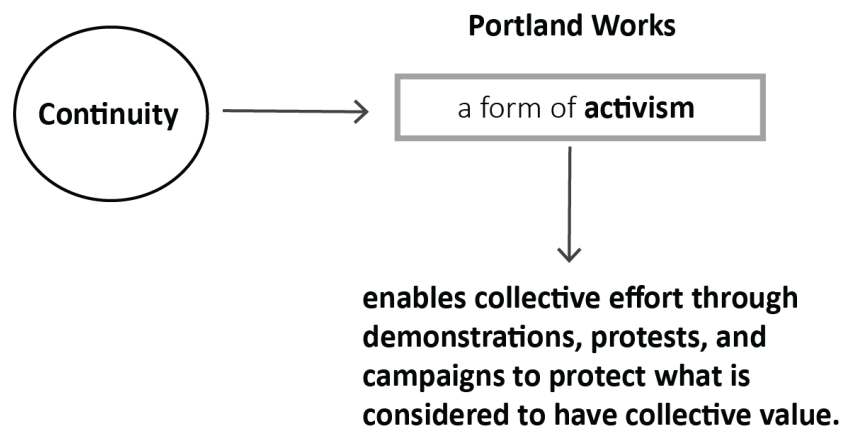


Figure 6. Portland Works continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Portland Works as an initiative that shows resistance toward a collective value.

## Blackburn Is Open

Blackburn's textile industry and handcrafted products contributed to the economic growth of the town during the Industrial Revolution, therefore, Blackburn has a long history in creative arts. In order to bring back the manufacturing identity, the project Blackburn is Open formed a network of artists through sharing information and creative skills led by Claire Tymon and Wayne Hemingway, both practitioners (artist and architect). The project advocates for arts and manufacturing identity, embedding research and design to collectively envision strategies to reactivate the town centre using arts as a central point to develop ideas. As a form of continuity, the project established the 'Festival of Making' (a yearly national festival of arts and crafts) that celebrates the creative identity of the town.

Practitioner positionality: community-led

Initiators: Claire Tymon from Placeshakers and Wayne Hemingway from Hemingway design. The project was part of Live Projects, Sheffield School of Architecture in 2013 and 2015.

Year: 2012 - 2016

Location: Blackburn, England

Funding: Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council

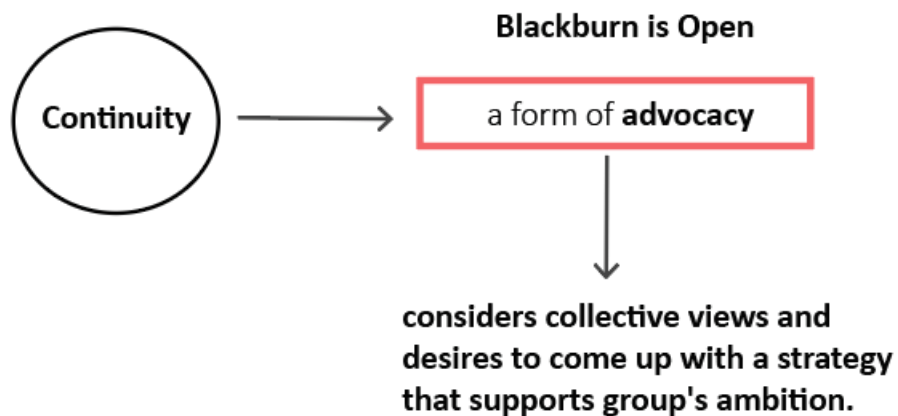


Figure 7. Blackburn is Open continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Blackburn is Open as an initiative that supports people's aspirations.

## Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life

Artists have the skills to create outputs that can generate ideas to activate disused post-industrial urban space through artistic practices. Therefore, to envision a plan of action, conversation around a collective aspiration needs to take place. To initiate conversation and create community based on sharing similar experiences, the project Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life, led by Helen Stratford (architect and artist), in partnership with Saabat Gallery in Middlesbrough, involved citizens in artistic activities to give a new usage to the gallery as a community hub. The project lasted a year, and Stratford framed the project around people's skills and knowledge through a collaborative approach between participants (citizens interested in joining the project). Beyond recording people's activities, the project was a catalyst for re-imagining the neighbourhood through sharing knowledge, experiences, and stories. Participants' empirical knowledge were recorded in a template which later originated in a booklet that, as a form of continuity, was distributed in the community as a potential tool that could inform future projects in the area.

Practitioner positionality: Artist-led

Initiators: Helen Stratford as part of Transitions17 residency and Adrian Moule, a local artist in collaboration with Saabat Gallery

Year: 2017-2018

Location: South Bank, Middlesbrough, England

Funding: Arts Council England

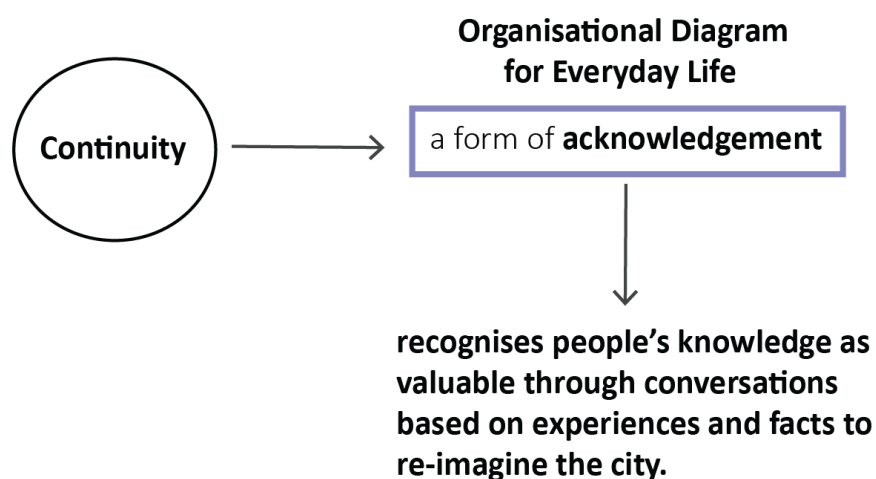


Figure 8. Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life as an initiative that gives value to empirical knowledge.

## Artist House 45

Artists-led projects allow collective critical insights to be formed by involving local communities in short-term artistic interventions (for example, a temporary installation or a temporary newspaper). Artists can take different approaches to develop projects that raise social and economic issues, such as an exhibition that portrays local realities of a neighbourhood (poverty, crime, racial exclusion) and engaging individuals in conversations about social concerns. The initiative Artist House 45 took place in Beeston, Leeds, and lasted five years. Several artists initiated different projects, for example, organising a campaign to preserve green space in the area or a set of murals that depict the day-to-day life in the neighbourhood. Regardless of the projects set by the artist, the initiative adopted a reflective approach where artists reflect upon the impact of their practices in the neighbourhood. As a form of continuity, East Street Arts continues running projects in partnership with artists who use arts as a medium of expression to question social realities.

Practitioner positionality: Artist-led  
Initiators: East Street Arts Organisation  
Year: 2015-2020  
Location: Beeston, Leeds, England  
Funding: Leeds City Council

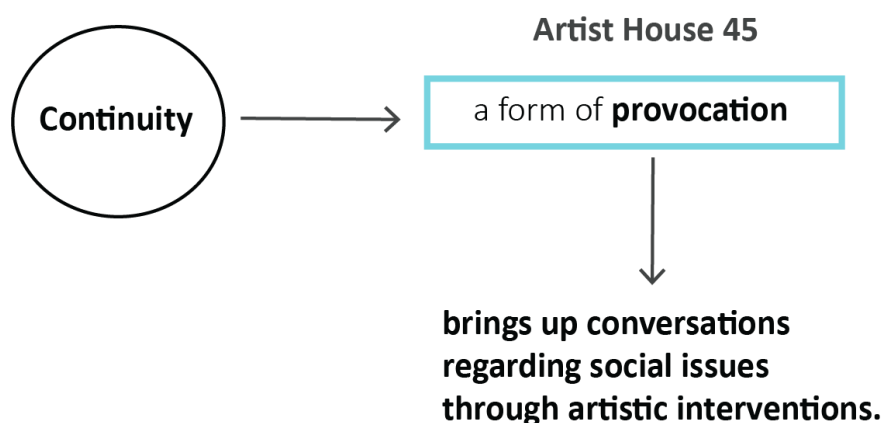


Figure 9. Artist House 45 continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Artist House 45 as an initiative that inquires about social challenges.



## Tei Community Centre

In the collective effort to take over public spaces, the project Tei Community Centre consisted of initiating conversations about the future of public spaces in Bucharest as a way to express opposition to privatisation. After the fall of communist era in Bucharest (1989), the management of public spaces shifted from a 'stated controlled affair to one completely driven by the free-market' putting most of the leftover urban spaces under threat of losing its public and accessible characteristic to profit-driven spaces (For example, office buildings, shopping malls, etc).<sup>155</sup> Therefore, this case study represents a form of activism from a group of citizens that expresses their demands and visions that public spaces should be seen as democratic spaces where life in the city happens through meetings and connections with others. As a form of continuity, the project inspired other civic groups to rethink the management of public spaces in the city and to look for participation in the decision-making process.

Practitioner positionality: Architect-led

Initiators: Lacul Tei Civic Initiative Group, Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan from Studio Basar

Year: 2015 – 2020

Location: Circus Park, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sector, Bucharest, Romania

Funding: Studio Basar with the support of Lacul Tei Civic Initiative Group and CeRe Resource Centre for Public Participation

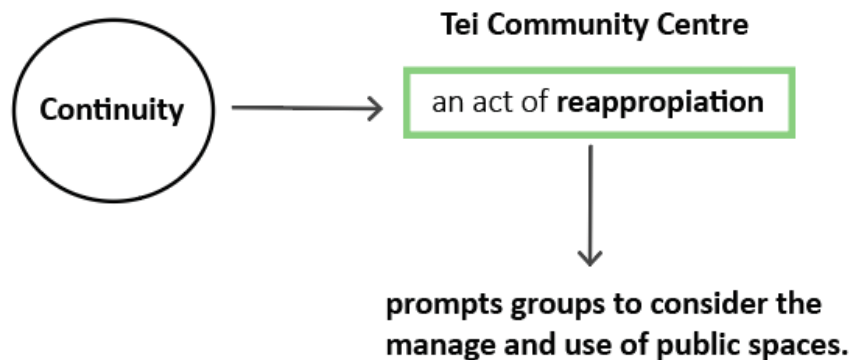


Figure 10. Tei Community Centre continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. Tei Community Centre as an initiative for the re-appropriation of public space.

<sup>155</sup> Liviu Teodorescu, *Privatized Publicness: Post-Communist Public Space in Bucharest* (2023) <<https://failedarchitecture.com/privatized-publicness-post-communist-public-space-in-bucharest/>> [accessed 25 February 2024].

## City School 1

Under the communist regime, public spaces were conceived and planned for people not to gather. On the contrary, there were hierarchised places that used visible strategies to show power, discouraging citizens from interacting with urban spaces and making them their own.<sup>156</sup> Small-scale and temporary interventions have the potential to enable collective ownership through collaboration with other practitioners (students, architects, and residents). This partnership is to drive forward an initiative that allows an alternative way of managing public space, in the case of City School 1, a local library. The project started as a series of workshops organised by Studio Basar (an architecture studio that advocates for public spaces) and residents from the Militari neighbourhood to outline a strategy to push the local government to reopen the library due to the lack of funding. The group's action reveals the library is a valuable resource that should be open and accessible to all. As a form of continuity, students and architects worked as a group to defend the library as a community resource.

Practitioner positionality: Architect-led

Initiators: Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan, from Studio Basar in collaboration with the Bucharest Metropolitan Library

Year: 2015 – 2016

Location: Gheorghe Lazăr" library, Militari neighbourhood, Bucharest, Romania

Funding: Mobilizing Excellency Programme created by Porsche Romania and developed with Bucharest Community Foundation

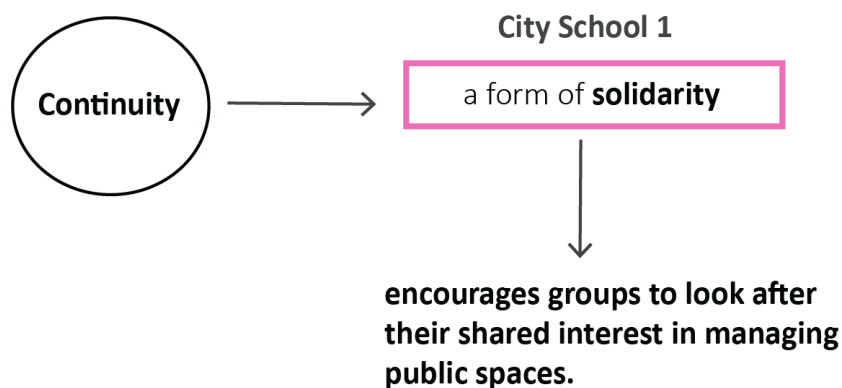


Figure 11. City School 1 continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. City School 1 as an initiative that involves residents in the production of space.

<sup>156</sup> Natalia Barykina, 'Architecture and Spatial Practices in Post-Communist Minsk: Urban Space under Authoritarian Control', *Space of Identity*, 8.2, (2008), 61-81 (p. 74).

# **Chapter Two**

Practitioner positionality

## **Student-led**

Case study project:

**Live Projects – the University of Sheffield School of Architecture (Sheffield, UK)**

In Sheffield de-industrialisation resulted from 'the chronic [...] and absolute decline in the contribution of manufacturing to the national economy,' leading to an economic and social crisis. The decline in manufacturing performance brought significant job loss and unemployment rates, which determined the end of the Industrial Revolution in England.<sup>157</sup> As a consequence of de-industrialisation and the post-war, cities in the north of England faced social inequality, and according to the Department for Communities and Local Government, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Sheffield still show high levels of economic disparity and social division.<sup>158</sup>

As a means of improving the image of the city, Sheffield underwent a regeneration plan that consisted of decentralising the government power to allow a new economic base in the north by attracting new business.<sup>159</sup> According to Rachel Granger, regeneration is understood as 'action to address need, where need refers to the need to resolve problems as a result of market failure and subsequent job loss and disinvestment.'<sup>160</sup> As part of the Sheffield regeneration programme, the city went through environmental improvements that concentrated on rivers, canals and the Attercliffe area (an industrial suburb located northeast of Sheffield), where most of the steel production was situated during the industrial period. The central government adopted this strategy to encourage alternative land uses outside the city centre. The regeneration project was achieved through public sectors and funded under the government's urban plan, but by the mid-1980s, the City Council suffered fund restrictions from the central government, reducing investments for future projects.<sup>161</sup>

Therefore, the City Council recognised the public sector would no longer invest its resources and an alternative had to be negotiated. This situation led to the City Council to establish a partnership with the private sector to continue with the regeneration plan for the city (currently Sheffield is in phase two of the regeneration programme the Heart of the City).<sup>162</sup> 'Although regeneration has been an important part of revitalising these urban centres' critical reflection, especially on gentrification and its long-term effect on society, still needs to be addressed.<sup>163</sup>

In this chapter, I explore the value of Live Projects (LP) as a pedagogical model of civic engagement at the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield, which critically addresses current city issues through research and design strategies. Live Projects are recognised for their contribution to community projects which engage the local community in a collaborative and participatory approach that involves the creation of outputs for the community and the empowering of citizens to take agency in the production of space. As a social action, civic engagement has been broadly used and defined, for example, civic engagement could be understood as community service which involves voluntary work in the local community, as a collective action referring to a collective activity or action people take to improve their community or as political involvement where the term is used to emphasise activities that involve political processes in solving collective issues.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> G. F. Harte and D. L. Owen, 'Fighting De-industrialisation: The Role of Local Government Social Audits', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 12.2, (1987), 123-141 (p. 123).

<sup>158</sup> Stephen Dobson, 'Urban Translations: Regeneration Through the Lens of Actor-Networking', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 30.8, (2015), 944-960 (p. 945).

<sup>159</sup> Kirsten Holmes and Yasminah Beebeejaun, 'City Centre Masterplanning and Cultural Spaces: A Case Study of Sheffield', *Journal of Retail & Leisure Property*, 6.1, (2007), 29-46 (p. 31).

<sup>160</sup> Rachel Granger, 'What Now for Urban Regeneration?', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers - Urban Design and Planning*, 163.1, (2010), 9-16 (p. 9).

<sup>161</sup> Peter Ramsden, 'Sheffield's Lower Don Valley: Recession and Regeneration', *Teaching Geography - Geographical Association*, 18.1, (1993), 11-17 (p. 12, 15).

<sup>162</sup> Peter Ramsden, 'Sheffield's Lower Don Valley: Recession and Regeneration', *Teaching Geography - Geographical Association*, 18.1, (1993), 11-17 (p. 12, 15).

<sup>163</sup> Stephen Dobson, 'Urban Translations: Regeneration Through the Lens of Actor-Networking', *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 30.8, (2015), 944-960 (p. 945).

<sup>164</sup> Richard P. Adler and Judy Goggin, 'What do We Mean by Civic engagement?', *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3.3, (2005), 236-253 (p. 238).

Universities can also play an important role in shaping civic engagement by addressing societal issues through pedagogies and building a community of learners which can identify and address issues of public concern.<sup>165</sup> As Muriel Egerton says, universities and colleges equip students with cognitive, social, and personal skills, enhancing civic engagement through engaging students with the community.<sup>166</sup> LP acts as a method for this. As Jane Anderson and Colin Priest explain, LP can contribute to civic engagement because it acts as a vehicle to learn and practice architecture both inside and outside the design studio while engaging with the city and its inhabitants.<sup>167</sup>

The programme acts as enabler and catalyst, as enabler because it provides tools and practical outputs for the community to take action and achieve their shared vision for their future. LP is a two-way learning programme in which the community as clients work in collaboration with master's students to develop a joint project, where students apply their acquired knowledge during their studies in a real setting and act as facilitators in the process of developing a project with the client. It can be argued that LP encourages civic engagement because it combines knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to identify and address issues related to society through research, design and most importantly working with community clients in a participatory approach.

I consider Live Projects as a “**catalyst**” because it has a long-term impact on the community. Once the output is delivered, the client has the possibility to take their project further through Live Works, the University of Sheffield School of Architecture's Urban Room which connects local people and partners on socially engaged projects that combine public events, research, and design outputs. Live Works operates as a community based architectural practice, and claims that community groups benefit from the collaboration of a network of partners in producing and developing design proposals and research that are locally relevant.<sup>168</sup> Live Projects on the other hand, is a student facing pedagogical programme that allows students to get involved in current social issues that go beyond another studio project because they interact with people and embed themselves in the context and real people's stories in their community.<sup>169</sup> The experiential learning methods LP sets up requires students to apply acquired knowledge, theory and principles (testing theories in practice) while developing commitment to the project. This learning process lets students experience the result of active experimentation, where they can analyse the project's outcome, reflect on their learning, and integrate perceptions into theories.<sup>170</sup> This combination of real practice, reflection, and collaboration with the community is a powerful tool for learning. In the process, the hierarchy of 'we know better' (from the student side) are left behind, and they embark on a learning process where both parties are equal in terms of knowledge translating the community's needs into achievable and feasible outputs for the short and long-term future of the community.

The programme places the community at the centre of the process where the client constantly communicates, exchanges knowledge, and makes decisions with students, resulting in a final output that translates the community's needs into the design. The programme encourages students to test and explore different methodologies to engage the community in participatory activities, for example, organising workshops, discussion groups, et, that will inform the final output of the client project.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Nancy Cantor, 'Civic Engagement. The University as a Public Good', *Liberal Education*, 90.2, (2004), 18-25 (p. 18, 20).

<sup>166</sup> Muriel Egerton, 'Higher education and civic engagement', *British Journal of Sociology*, 53.4, (2002), 513-700 (p. 2).

<sup>167</sup> Jane Anderson and Colin Priest, 'The Live Education of an Architect: John Hejduk and Oxford Brookes Year One Live Projects', *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*, 7.2, (2012), 50-62 (p. 51).

<sup>168</sup> Live Works, *About Live Works* (2023) <<https://liveworks.ssoa.info/who-we-are/>> [accessed 9 May, 2023].

<sup>169</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, 'A Live Currency: Introducing 'The SSoA Live Projects Handbook'', *AAE Conference 2013*, 1.1, (2013), 1-10 (p. 2).

<sup>170</sup> Paul Kirschner, Paul Van Vilsteren, Hans Hummel and Marcel Wigman, 'The Design of a Study Environment for Acquiring Academic and professional Competence', *Studies in Higher Education*, 2.22, (1997), 151-171 (p. 159, 160).

<sup>171</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown, *A Handbook for Live Projects, Getting started* (the University of Sheffield, 2013), p. 17.

As a form of continuity, Live Projects reinforces the view that the programme involves civic engagement through:

**The structure of the programme** is student-led, giving freedom to students to experience practice, and build a close relationship with the client (a member of a community, a group, or an organisation) through creative outcomes that usually take the form of a workshop or event that reflects client vision. Therefore, the client feels identified with the project creating a sense of belonging and owning the outcome that will lead to continuity. What Live Projects bring to students is a set of different ways of operating and practising architecture. As a result, students not only practice and develop design skills but are also immersed in social, political, and environmental issues that communities face and together build a strategy to better respond to those challenges. So, each Live project is unique but has one common objective: to bring positive changes to the community through architectural design and strategies that explore social matters.

**Encouraging critical reflection**, Live Projects contributes to building student's identity as a future practitioner through critical evaluation that considers the learning outcomes, for example, what was positive during the experience, what could have been done better, what methodology worked, and how was the group dynamic and interaction with the client. At the end of the six weeks (duration of the programme) students are engaged in a reflective session that helps them to look at their project from different perspectives by prompting conversation and asking questions that students may not have thought reflecting upon their learning that could inform future practice in the field.

**Live Works** is an Urban Room that invites the community and previous Live Projects clients to continue developing their projects after six weeks of working with students in a collaborative process. The community receive support through Live Works to continue discussing their future vision of their community at a small or broader scale. The approach is through discussing and developing further work with the community that results in a partnership with different community organisations to imagine the future possibilities and reflect on the upcoming outcomes and how cities are understood and viewed from the perspective of their inhabitants. Live Works as an Urban Room play an essential role in the city as a space to initiate and conduct research that looks at the well-being of places, exhibiting works produced by students during Live Projects. Therefore, the community can closely look at what has been produced and, through discussion and workshops, initiate a conversation that involves not only the city as a space but also the surrounding community.



Figure 12. Interacting activities with children, 2024. Image by the University of Sheffield. This shows LP also engages younger generations in its participatory approach.

## Live Projects

## Live Projects at Sheffield School of Architecture

‘Live Projects are important in educating the architects of the future because, in contrast to more conventional teaching methods, Live Projects develop the collaborative and participatory skills that are essential to future practice. Live Projects establish an awareness of the social responsibility of the architect’<sup>172</sup>

As described above Live Projects (LP) at Sheffield School of Architecture enables students to work with external community clients outside the university. During an intense six weeks project, students come together in teams of around twelve to fifteen members between September and November each year and learn together in a collaborative environment how to work with clients on a project that makes a positive social impact on the community.<sup>173</sup> The programme started in 1999 with two projects. Since then, it has grown to twenty-four projects in the year 2021 which means the programme is constantly evolving, establishing partnerships along the way with organisations and community groups. Therefore, the existing network positioned LP as a civically committed educational programme engaging students in social architecture.

LP is a pioneer educational initiative that combines research bringing a realistic vision and feasible strategy to the community. According to Carolyn Butterworth director of Live Works (the University of Sheffield Urban Room), the definition of the term Live Art is used, denoting: ‘a strategy to embrace ways of working that do not sit easily within received structures and boundaries and to empower artists who choose to operate across, in between and at the edges of more traditional artistic forms.’<sup>174</sup> Butterworth uses this definition with Live Projects at Sheffield: ‘If we replace the words ‘artists’ and ‘artistic’ with ‘architects’ and ‘architectural’, we shed light on what the term ‘live’ might offer in the context of Live Projects.’<sup>175</sup> Butterworth compared Live Projects with the term Live Art because both operate through actions that can be experienced involving other participants. It is also a way of reflecting while exploring different ways of operating; for example, some projects may take the form of a built project, creative participation, or an exhibition. So, LP responds to the community with various outputs, from community engagement to feasibility reports, from strategic planning to sustainability strategy, toolkit, or a website design. Therefore, LP offers the community opportunities to expand their voices and create a conversation with the broader community.

She continues arguing the term ‘Live’ depicts a different way of working which discusses the existing structure and at the same time, explores another way of operating. This approach is adopted enthusiastically and represents Live Projects where the student experiences different positions on the role of the architect while testing other ways of learning and practising architecture. This idea makes the difference between ‘live’ and ‘real’ that frame the basis of Live Projects understanding that it should not be a replication of architecture.<sup>176</sup> With this in mind, Live Projects represent the pedagogical approach that emphasises the practice importance of a collaborative and socially engaged

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<sup>172</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown, *A Handbook for Live Projects, Getting started* (the University of Sheffield, 2013), p. 2.

<sup>173</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, *Live Projects at SSoA, 20 years video* (2021) <<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/architecture/march/live-projects>> [accessed 23 March, 2022].

<sup>174</sup> Lois Keidan, Live Art UK Vision Paper quoted in Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, ‘A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook’, *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.75.

<sup>175</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, ‘A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook’, *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.75.

<sup>176</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, ‘A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook’, *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.75.



participatory process, where students have the opportunity to explore social and environmental issues with an emphasis on community participation.<sup>177</sup>

What makes LP a socially committed programme is that most clients are non-profit organisations from the voluntary sector, often associated with community groups. However, LP has also worked with the public sector and local Councils contributing to the development of outputs and strategies for the community. Most of the time, community groups are unsure about the financing or have not secured funding yet. Still, they are committed to working with enthusiasm toward a social mission that, in the long-term, could have a significant impact on their communities. To maintain the ethos of Live Projects, the criteria for choosing a project are well defined and should fulfil four aspects: (1) the client preferably should be from a public or voluntary sector, (2) The project should strengthen and offer opportunities for community participation, (3) The project should bring positives changes to the community, and (4) The project should contribute to enriching students learning.<sup>178</sup>

The social vision adopted by Live Projects is evident because it looks at the social impact of architectural interventions. For example, a local community in Goldthorpe in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, organise events and performance for young people to tackle antisocial behaviour. Live Projects students worked in collaboration with the local community to test ideas to engage young people between thirteen and nineteen years old in participatory events involving community stakeholders, such as the local church and the community group dedicated to protecting wildlife while creating a community space near the old mining. Together they came up with a participatory toolkit that provides the local community with means for young people to continue the legacy of organising events to feel heard.<sup>179</sup>

LP does not only propose projects such as developing a neighbourhood plan or an urban design project, among other outputs, but also looks at strengthening social relations through the appropriation of the project so people can continue working in their community. Unlike Joan Wink's point of view on the fundamentals of pedagogy where 'the purpose of education is to continually reconstruct society,'<sup>180</sup> Live Projects' aim is not to reconstruct society but to explore social matters regarding architecture and endeavour to create places that actively engage society according to their context.<sup>181</sup> Throughout Live Projects, students are actively involved with the community, understanding their concerns and thinking about possible strategies to address social matters.

Over the years, Live Projects have grown a database of two hundred and twenty-four projects that can be found on the LP website. Each year new projects are uploaded maintaining a constantly growing and updated database for public access. The majority of the projects are located in Sheffield and Britain, but there are several international projects with students working on-site or remotely with the clients.<sup>182</sup> Working in different contexts exposes students to a broader vision of issues that some other communities around the world are facing. After experience in working in other contexts, students are able to compare and critically reflect on their perceptions abroad, expanding their knowledge. Apart from the website, there is the Live Projects Handbook as a material of ongoing debate on the role of Live Projects at the School of Architecture. The handbook is a guide that explains the purpose of the programme and the learning outcomes and gives examples of previous community projects in that students were involved.<sup>183</sup> The handbook is a guide that explains the purpose of the

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<sup>177</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, 'A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook', *Charrette: project*, (2014), p. 73.

<sup>178</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. A handbook for Live Projects, *Getting started*, (2013) p.20.

<sup>179</sup> Creative Daerne, *Live Projects*, (2021) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2021/creative-dearne/>> [accessed 15 January, 2023].

<sup>180</sup> Joan Wink, Critical Pedagogy quoted in Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, 'A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook', *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.76.

<sup>181</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, 'A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook', *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.76.

<sup>182</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, 'A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook', *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.74.

<sup>183</sup> Carolyn Butterworth and Leo Care, 'A Live Currency: Introducing the SSoA Live Projects Handbook', *Charrette: project*, (2014), p.75.

programme and the learning outcomes and gives examples of previous community projects in that students were involved. The handbook is a way to spread the work that Live Projects have been carried out. It is a useful material for students to assimilate what Live Projects is about before they embark on the six weeks of working in groups and with the community as clients.

The material is also available outside the School of Architecture for the broader community to learn about LP and how it can help them build a future vision for the community. However, some clients are familiar with the programme because they have previously worked with the Live Projects or are willing to start a new project or give continuity to a previous project they have started. On the other hand, for other clients may be the first time working with the programme.<sup>184</sup> Therefore, students need to be aware that their responsibility is to develop a brief that translates the client's needs and agrees with them on the project's outcome.

Through Live Projects, clients from the public sector and grassroots organisations can get access to research and design that would be difficult to obtain due to the limited resources they hold.<sup>185</sup> On top of that, the client might not have the capacity to develop their vision into a design project due to the lack of expertise in the area. In contrast, students have the expertise to help the community to translate their vision into a design, a physical material, or a set of documents while learning and practicing architecture with a social standpoint that later they could apply to their future practice. Live Projects not only benefit the community but enables students to establish a close relationship with local partners, allowing them to share knowledge about the local context while conducting research. In addition, this way of learning creates a connection between students and citizens to work in collaboration toward an outcome that can benefit the community. In other words, citizens learn to reflect critically on their current situation by sharing information with students about the place while students receive feedback and deliver designs for the community based on the research they conducted together.

The experience in getting involved in Live Projects is challenging but at the same time rewarding. It opens the possibility of practising architecture toward a socially engaged perspective, reinforcing the idea architecture should be available for everyone and not just for a limited group of people. It is essential to mention that Live Projects is between practice and academic research, prompting to reflection and criticism in both areas. It inquires students to reflect on the process while they embed themselves as a group and as an individual into the projects. After exploring architecture practice through Live Projects, they could look at alternative modes of practice that goes beyond the 'common' role of the architect and looks onto interdisciplinarity and a participatory approach to working with the community.

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<sup>184</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. A handbook for Live Projects, *Getting started*, (2013) p.20.

<sup>185</sup> Live Projects, the University of Sheffield, *our clients tell us how useful working with students on Live Projects can be*. (2023) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/client-guide/>> [accessed 23 March, 2022].

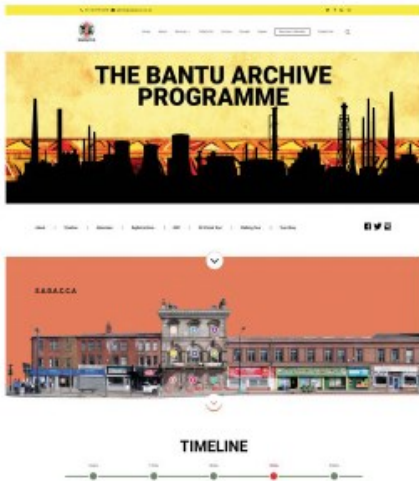


Figure 13. SADACCA Archive, 2021. Image by Live Projects. Sheffield School of Architecture students curated the history of SADACCA by creating an archive.



Figure 14. Portland Works, 2011. Image by Live Projects. Live Projects worked in collaboration with the local communities in a campaign "to save Portland Works."

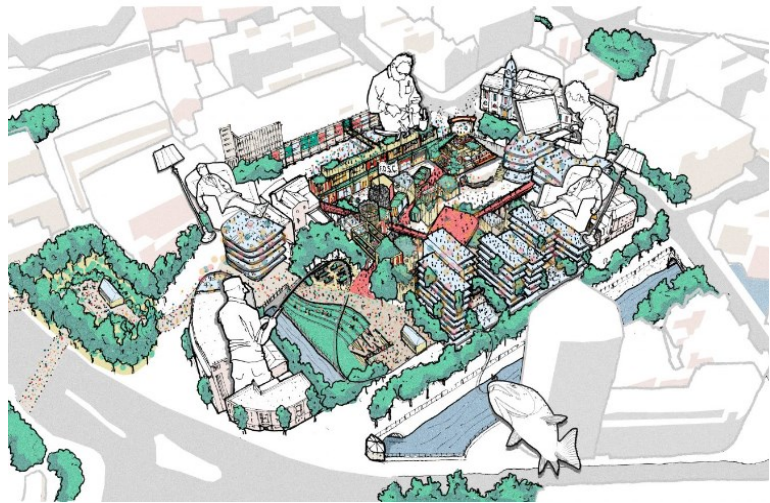


Figure 15. Imagine Castlegate, 2021. Image by Live Projects Network. Sheffield School of architecture students worked on a design proposal as an instrument to create a future vision for Castlegate.

## Live Projects as a pedagogical model

*'Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.'*<sup>186</sup>

The civic university is based on the idea of sharing and distributing knowledge produced in the institution within the wider community through educating citizens,<sup>187</sup> conducting research and teaching agenda that involves commitment to society through civic engagement.<sup>188</sup> The idea of the civic university is present at Sheffield School of Architecture and connected with the view of showing the value of the work the school produce through Live Projects and Live Works, identifying challenges community and the city confront and contributing to the discourse of resilience, sustainable regeneration, community engagement and co-design.<sup>189</sup> Throughout the teaching ethos of the school, the motivation the liveness approach encourages students to practice architecture while they engage with the city while talking to people.<sup>190</sup> This view is supported by the psychologist Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, et al. who writes that civic engagement is linked with active participation that inspire people to get involved increasing their understanding about society's issues and for that reason makes them more tolerant with others.<sup>191</sup>

Architecture is for the welfare of people, the community, and the city, engaging architecture students with people while they are at the university is crucial for their career formation. They start to learn skills in the school that in the upcoming years of studies; they can use to experiment outside design studios and engage with the community. Effective professional practice involves conceptual and operational understanding of the knowledge and skills. By experiencing community service, both understandings are achieved.<sup>192</sup> The psychologist Paul Van Kirschner et al. argues that in higher education students engaged in activities outside the institution have the opportunity to apply and test knowledge acquired from theory and principles previously learnt and at the same time reflect about the results obtained during the personal experience.<sup>193</sup> Susan Roakes et al. posits that, academic learning is enriched when students and community services activities are linked, thus allowing individuals and community organisations to exchange knowledge and benefit positively from the interaction. After experiencing community interaction, students from the graduate programme in City and Regional Planning at the university of Memphis reported that working with the community reinforced their commitment as well as their sense of citizenship.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Thomas Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (American Council on Education Series on Higher Education ORYX Press, 2000), p. vi.

<sup>187</sup> Craig Calhoun, 'The University and the Public Good', *Thesis Eleven*, 89, (2006), 7–43 (p. 19).

<sup>188</sup> John D. Brewer, *The Public Value of the Social Sciences, an Interpretative Essay* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 6.

<sup>189</sup> Live Works, *Live Works Operates in Three Core Areas* (2023) <<https://liveworks.ssoa.info/about/>> [accessed 9 May, 2023].

<sup>190</sup> Sheffield School of Architecture, *About Live Projects* (2021) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/about/>> [accessed 10 May, 2023].

<sup>191</sup> Elizabeth Theiss-Morse and John R. Hibbing, 'Citizenship and Civic Engagement', *Annual Review of Political Science*, (2005), (p. 227).

<sup>192</sup> Susan L. Roakes and Dorothy Norris-Tirrell, 'Community Service Learning in Planning Education, A Framework for Course Development', *Journal of planning education and research*, (2000), p. 100.

<sup>193</sup> Paul Kirschner, Vilsteren Van, Hans Hummel and Marcel Wigman, 'The Design of a Study Environment for Acquiring Academic and Professional Competence', *Studies in higher education*, 22.2, (1997), 151-171, p. 159.

<sup>194</sup> Susan L. Roakes and Dorothy Norris-Tirrell, 'Community Service Learning in Planning Education, A Framework for Course Development', *Journal of planning education and research*, (2000), p. 102, 109.

According to Ruth Morrow, in teaching settings learning approaches originated with the purpose of addressing questions such as: 'what do we want (students) to learn? Live Projects expand that to ask: what more do we want architecture students need to learn? Tutors create Live Projects, sometimes instinctively, in response to perceived gaps in education or areas of practice that normative design studios fail to address.'<sup>195</sup> Although, studios show a broad vision of the real-world situation, providing students with tools to test theoretical and practical knowledge in a real community context, emphasising environmental and community needs, contact with people in the community tends to be limited.

Live Projects as a pedagogical model allow students to situate what they have learnt throughout their architectural education so far. A group of students work outside the enclosed studio space or the professional practice space to initiate a close relationship with a community organisation as a client. Working in collaboration with the community, students embed themselves into an architectural practice that is socially committed while reflecting on their future practice. In other words, Live Projects offers a different dynamic for students that motivates learning and the sharing of ideas of the design process and how practising an engaged architecture that is different from the studio setting.<sup>196</sup>

Harriet Harris argues, 'architects are largely preoccupied with material rather than social outcomes. Yet underlying social issues are often hard to serve.'<sup>197</sup> There is the thinking that architects come with preconceived projects and that they are not opened to listening to people. Some professionals in the area still have that vision, perhaps because of the way they had been educated at the University in the past. For that reason, the concept of the civic university that is committed to have a long-term impact in the community must be revised and added to the University curricula. Sheffield School of Architecture encourages students to question practice and other ways of doing architecture. The conflicting and contentious view of architecture that rises up in studios is relevant for students as it helps them begin questioning their position regarding it. In addition, the value and the essence of the architectural practice are under close examination during Live Projects. Therefore, students have the chance to explore as Sandra Denicke-Polcher and Torange Khonsari mentions 'new ways of practising architecture and [...] rethink the traditional role of the architect as a service provider [...]'.<sup>198</sup>

When students work in a collaborative and participatory process with the community, the client tends to realise how far students can go, not only in terms of design or the final output but also in how working and talking to students could bring up local issues related to the community that perhaps the client could not notice. This partnership offers an exchange of knowledge. From the community side, they are the experts in the area they live in, and students can have a clear idea of the client's expectations and what they are hoping to achieve with the project while learning about the site. From the student side, they have the opportunity to experience real practice while engaging with real clients for a design of a project that will have a positive impact in the future of those communities they worked.

Live Projects at the Sheffield School of Architecture has twenty-one years of trajectory and has developed from 1999 to 2023 two hundred and fifty-two project.<sup>199</sup> They have built strong

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<sup>195</sup> Ruth Morrow, 'Live Project Love, Building a Framework for Live Projects', in *Architecture Live projects Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harris Harriet and Widder Lynnette (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. XIX.

<sup>196</sup> Jane Anderson and Collin Priest, 'Developing an Inclusive Definition, Typological Analysis and Online Resource for Live Projects', in *Architecture Live projects Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harris Harriet and Widder Lynnette (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p.10.

<sup>197</sup> Harriet Harris, 'Co-Authoring a Live Projects Manifesto', in *Architecture Live Projects, Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harriet Harris and Lynette Widder (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p.45.

<sup>198</sup> Sandra Denicke-Polcher and Torange Khonsari, (2012) quoted by Ruth Morrow, (2014) in *Architecture Live projects Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harris Harriet and Widder Lynnette (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. XX.

<sup>199</sup> Sheffield School of Architecture, *About Live Projects* (2021) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/>> [accessed 10 May, 2023].

partnerships with many clients across the community through those years, and their networks are continually growing. Achieving meaningful work, requires long-term work with the community and partners to build a solid relationship that could be sustained over time. Live Projects is a six-week student-led programme that brings new ideas and possibilities and initiates discussion around the building environment producing physical material that supports the client to accomplish their objective related to the production of space. According to Till at the 2012 Architecture Live Projects Pedagogy International Symposium 'Live Projects are perceived by some as being too technically or sociologically complex for year one or even undergraduate students to tackle.'<sup>200</sup> In terms of complexity, Live Projects are challenging because of the timeframe. Students have six weeks to analyse the brief, engage with the project, understand their client's needs, and produce a final output that responds to a social issue. Projects may vary across groups, which does not mean some projects are easier than others, each project carries its own complexity encouraging students to critically reflect on current issues affecting the communities.

That complexity adds value to the student learning process addressing four emergent areas described by Ruth Morrow as: (1) 'People': with Live Projects, students are exposed to a variety of people involved in the architectural field such as other professions, contractors, client organisations, and particularly users outside the architecture field. (2) 'Processes': Live Projects bring the opportunity to students to participate and be involved in stages beyond the design process. It gives the potential to define briefs, fundraise, organise workshops and develop marketing strategies for clients; (3) 'Other skills': students acquire different skills from experiencing live projects. The skills students acquire are group work, audience-responsive communication skills, reporting, and negotiation. (4) 'Value systems': Live Projects exempt students from the tutor position of power that often emerges in the studios.<sup>201</sup> With Live Projects students acquire and develop a variety of useful skills to apply in their studio project as well as their own practice outside the school. At the end of their master course students are prepared with a set of knowledge that will inform their practice.

At many schools, community design centres and charitable organisations work in partnership with a university. So, projects may vary from a single building to urban design and even a regional planning, through which the funding for these projects often comes from external partners. According to Michael Davis from the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Auckland, Live Projects clients are community groups, government agencies, small businesses, and developers that seek to establish a relationship with the school to strengthen the collaboration between academia and organisations. Out of this partnership, the community receive a set of outputs that are the starting point for funding applications and community consultation.<sup>202</sup> So, to carry on the work started by Live Projects, Butterworth and Leo Care co-director of Live Works set up an Urban Room as a mechanism to continue the work with the clients and thus build a solid relationship between the community and academia. Stephen Long emphasises, 'engaging local communities to address their needs and concerns can be done with partnerships, leadership, and organizational commitment.'<sup>203</sup> Through community engagement Urban Rooms can become as Ellen Hirzy says 'a centre where people gather to meet and converse and an active, visible player in civic life, a safe haven, and a trusted incubator of

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<sup>200</sup> Jeremy Till, (2012) at Architecture 'Live Projects' pedagogy international symposium quoted in Jane Anderson and Colin Priest in *Architecture Live projects Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harris Harriet and Widder Lynnette (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. 11.

<sup>201</sup> Ruth Morrow, 'Live Project Love, Building a Framework for Live Projects', in *Architecture Live projects Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harris Harriet and Widder Lynnette (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. XIX.

<sup>202</sup> Michael Davis, 'Academy Profession Market, Problematising Tensions in The Live Project', *The journal of public space*, 2.3, (2017), p. 86.

<sup>203</sup> Stephen Long, 'Practicing Civic Engagement: Making your Museum into a Community Living Room', *Journal of Museum Education*, 38.2, (2015), 141-153 (p. 142).

change.<sup>204</sup> As a way of engaging people in the production of space, The Urban Education Live seminar held at the Sheffield School of Architecture in 2020 discussed the idea of how Urban Rooms are means of starting conversations with the community. Community Hubs and Urban Rooms connect people building social cohesion through conversations that bring up issues in the local community and imagining the community's future. As Christine Theodoropoulos, architect and engineer argues, '[...] design partnership projects are celebrated as exemplary contexts for architectural education that integrate numerous learning objectives while providing opportunities to serve communities.'<sup>205</sup> So, Urban Rooms hold great potential to build a social network of people who could work together on similar projects. Apart from an Urban Room being a place for prompting discussion, it also serves as a place for public exhibition. According to Mia Papaefthimiou architect and designer, exhibitions have the power to emphasise the need for live, engaging, and critical curatorial practices in the production of architectural design.<sup>206</sup>

### Live Projects outputs for the community and the contribution to student learning, a mutual learning experience

*'Many Live Projects create a legacy, either by triggering subsequent projects or in the opportunities they open up for students.'*<sup>207</sup>

The psychologist Kurt Lewin has used the word dynamic to describe activities, processes, operations, and changes that occur in groups. At the same time, his work suggests that groups have a powerful influence on their members and society. Dynamic systems are fluid, and this means the relationship between members develop and evolve over time.<sup>208</sup> Therefore, group dynamics are very complex to understand due to many factors that can occur within groups that will have different effects on the way people behave and work together. The early stages are crucial and perhaps the most important stage because that is where the relationship between members will be established. They will start to get to know each other and build a relationship based on trust. The more they trust each other, the more they will feel comfortable to come up with ideas that will benefit the group.

Live Projects assemble groups of people with specific interests and common objectives. The challenge for students is to develop an appropriate and ethical methodology such as participatory workshops, game boards, toolkits, documents, digital resources and so on to work with community clients to understand their needs and create a design work that is feasible for them, empowering community to take action and transform their reality.<sup>209</sup> Students work in groups during Live Projects, and they can offer support to each other to understand the brief correctly. After all, the brief is the main part of Live Projects and students need to be aware; they are not designing for themselves.

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<sup>204</sup> Ellen Hirzy, 'Mastering Civic Engagement: A Report from the American Association of Museums', *American Association of Museums*, (2002), 9-20.

<sup>205</sup> Christine Theodoropoulos, 'The Naab Live Project Paradigm', in *Architecture Live projects Pedagogy into Practice*, ed. by Harris Harriet and Widder Lynnette (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. 62.

<sup>206</sup> Mia Papaefthimiou, 'Night at the Museum: Battle for the Future of Architecture', *2nd Annual AAE Conference 2014 Living and Learning, the University of Sheffield*, (2014), p. 1.

<sup>207</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. *A handbook for Live Projects, Getting started*, (2013) p.38.

<sup>208</sup> Kurt Lewin (1943, 1948, 1951) quoted in Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th edn. (Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), p. 18.

<sup>209</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. *A handbook for Live Projects, Getting started*, (2013) p.40.

Instead, they are delivering an output for the client with a specific interest. As Live Projects is a student-led programme, their responsibility is to meet with the client regularly and manage the project.

In terms of the clients, they are available to provide any material that will help develop the design. Clients should be able to hand over reports, plans, strategies documents, and any type of information they think may be helpful. They are also committed to meet regularly, discussing the brief with the students, and giving feedback during the meetings. While observing and interacting with clients and stakeholders, students develop an understanding of the local conditions. At the same time, trust and commitment arise between students, clients, and the community, allowing possible solutions for their needs.<sup>210</sup> It is beneficial to have constructive and honest feedback, where everybody learns from each other. At the end of the six weeks, the final proposal and design should be ready to deliver to the programme and the client. In the process students establish a cohesive group, get to know each other, and build connections and trust with other members of the team and with the client. It is vital for effective teamwork to respect and support each other, which potentially will lead to better project results. While the project is developed, students begin to understand the complexity of spatial design and how it is linked with other aspects, such as network of people, funding, and resources available.

During the programme, clients need to be aware of the costs and the effort students put into their work. In the beginning, clients might be sceptical of the quality and value of the work students are able to produce. Afterwards, they realise the student's work's potential to help their project apply for funding.<sup>211</sup> To get financing, it is essential for clients to hold a design proposal that is clear and well visualised, such as drawings, models, reports, etc. From the process of Live Project, clients can also benefit through sharing skills, knowledge, and ideas between clients, students, and a more comprehensive network of stakeholders.<sup>212</sup> Through the learning process with the community, students start to explore ways of engaging the clients in a conversation, for instance, thinking about the future of the project or building and the client's long-term vision of the project. Reflecting on possible scenarios for the project to bring a discussion to the client to make the project resilient. The notion of co-production at the core of the Live projects invites students to reflect on their practice, how to involve people, and, most importantly, how to work with the community.

The challenge in working in such a big group of twelve to fifteen students, as it happens with Live Projects, is how they organise themselves as a team to fulfil their expectations and the client's need. They need to rely on each other during the process, and each member of the team will have a different perception and opinion toward the brief or the information the client gives to them during the meetings. They only have six weeks to manage and coordinate the project. As a group, they need to come to an agreement about the output to be delivered to the client. For example, during their first meeting with Rob in the project 'SADACCA Archive', students were not clear if the client wanted them to create the archive or curating it. Therefore, having a clear and direct conversation with the client is crucial from the very beginning of the project to decide the best outcome that adjust to the client's objective.

Another critical aspect the students faced is how to organise themselves strategically during those six weeks. They need to plan, define their objective and how they are going to develop the project week by week. All projects are different, and there is no specific way of doing it. So, they need to define in their group how they are going to approach the project. Another challenge during Live Projects, in terms of research, is what information the client is able to provide to the group, for

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<sup>210</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. *A handbook for Live Projects, Getting started*, (2013), p.40.

<sup>211</sup> Prue Chiles, Jeremy Till, 'Live Projects: An Inspirational Model, The Student Perspective', *Centre for Education in the Built Environment*, (2004), p. 7.

<sup>212</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. *A handbook for Live Projects, Getting started*, (2013) p. 3.



example, it could include drawings plans, building measures, official documents, detailed network maps of the organisation and so on. Students are responsible for gathering all the necessary information to inform the project and identifying what information is missing that will contribute to the project.

According to the architects Prue Chiles and Till, indicate that students find the Live Projects programme very useful and relevant for their future practice. Key reasons were identified and cited by the authors as follows: (1) Timing: after having experience in practice and returning to their studies, students are able to evaluate the relationship between client, practice and community from an academic perspective of the university context and establish the difference between the office point of view and the academia. (2) Social benefits: Live Projects are group projects contained within a specific time limit, making it easy for new students to join and work with established students on the project efficiently. (3) Perception: Students' perception of the projects is to enjoy working in collaboration with the community for a change rather than working competitively. (4) Feedback: students feel motivated by the positive feedback received by clients. Through Live projects, clients have realised how skilful architecture students can be in planning and developing projects. (5) Jobs: students find that Live Projects help them build their curriculum. After completing the course, students reported that their chances with prospective employers are very high. (6) Communication: During Live Projects, students constantly develop their communication skills and see this as a positive aspect of the process. (7) Skills: Live Project makes architecture education pertinent. Active, hands-on work contributes to the development of carpentry and practical building skills. (8) Moral and ethical: Live Projects is significant for the School of Architecture and the community. It provides benefits to the community in terms of design, and a better understanding of what architecture means to society, the public often is uncertain about the role of the architect.<sup>213</sup>

### Feed a Million and Friends of SADACCA as an example of outputs for the community

*'The most important thing is we are telling our story in our way, in our words.'*<sup>214</sup>

In the effort to involve the community from the beginning until the end of the programme, Live Projects concludes with a public presentation to celebrate students' work, and clients are invited to give feedback and tell their experiences of working with the student. As an example of students' outputs for the community, I would like to refer to two projects that reflect a strong sense of identity. 'Feed a Million,' as part of Live Projects 2021, students worked with a local charity that works for sustainable development in Attercliffe, Sheffield, bringing food production as the core vision for the future of the area and 'SADACCA Archive,' a project that curated an archive with the Sheffield and District African and Caribbean Community Association, that have contributed to Sheffield's community over many years.

The project Feed a Million started with the initial client's idea to look at the regeneration of Attercliffe under the scope of food production. They work on behalf of a charity organisation known as Econé, established by community members to build a future vision for Attercliffe. They worked in

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<sup>213</sup> Prue Chiles, Jeremy Till, 'Live Projects: An Inspirational Model, The Student Perspective', *Centre for Education in the Built Environment*, (2004), p. 3.

<sup>214</sup> Rob Cotterell, SADACCA Chairman. *SADACCA Archive* (2021) <<http://www.liveprojects.org/2021/sadacca-archive/>> [accessed 16 March, 2022].

partnership with other organisations and the Sheffield City Council to go ahead with the plan to regenerate this part of the city and bring new commercial use that could generate incomes for social benefit.<sup>215</sup> In the past, the Sheffield City Council designed a master plan for the regeneration of the area. However, the project relied on developers, putting the Attercliffe community's memories and identity at risk of gentrification. The community considered the developers would take most of the profit away. Hence, the social organisation was interested in looking at regeneration from a position where the community could be the main beneficiary.<sup>216</sup>

Attercliffe was a prosperous area in Sheffield where many steel industries operated. As Attercliffe's resident Conrad Aldridge mentions 'I guess when the industry closed, it was a bit of an embarrassment, and the people left, but they gave their heart and soul to this place.'<sup>217</sup> The decline of the steel industry in the seventies and the economic recession left vacant buildings and underused spaces that one day was part of a thriving community. As Aldridge, many other people from the community were witnesses of the flourishing community and the decline of the steel industry in the area. Aldridge remembers, 'The magic of Attercliffe in the past was its community spirit. The street here were lined back-to-back houses. There were thousands of them. They demolished them all... when you give everything to a place, of course, part of you stays there. I mean, you feel it's a part of you, and as part of you, it becomes very special.'<sup>218</sup>

Aldridge had a vision of creating a food production centre, imagining Attercliffe as an urban farming hub. So, students worked with the client, organising meetings and charrettes to initiate a conversation with residents in Attercliffe and stakeholders about local markets and identify the potential the place carries. As urban agriculture was the primary client's vision, students delivered a future vision for Attercliffe that consisted in creating a community hub that encourages urban agriculture and promotes a culture of harvesting through a community kitchen that unites people and establishes a solid relationship in favour of local food production.

Besides the design plan strategy, students delivered a toolkit for community engagement based on tactics for growing food in urban settings. Natural resources are gradually decreasing, and there is an urge to find alternative ways to feed the population. Relying on food that comes from other parts of the world is not sustainable in the long-term; therefore, the need to produce food locally will be required.<sup>219</sup> Likewise, R-Urban hub in Colombes, a set of hubs (Agrocité, Recyclab and Ecohab) located in Paris and designed by AAA (*Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée*), shares similarities with the project 'Feed a Million.' The initial idea started as a Live Projects in 2022 with the project 'Participative gardening and communication spaces in Paris' and in 2024 with the project 'Mobile Library, Paris' with AAA as client. The hubs represent community resilience and co-production by identifying the community capacity and integrating them into the project to create opportunities for the community to put into practice and develop new skills through training that focuses on supporting the local economy by using the community garden as a laboratory to learn how to grow food. As a result, a network of people emerged and contributed to creating a civic hub that hosts and supports collaborative practices.<sup>220</sup> As a result, a network of people emerged and contributed to creating a civic hub that hosts and supports collaborative practices. Both projects are ways of finding answers to gradually bring the idea of food production to urban settings and establish a network of people that

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<sup>215</sup> Live Projects, *FeedAMillion* (2021) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2021/feedamillion/>> [accessed 13 May, 2023].

<sup>216</sup> Live Projects, *FeedAMillion* (2021) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2021/feedamillion/>> [accessed 13 May, 2023].

<sup>217</sup> Conrad Aldridge, *Feeding A Million. Live Projects Presentation* (2021) <<http://www.liveprojects.org/2021/feedamillion/>> [accessed 16 March, 2022].

<sup>218</sup> Conrad Aldridge, *Feeding A Million. Live Projects Presentation* (2021) <<http://www.liveprojects.org/2021/feedamillion/>> [accessed 16 March, 2022].

<sup>219</sup> Live Projects, *FeedAMillion* (2021) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2021/feedamillion/>> [accessed 13 May, 2023].

<sup>220</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou, Maliha Safri, Katherine Gibson, 'Calculating the Value of the Commons: Generating Resilient Urban Futures', *Environmental Policy and Governance*, (2021), 159-174.

reinforces active participation where the community take responsibility for their social and economic future.<sup>221</sup>

On the other hand, Rob Cotterell, chairman of SADACCA brought back memories of when he lived in Attercliffe when he was nine years old. Cotterell mentioned how the place used to be back in that time with all the factories operating and the shops near every corner. Cotterell from SADACCA and Aldridge from Econé exchanged contact for future talking and support for both organisations. One thing that Live Projects bring, apart from the creative outputs, is the opportunity to build a connection with people and create a community around ideas, visions, and memories of places. In the case of SADACCA, the organisation worked before with Live Projects in 2019 in the project 'Friend of SADACCA.' The project aimed to redefine the vision of SADACCA for the future generation to attract young people to join the community centre and, in the future, to continue with SADACCA's legacy for the community. Due to the funding cuts in time of austerity during the economic recession in 2008 combined with services dedicated to older adults, SADACCA has been associated as a place for the elder, not attracting enough young generation to join the association.<sup>222</sup> Nevertheless, SADACCA continues providing services such as day care for the elderly, a music studio for young artists, and a communal space for gatherings. In addition, the building is proven to be a place for live events within the community.<sup>223</sup>

For the project, students looked at different aspects, such as the physical building and its future redevelopment and the creation of engagement tools that will help the organisation build collaboration with stakeholders. Apart from the set of documents, students proposed a new organisation logo that reflected SADACCA's identity of unity. According to the client, they have been working on rebranding, and some other people they worked with came up with proposals that somehow changed the identity of the organisation, whereas the work students produced translated the strong identity the organisation has with the community. The students' approach to the project demonstrates they have the expertise to propose solutions that facilitates ways in which SADACCA could engaged with stakeholders and young people.<sup>224</sup> The organisation decided to continue working with Live Projects on the creation of an archive that tells the story of the migration of the African and Caribbean community to Sheffield and to discover the contribution of a big community that established its roots in the early fifties in Sheffield; still, it was until the eighties where they formed an association.<sup>225</sup> The archive is a permanent public exhibition known as 'the Bantu archive' that is open to people to contribute by adding new documents. The previous material of 'Friends of SADACCA' project was helpful for the team to take the material further and develop the archive. So, the last output designed for SADACCA helped students with the continuity of the project to follow the same narrative.

These two examples of Live Projects reflect the programme approach in educating future architects because of the way they developed the collaborative and participatory skills necessary for practice. The students were eager to engage with social responsibility and produce work of exceptional quality for the communities they worked with. The contribution of Live Projects to architectural pedagogy is broad; it helps communities achieve their shared vision and enrich the student's learning experience and skills, such as developing design, management, and enterprises

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<sup>221</sup> Doina Petrescu, Constatin Petcou and Corelia Baibarac, 'Co-producing Commons-based Resilience: Lessons from R-Urban', *Building Research & Information*, 44.7, (2016), 717-736.

<sup>222</sup> Live Projects, *Friends of SADACCA* (2019) <<http://www.liveprojects.org/2019/friends-of-sadacca/>> [accessed 23 March, 2022].

<sup>223</sup> SADACCA, *Welcome to SADACCA* (2021) <<https://www.sadacca.co.uk/>> [accessed 13 May, 2023].

<sup>224</sup> Live Projects, *Friends of SADACCA* (2019) <<http://www.liveprojects.org/2019/friends-of-sadacca/>> [accessed 23 March, 2022].

<sup>225</sup> SADACCA (Sheffield and District African Caribbean Community Association), *Brief History* (2021) <<https://www.sadacca.co.uk/about/>> [accessed 23 March, 2022].

relevant skills for future practice.<sup>226</sup> It also helps students build up and upgrade their experience in practice, increasing their chances of working with potential clients. They realised that developing soft skills such as talking and interacting with people puts into perspective that the architect should not only be seen as the producer but also as the enabler that listens to people and works with them in a collaborative environment. This different way of learning, practising, thinking, and experiencing architecture through Live Projects exposes students to the complexity of real situations and allows them to perceive the potential of research by design and reflect on processes, roles, and effects of architecture.<sup>227</sup> Architects should work with the community and with other professionals in a multidisciplinary environment where the exchange of knowledge and expertise contributes to the development of the project where the community is placed at the centre of the process.

### Live Works as a mechanism of continuity

*'...Collaboration has really developed alongside the growth of this idea of the civic university, where the University actively contributes to the development of its host city through teaching and research'<sup>228</sup>*

The 2008 financial crisis led the UK Government to a budget deficit hitting cuts in public services. Due to the crisis, the significant National debt, and the public spending after 2007, finances were compromised. To tackle the deficit the government formed a coalition between two parties, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The alliance proposed initiatives regarding local governance and the introduction of 'The Big Society.'<sup>229</sup> Community involvement started to increase after the UK national government reframed the legislation, which relied on stakeholders from the voluntary and private sectors and introduced the 'The Big Society' Localism Act 2011 as a reaction to the centralised policies of the previous government. The introduction of the Big Society refers to society as a leading force for progress, meaning social responsibility is in the citizens' hands. It's a concept for progress at the grassroots level, empowering communities to take an active role in their communities.<sup>230</sup>

Building a society under 'the Big Society' scope is the responsibility of civil society, organisations, private sectors, and local governments. So, the university as an institution plays a vital role in society with its resources and research experience. The university has the skills and knowledge to support the local community in responding to social, political, and economic challenges. So, the civic university aims to identify ways universities and the community can build a partnership that benefits society. As found in Shinichiro Maeshima's work, 'the role of the university has recently expanded to include contributing to the local community.' Maeshima continues arguing universities

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<sup>226</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. A handbook for Live Projects, *Getting started*, (2013), p.2.

<sup>227</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, Jen Langfield, Ian Hicklin and Sam Brown. A handbook for Live Projects, *Getting started*, (2013), p.4.

<sup>228</sup> Carolyn Butterworth, *Castlegate 'Live Project' Enables Student Involvement in City Regeneration* (2022). <<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/social-sciences/research/teaching/castlegate>> [accessed 23 March, 2022].

<sup>229</sup> Vivien Lowndes and Lawrence Pratchett, 'Local Governance under the Coalition Government: Austerity, Localism and the 'Big Society'', *Local Government Studies*, Volume 38, 2012. Issue 1, (2011), (p. 22,23).

<sup>230</sup> Peter Leyland, 'The Localism Act 2011: Local Government Encounters the "Big Society"', *Istituzioni del Federalismo: Rivista di Studi Giuridici e Politici*. Issues 4, (2012), (p. 770, 771).

could contribute to the welfare of society through the knowledge acquired in their educational and research activities.<sup>231</sup>

As institutions, universities are significant actors that operate at a grassroots level in partnership with other institutions, the community, and the local government to nurture projects by creating a network of partners connecting different actors for the public good. For example, the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield plays a crucial role in society through teaching and research and in the well-being of places through Live Projects and Live Works. On the other hand, there are barriers behind the university engagement and the civil society in bridging relations. These challenges for example, could include the limited resources universities have narrowing the degree of involvement in external projects. Whereas, from the external bodies points of view there are still the perception that students' outputs could not meet their demand, and others perceive the university as being inward focused therefore, they are not aware of how universities can support civic society.<sup>232</sup>

As a mechanism to work with local communities, the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield has set up Live Works, an Urban Room located in the Sheffield City Centre. It is a space for showing the community the work produced during Live Projects and other community-based projects undertaken by academics. It is a permanent space funded by the university that employs graduated students to carry on work with the community. It aims to engage people to participate in architectural projects and join the community in a physical space to discuss a number of issues related to design, architecture, and the city.<sup>233</sup> Terry Farrell mentions in his *Review of Architecture and Built Environment* that institutions, practitioners of the built environment, and governments need to engage citizens in planning policy and development proposals that involve the transformation of the built environment. In order to do that, Farrell proposed an Urban Room managed by local universities as a space that integrates knowledge in a learning environment that involves the community to generate discussion about the future development of the city.<sup>234</sup> Therefore, Live Works and Live Projects represent many voices and visions from the community expressed in their projects.

As previously mentioned, Live Projects is a six-week programme that happens once a year, becoming a challenge to maintain a continuity of the projects developed by students during Live Projects. In response to that need, the School of Architecture set up Live Works as an opportunity to continue working with clients and graduate students to support community projects on a professional basis. So, for example, if a client was involved in a previous Live Projects and managed to get funding for the continuation of their project, they can do so through Live Works and move the project to the next phase. It is also an opportunity to work with people outside academia and join research with people working in architecture practice, community groups, and organisations in a collaborative approach. Therefore, the process of gathering ideas and giving people space to engage in a conversation enables them toward agency because they are aware their voice matters, and it gives them the confidence to build up the capacity to make decisions for their community. Hence, Live Works brings an active method facilitating connections within different sectors, breaking the gaps between teaching and research between the university and the city.

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<sup>231</sup> Shinichiro Maeshima, *Contributions to the Local Community Through the University*, (IntechOpen 2022), p. x, 5.

<sup>232</sup> John Goddard and Paul Vallance, 'The Civic University and the Leadership of Place', *Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS)*, (2011), (p. 1,12,13).

<sup>233</sup> Live Works, *Who We Are* (2023) <<https://liveworks.ssoa.info/who-we-are/>> [accessed 10 February, 2022].

<sup>234</sup> Mark Tewdwr-Jones, Dhruv Sookhoo and Robert Freestone, 'From Geddes' City Museum to Farrell's Urban Room: Past, Present, and Future at the Newcastle City Futures Exhibition', *Planning Perspectives*, 35.2, (2020), 277-297 (p. 281).

## Revealing Castlegate as an example of Live Works

Castlegate is in the northern part of the city, and it is where Sheffield castle was previously located. Due to a series of political and sociological events, the castle was destroyed during the English Civil War in the mid-seventeenth century<sup>235</sup> and remained hidden under layers of debris, but it emerged to the surface since its excavation. On top of the historic castle, the Castle Market was built, which had been there since 1959, but in 2015 with the City Council's planning decision to build a shopping area to the south of the city centre, the Castle Market was demolished.<sup>236</sup> Previously, in 2014 the project Revealing Castlegate was part of Live Projects. Students explored strategies to re-engage people with the history of the castle. As part of the design plan, they proposed an accessible platform for people to visit and interact with the remaining rest of the castle that was revealed during the last archaeological excavation.<sup>237</sup> Since then, Live Works has been working with Friends of the Castle and the local community for around six years in a project to reimagine Castlegate.

In 2020, At the Festival of the Mind, an event that brings together academics and professionals from the creative industry to share their research with the community, the hidden history of the Sheffield Castle around the area of Castlegate was put into evidence. It was a result of many years of work in collaboration with the department of archaeology of the University of Sheffield, Sheffield City Council and the Sheffield Museum that made possible the publication of the book *Sheffield Castle*. The book is a compilation of information from previous excavations and objects found on the site, that explain the past of Sheffield medieval history and discusses the implication of heritage for the regeneration of the site.<sup>238</sup> In addition, the archaeologist Professor John Moreland has worked in partnership with the Sheffield School of Architecture, the City Council, local businesses, and the local community to explore possibilities for the regeneration of Castlegate that can preserve and celebrate the history of the place. The research conducted by the school of architecture and the department of archaeology with the help of students and other partners has significantly contributed toward the ambition of redeveloping Castlegate.<sup>239</sup>

Understanding the past is significant for the future development of the site and for the identity of the city that is much more reminiscent of its steel manufacturing during the industrial revolution. People might necessarily not know the history of Sheffield castle, but its traces remain on the street name around the area where it was the old Sheffield city centre.<sup>240</sup> Rediscovering Sheffield history before the industrial revolution is a way of recapturing people's sense of identity to bring a positive impact on the future development of Castlegate that remains uncertain. Rediscovering the story of Castlegate will get back the value the area once had due to its rich history, but for that to happen, the community needs to recognise the history of Castlegate to make the area a distinctive place again. Butterworth and Martin Gornan, chair of the Friend of Sheffield Castle, a voluntary group to protect and promote Sheffield castle for the community and future generations have been working in

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<sup>235</sup> Matthew Leach, Steve Maddock, Dawn Hadley, Carolyn Butterworth, John Moreland, Gareth Dean, Ralph Mackinder, Kacper Pach, Nick Bax, Michaela Mckone & Dan Fleetwood, 'Recreating Sheffield's Medieval Castle in Situ using Outdoor Augmented Reality', in *Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality*, ed. by Patrick Bourdot, Sue Cobb Victoria Interrante, Hirokazu kato Didier Stricker (Eds.), 15th EuroVR International Conference edn. (2018), p. 213.

<sup>236</sup> Carolyn Butterworth with Ronald Lawrance, 'Provocateurs or consultants? The role of Sheffield School of Architecture in the co-production of Castlegate, and Interview with Carolyn Butterworth', in *Architecture and Resilience Interdisciplinary Dialogues*, ed. by Kim Trogal, Irena Bauman, Ranald Lawrence and Doina Petrescu, 1st edn. (Routledge, 2018), p. 135.

<sup>237</sup> Live Projects, *Revealing Castlegate* (2014), <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2014/revealing-castlegate/>> [accessed 10 February, 2022].

<sup>238</sup> John Moreland and Dawn Hadley with Ashley Tuck and Milica Rajic, *Sheffield Castle, Archaeology, Archives, Regeneration, 1927–2018*, 1st edn (White Rose University Press, 2020), p. 15.

<sup>239</sup> Live Works, *Castlegate* (2014) <<http://live-works.org/portfolio/castlegate-co-production/>> [accessed 10 February, 2022].

<sup>240</sup> Castlegate Sheffield: Excavating the Past; Building the Future, dir. by Festival of the Mind 2020 (the University of Sheffield, 2020).

collaboration to explore ideas of how the site could be regenerated. Considering its history and the archaeological discovery made until now, it could draw up plans for the design that continues the story of the place and that people feel identified with. A regeneration design plan that respects heritage and the remains of the Sheffield castle revealed during the last excavation in 2018, toward a vision that intends to activate the site through public events such as markets, festivals, and creative activities and, over time, potentially develop a plan for people having their business and creative practice on the site. The challenge for the redevelopment is how to combine the knowledge of its past that at the same time develop a vision for new activities for the site.<sup>241</sup>

The work with the organisation Friends of the Castle did not end there. They continued working in partnership with the School of Architecture in the project called Remake Castlegate. Butterworth, students, artists, and people from the archaeology department dedicated a considerable amount of time to develop a 3D vision for the Festival of the Mind (2018) that consisted of using augmented technology reality on a sizeable cardboard model of the area they could remake the castle.<sup>242</sup> The project provided the opportunity to the local community to engage with the heritage and encourage people to work in collaboration with urban planners and the City Council toward the regeneration of Castlegate.<sup>243</sup> To involve the community around the Castlegate project, they used a virtual reality model of the castle and projected outside of the Yorkshire Artspace building to show the site where once was located the Sheffield castle.<sup>244</sup> During the Festival of the Mind, they invited people to join and interact with the physical model and build together their vision for Castlegate. Thanks to the interaction with the physical model and the 3D vision of the castle, people recognised the value of the area through the history of the place. In the future, if people can get access to the 3D technology from their own devices they could interact beyond the cardboard model, allowing them to go to the site and explore the castle through virtual reality from their screens.<sup>245</sup>

This type of community engagement event allows people to participate and interact not only with the physical model but also with the past memory of the city. It makes it easier for people to visualise and locate the place so they can participate in designing the future of the place. Through Live Works, comments, ideas, and feedback from the community can be collected, and it could signpost a direction to frame the City Council's plans for the development of the area. The Revealing Castlegate event was a sort of timeline in which people located themselves in the past (the revealed hidden memory of the city), the present (the current reality of Castlegate), and the future (what is next? now that you know the story of the site).<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Live Projects, *Revealing the Castle* (2016) <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2016/revealing-the-castle/>> [accessed 10 February, 2022].

<sup>242</sup> Matthew Leach, Steve Maddock, Dawn Hadley, Carolyn Butterworth, John Moreland, Gareth Dean, Ralph Mackinder, Kacper Pach, Nick Bax, Michaela Mckone & Dan Fleetwood, 'Recreating Sheffield's Medieval Castle In Situ using Outdoor Augmented Reality', in *Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality*, ed. by Patrick Bourdot, Sue Cobb Victoria Interrante, Hirokazu kato Didier Stricker (Eds.), 15th EuroVR International Conference edn. (2018), p. 216, 217.

<sup>243</sup> Live Projects, *Revealing Castlegate* (2014), <<https://liveprojects.ssoa.info/2014/revealing-castlegate/>> [accessed 10 February, 2022].

<sup>244</sup> John Moreland, *Putting the castle back in Castlegate* (2020)

<[https://figshare.shef.ac.uk/articles/media/Putting\\_the\\_castle\\_back\\_in\\_Castlegate/12311684/1](https://figshare.shef.ac.uk/articles/media/Putting_the_castle_back_in_Castlegate/12311684/1)> [accessed 10 February, 2022].

<sup>245</sup> The University of Sheffield, *Festival of the Mind Project Case Studies* (2023) <<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/city-region/public-engagement/festival-mind-project-case-studies>> [accessed 13 May, 2023].

<sup>246</sup> Sheffield Castle Talk with John Moreland and Carolyn Butterworth, dir. by Festival of the Mind 2020 (the University of Sheffield, 2020).

## Reflection on Live Projects

Live Projects is the Sheffield School of Architecture programme that advocates for civic engagement because it involves students in social architecture practice. The programme underlines civic engagement by teaching other ways of practising architecture embedded in society, broadening the practice of architecture instead of limiting the practice and breaking the idea that architecture is only accessible to a specific group of people. The programme demonstrates what students can achieve in collaboration with the community in a two ways learning approach while contributing to the right to the city by how the city is perceived and seen through the outputs Live Projects produces in a relatively short period of time (six weeks). During Live Projects students and community clients play an important role in designing and creating outputs that can benefit the community in the future through co-design, co-production, collaboration, and community participation.

Through LP clients have access to design outputs that could be used to take action and move their vision forward in seeking for funding and financial support. It is a mutual learning programme in which the community and student benefit from a learning process that is mutual by sharing knowledge and skills while developing a project that reflect the community need and the city they want to see in the future. The way LPs advocate for civic engagement are through co-design, co-production, collaboration, and community participation in which knowledge, skills, values, and motivation are shared for a common good, addressing issues related to society through research and design. Civic engagement is a social action that involves individuals in being active collaborators in the co-production of space. In that way, LP addresses collective concerns and develop feasible strategies to target issues of public concern by empowering individuals through design.

The programme advocates for the sense of civic engagement through a community-embedded approach in which students explore, experience, and engage with the city while interacting with the community. The collaboration between students and community clients allows students to embed themselves into a socially committed design practice while reflecting on other ways of doing architecture, questioning the role of architects in society, and encouraging the community to take agency and being active participant in decision-making process and the partnership between the school of architecture and community clients provides shared knowledge to produce a change through academic inputs, including designing and conducting research with the community.

As previously stated in this thesis, continuity is linked with multiple social actions and actors in the production of space and in LP this is reflected in the different directions a community project can take. For example, some projects may take the form of an exhibition/event such as SADDACA Archive, strategic planning such as Feed a Million and creative participation as Revealing Castlegate. So, LP responds to the community with various outputs that can be taken forward by the community client after LP finishes. On the other hand, Live Works (the Sheffield School of Architecture Urban Room) is itself a form of “continuity” in which community and previous Live Projects clients can continue discussing their future vision for the city of Sheffield. This ongoing discourse reinforces a sense of collective identity through community participation motivating citizens to take agency in the production of their civic space.



# Chapter Three

Practitioner positionality

## COMMUNITY-LED

Case study projects:

Portland Works (Sheffield, UK)

Blackburn is Open (Blackburn, UK)

Metal industries were established mainly in South Yorkshire due to the fertile landscape of rivers and mines. The high demand for steel production brought long working hours leading workers to develop skills and expertise that later was handed down and enhanced from generation to generation.<sup>247</sup> After the twentieth century, the decline of the cutlery trade contributed to the abandonment of former workshops.<sup>248</sup> However, in Sheffield, the Little Mesters (skilled craftsmen such as cutlers, platers, engravers, knife makers, forgers, and toolmakers) developed an independent form of working that went against the factory mass production and concentrated in crafts and bespoke small scales of production.<sup>249</sup>

Skilled individuals were known for producing handmade items and renting workshops to run their small businesses, setting their own way of working that could be working alone, employing one or two apprenticeships, or producing batches of items for other firms to sell in the market.<sup>250</sup> For example, in Blackburn, Lancashire, the textile industry and woollen cloth production had become commercially significant, and those working in the cloth-making industry were known as weavers, glovers, and 'shereman' (who finished woollen cloth).<sup>251</sup> These small and medium-scale businesses contributed to the economic growth of towns and cities during the Industrial Revolution as their products were sold in local markets and also commercialised outside Britain.<sup>252</sup>

Besides producing, skilled workers relied on relationships with other artisans to access informal training and repair machinery and tools. For skilled workers, self-employment, borrowing and lending, and in-kind transactions were part of their everyday lives.<sup>253</sup> Manufacturing remained a thriving industry until the late 1960s with 'Made in Sheffield' and 'By Skill and Hard Work' in Blackburn, both known for their high-quality handmade products. During the 1970s, the privatisation of several industries and competition from Asia contributed to the decline of the manufacturing industry, and handcrafted products were not as profitable as they used to be.<sup>254</sup>

This chapter argues that community-led projects are a component of the social driven collective action in which individuals give meaning to their collective experiences where continuity is as an available and accessible resource for that depends on the dissemination and support of the community. Through the subsequent production of identity, individuals define and redefine projects and possibilities for actions. Individuals get involved in activities by building a relationship of trust and establishing connections between them. Therefore, collective identity is a process in which individuals attribute specific meanings to social relations, allowing their mutual recognition. So, actions can occur when individuals define themselves and recognise other individuals as part of their group because it is through acting together that the sense of belonging, the 'we' as identity, is either reinforced or weakened.<sup>255</sup> Thus, a network of active relationships between individuals strengthens interaction, communication, and negotiation toward decision-making. In addition, another layer that adds to

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<sup>247</sup> Nicola Wray, Bob Hawkins and Colum Giles, *One Great Workshop: The buildings of the Sheffield Metal Trades* (Historic England, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>248</sup> Victoria Beauchamp and Joan Unwin, *The Historical Archaeology of the Sheffield Cutlery and Tableware Industry: 1750-1900*, ed. by James Symonds (ARCUS, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>249</sup> Victoria Beauchamp and Joan Unwin, *The Historical Archaeology of the Sheffield Cutlery and Tableware Industry: 1750-1900*, ed. by James Symonds (ARCUS, 2002), p. 4.

<sup>250</sup> Bernard Cotton, 'Big Organisations and People The past - 'the Little Mesters'', *Management Education and Development*, 11, (1980), 66-70 (p. 66).

<sup>251</sup> Geoffrey Timmins, *Made in Lancashire: A History of Regional Industrialisation* (Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 12.

<sup>252</sup> Hannah Barker, *Family and Business during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 8.

<sup>253</sup> Julia Udall, 'Mending the commons with the 'Little Mesters'', *Ephemera Theory and Politics in Organization*, 19.2, (2019), 253-281 (p. 255).

<sup>254</sup> Anne Power, Jörg Plöger and Astrid Winkler, *Phoenix Cities: The Fall and Rise of Great Industrial Cities* (The Policy Press, 2010), p. 13.

<sup>255</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements, An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 92, 93.

collective identity is the degree of emotional investment, enabling the individual to feel part of the common unity by sharing a set of values and aspirations.<sup>256</sup>

In this chapter, I examine the projects Portland Works and Blackburn is Open. Both projects advocate for the existing community of artists who set up their independent businesses and workshops related to arts and crafts as a form of living. In the project Portland Works, tenants recognise the building as a place for artists who support each other by collaborating and exchanging tools and knowledge on art and craft. The project shows how the community of artists worked with other volunteers with one common goal: owning the building as a community asset.

However, the project Blackburn is Open shows that collective identity is a process facilitated by practitioners that advocates for engaging an existing community of artists (photographers, designers, and manufacturers) and with the support of other institutions, for example, the Darwen Borough Council and in collaboration with Live Projects (the University of Sheffield, school of architecture programme) in identifying the surrounding area of the town centre needed to be reactivated as many shops were closing, leaving vacant buildings. Therefore, in the effort to revive Blackburn's art identity, the project shifted the former idea of occupying vacant building with shops and focuses on establishing a network of artists that aims to reprogramme the town centre with activities related to arts that later gave birth to the 'Festival of Making' a national festival that acknowledge Blackburn's artistic roots.

The construction of collective identity promotes continuity through means that give voice to the community, for example, in organising campaigns or writing a manifesto to reclaim a space that is significant for a group of people because it carries a collective meaning through its history. For example, in the case of Blackburn is Open, the city centre, and the project Portland Works, an industrial building with a long manufacturing history. The different activities groups undertake to reclaim a space are not accidental but planned; they mobilise to achieve a negotiation, and they conduct protests and campaigns as a means for participants to express their discontent toward what they consider a threat to their future.<sup>257</sup> Community groups strive to represent the needs and desires of the local population for the implementation of strategies and tactics to reclaim or negotiate a building or space they consider having a collective interest.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 70, 71.

<sup>257</sup> Charles Tilly, Ernesto Castañeda and Lesley J. Wood, *Social Movements, 1768-2018*, 4th edn (Routledge, 2020).

Barbara Maćkiewicz, Raúl Puente Asuero and Krystyna Pawlak, 'Reclaiming Urban Space: A Study of Community Gardens in Pozań', *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 37.4, (2018), 131–150 (p. 131).

<sup>258</sup> Cristina Cerulli and Anna Holder, 'Acting from Bottom Up: Stories of Designers and Communities', in *Networks of Design: Proceedings of the 2008 Annual International Conference of the Design History Society (UK)*, ed. by Jonathan Glynne, Fiona Hackney, Viv Minton (Universal Publishers, 2009), p. 33.



Figure 16. Portland Works renovation, 2016. Image by Portland Works. Tenants and volunteers raised funds to renovate the main building façade.

## Portland Works

## Portland Works, A Building Under Threat

Portland Work is a listed Grade II cutlery building in Highfield, Sheffield (UK). It was built in the late 1870s and was a place of a hundred master craftsmen. During the 1970s, when industrial activities began to decline, tenants started to diversify, including artists, musicians, distillers, toolmakers, knifemakers and other metalworkers.<sup>259</sup> Portland Works is a building that carries meaning due to its history and cultural significance dating back to 1914 as the birthplace of steel cutlery manufacturing. Despite the fact the building was recognised as an important heritage for Sheffield's identity, the building was under threat in 2009 when its owner presented a planning application for its change of use to convert the old cutlery factory into housing, putting the building at risk, its history and the job of many artist and craftsman that use the building installations to create their art.<sup>260</sup> Therefore, the participants involved in the campaign to save Portland Works looked at alternatives to purchase the building and manage it as a community asset.<sup>261</sup>

The building contributed to the city's economy in the industrial period, and today is home to artists and artisans that still operate their businesses using the building as a workshop. According to Julia Udall (architect and researcher), the change of use would mean its distinctive industrial characteristics would be lost and turning into housing would mean that many skilful people that operate from there would have been evicted from the property.<sup>262</sup> Therefore, tenants, activists and the local community worked in a campaign to save Portland Work from being lost and instead to be preserved as a united group of people worked on a strategy to envision the future of the building and to outline an action plan to save the building.<sup>263</sup> As a group, they set their own non-negotiable objectives, challenging powerholders. A social movement begins with a mobilisation in which actors assume control of resources they did not control before.<sup>264</sup>

As soon as Andy Cole of Wigfull Tools, Cllr Jillian Creasy and Julia Udall knew about the planning application, they organised a public meeting in 2009, had echoed in the community attracting many other people from nearby neighbourhoods to join the conversation about what would mean if the building were lost.<sup>265</sup> Udall mentions this as a way of taking action and raising awareness of the importance of the building and the history it carries. For example, The Knowledge Transfer Workshop organised in 2010 brought several collaborators such as tenants, campaigners, advisors, and organisations, including the creative industries, business advice, cooperative support, local government, and community development. The involvement of different people allowed participants to debate the future of the building and explore alternatives to maintain it in the long-term and how it could be achieved through governance, approach to conservation and networking.<sup>266</sup>

In social movements, supporters provide the necessary resources for taking action in four primary ways, it could be through signing petitions, donating money, actively participating in activities

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<sup>259</sup> Julia Udall and Studio Polpo, 'Economies, Portland Works', in *Urban Commons Handbook*, ed. by Urban Commons Research Collective (DPR Barcelona, 2022), p. 40.

<sup>260</sup> Cristina Cerulli, 'Portland Works – Sheffield a Framework for Co-Production and Community Ownership', in *Enabling the City* (Routledge, 2021), p. 203, 204.

<sup>261</sup> Cristina Cerulli, 'Portland Works – Sheffield a Framework for Co-Production and Community Ownership', in *Enabling the City* (Routledge, 2021), p. 204.

<sup>262</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161,

<sup>263</sup> Cristina Cerulli and Julia Udall, *Re-Imagining Portland Works* (Antenna Press, 2011), p. 7.

<sup>264</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.30.

<sup>265</sup> Julia Udall, *The Campaign to Save Portland Works, Early Days* (2023) <<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/the-campaign-to-save-portland-works/>> [accessed 3 March, 2023].

<sup>266</sup> Cristina Cerulli and Julia Udall, *Re-Imagining Portland Works* (Antenna Press, 2011), p. 34.

and building bridges with other people or institutions.<sup>267</sup> For example, in Portland Works, to achieve their collective goal, campaigners organised different activities to disseminate the cause across the wider Sheffield community through open meetings to re-imagine the future of Portland Works. An online website as the main portal to maintain networks across the UK and to collect donations, as well as an archive to display what Portland Works has to offer, exhibitions across the city and films telling the story of the building and their tenant's skills. As well as open days to visit the building and as an opportunity to interact with tenants and the history of the building, the Galvanised festival (2009) to celebrate Sheffield's history of metalwork, endorsement and petitions were part of the action to ask the City Council to save Portland Work from converting into flats. The media and press were also significant in supporting the campaign by publishing Portland Works tenants' works to draw new people to the campaign; furthermore, the partnership with the University of Sheffield allowed research conducted by students (in the projects were involved, the School of Architecture, Journalism and English).<sup>268</sup> Udall mentions 'I think we built on in some ways that space, all those connexions were there, so we were just kind of working with that and adding to it.'<sup>269</sup>

The Sharrow Community Forum contacted Live Projects programme at the University of Sheffield, School of Architecture, to work together with students on a new vision for the future of the building that put the community as the leading actor in the development project. Students from Master in Architectural Design (MArch) through Live Projects and Master in Urban Design (MAUD) conducted initial research that put in evidence the different businesses within the building and the connection that exists between them. That included sharing tools, borrowing resources, and helping one another, so it was a closely connected community and business happening together.<sup>270</sup> Therefore, mobilisation occurred because actors gathered and organised their resources to pursue a shared objective against what they had identified as a threat that would affect the collective.<sup>271</sup>

Portland Works is a space for collective activities through guiding tours, volunteering programmes and studios space to rent and build a community around craft; it is a place for makers to share their creative experiences with other artists. Therefore, the narrative around heritage and metalworkers was the focus of the campaign to save the building from converting into flats.<sup>272</sup> Udall argues it was critical to accommodate all these people in a space where they could work side by side and help each other by exchanging knowledge.<sup>273</sup> So, if Portland Works were at risk, all the skills and particular knowledge of making and working in the building would have disappeared. The building is home to skilled metalworkers and artists that run their businesses there.<sup>274</sup> Hence, the community created around Portland Works is diverse and full of expertise to share through bespoke and unique objects that are handmade. For example, Andy Cole works in forging made-to-measure hand tools since 1978, and Stuart Mitchells works with metals producing bespoke knives. His story in Portland Work began when he was a child back in 1980 with his parents owning a workshop in Portland Works and many other artists such as Peter Ledge, one of the few silver platers in Sheffield, Mick Shaw, an engraver specialist that produces high-quality engraving in the old-style using scaling milling and machining equipment, among others artist, had started there.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 125.

<sup>268</sup> Cristina Cerulli and Julia Udall, *Re-Imagining Portland Works* (Antenna Press, 2011), p. 76.

<sup>269</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161.

<sup>270</sup> Cristina Cerulli and Julia Udall, *Re-Imagining Portland Works* (Antenna Press, 2011), p. 77.

<sup>271</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.289.

<sup>272</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161.

<sup>273</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161.

<sup>275</sup> Portland Works, *Supporting Our Makers* (2023) <<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/what-we-do/#ourmakers>> [accessed 3 March 2023].

If people had been evicted from the building, moving their workshop would not be an option for them due to the cost of relocating the equipment due to many artists relying on specialised and heavy machinery to produce their work.<sup>276</sup> Therefore, the consequences of losing Portland Works go beyond an ordinary building with history; rather would have affected many people with specialised and unique skills that 'enrich the cultural heritage of Sheffield.'<sup>277</sup> Bringing back the idea of mobilisation, Melucci mentions, three factors should be considered for social movements to occur: a collective identity, which in this case is related to the history of the building as a heritage and the skilled people that still work there. The identification of an adversary; the planning application set to convert the building into flats, the definition of a purpose; which was to save the building from being lost and an object at the stake of the conflict; the building under threat.<sup>278</sup>

The project to save Portland Works was set to welcome different forms of contribution, allowing it to embrace all kinds of skills and people, making it a collaborative approach. Udall mentions bringing together a considerable number of people was challenging, but it was also an excellent opportunity to meet people with different skills. Udall's approach was to ask what they could do to contribute to the project and let them make decisions on the skill set they had identified between them. Udall says, 'it was this thing of asking people what they could contribute, allowing them to do that rather than starting from a pre-determined position of this is what we need, and we need to find people do this.'<sup>279</sup>

So, giving tenants and volunteers the power to decide and join their forces, their skills and what they could do to contribute to the initiative was significant for the project to gain visibility and draw funding to do work on refurbishing part of the building when necessary. Udall argues, after all, tenants are the ones who have a long-term relationship with the building; they know how it works, how the community operates and the mode of working inside the building. The willingness to work together and find alternatives to save the building brought around five hundred people who donated to purchase Portland Works in 2013, making Sheffield's first community shared campaign.<sup>280</sup> The story of Portland Works is made by many people that contributed to the cause and spent energy and time on the project. Therefore, Portland Works is an example of a self-organised community with a common interest in taking control through ownership and governance that supports small manufacturing businesses while preserving heritage.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>277</sup> Portland Works, *Supporting Our Makers* (2023) <<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/what-we-do/#ourmakers>> [accessed 3 March, 2023].

<sup>278</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes, Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.292.

<sup>279</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161.

<sup>280</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161.

<sup>281</sup> Cristina Cerulli, 'Portland Works – Sheffield a Framework for Co-Production and Community Ownership', in *Enabling the City* (Routledge, 2021), p. 204.



Figure 17. Shareholders, 2013. Image by Karl McAuley. A group picture where makers, volunteers, and people involved to save Portland Works got together to eternalise a moment.

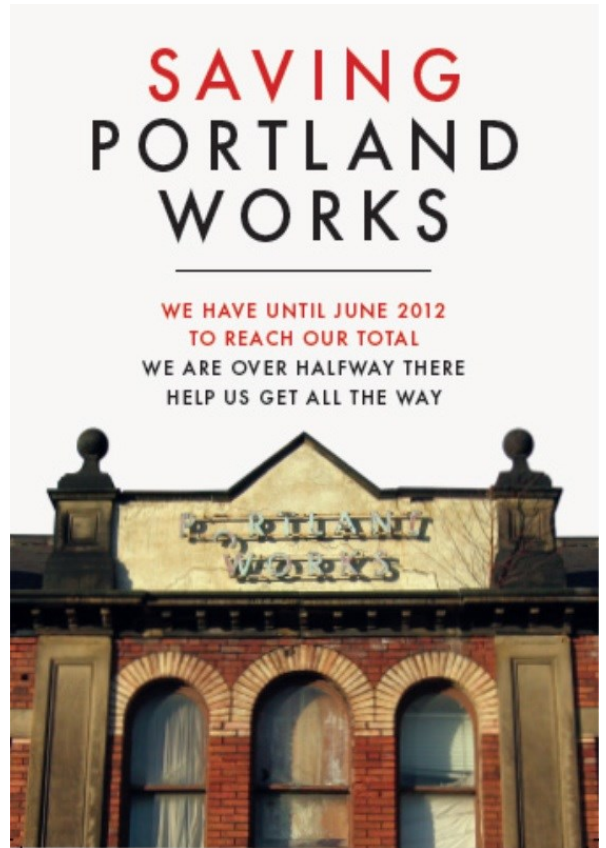


Figure 18. Portland Works campaign poster, 2015. Image by Opus Independents, Now Then Magazine in Tools to Create Agency by Julia Udall.

### Tenants united for a common goal

Every group develops a culture that occurs when individuals are bounded by a set of beliefs, behaviours, knowledge, and customs that characterised them, which is created through interaction.<sup>282</sup> For example, in the Portland Works, people participated and joined a project that was shaped collectively. From the beginning, the initiative had at its core to value peoples' history, decisions, labour, and the relationship they have established with the building over the years. The effort to maintain that belief persisted throughout the project. Thus, participants recognised they share similar experiences, as Garry Alan Fine mentions, 'expecting others will understand them, and it will become a tool to generate meaning, interaction, and a structure to construct a social reality.'<sup>283</sup>

Social movements are clearly organised as a group of people that respond to a particular grievance in society. They adopt structures that often differ from the formal bureaucratic structure in managing their resources and acting together.<sup>284</sup> Portland Works initiative was open to people who wanted to join and contribute regularly. For volunteering, people got involved in different ways and

<sup>282</sup> Gary Alan Fine, 'Public Narration and Group Culture: Discerning Discourse in Social Movements', in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 128, 129.

<sup>283</sup> Gary Alan Fine, 'Public Narration and Group Culture: Discerning Discourse in Social Movements', in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 128, 129.

<sup>284</sup> Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 119.



duration throughout the project, for example, as volunteers for a day or attending regular meetings.<sup>285</sup> This way of working allowed diverse collaboration, renewed the project with fresh ideas from new people and allowed people to enter and leave the project according to their availability. In addition, volunteers conducted guided tours around the building, organising events and campaigning to raise funding. On the other hand, some people joined on a long-term promoting the initiative to reach a broader scope within the community and do repairs in the building.<sup>286</sup>

Through this type of open way of working, people could learn new skills while strengthening bonds in a network of people. Movements are means to goal achievement, and having an organised structure, movements will survive. For example, if they are able to maintain the organisation, they will develop the power to achieve social changes and arrangements that will lead them toward their goal.<sup>287</sup> Udall mentions it was critical to understand what needed to be put in place first for the project to continue its development. She points out ‘there was a particular moment where we were looking at how we could buy the building, how we could run it, and manage it’<sup>288</sup> and thinking in a strategy that at the same time was feasible and achievable was critical due to the available funding to invest in the refurbishment of the building was limited. Udall highlights, hence, tenants’ needs, and business were put as the main focus of the initiative by prioritising specific spaces that are important for tenants to continue producing and developing their work.<sup>289</sup> In addition, the initiative sought to raise issues and concerns from tenants and address them through different modes of collaboration, fostering collective action through regular public meetings that brought people together to share ideas. So, people who regularly joined the meetings framed a particular direction for the project. As Udall argues, ‘from a very pragmatic level, different people have time and energy to invest at different points. So, the project was pulled toward their vision and understanding at different times.’<sup>290</sup>



Figure 19. Activism, 2015. Image by Eric Winnert and Mark Parsons in *Tools to Create Agency* by Julia Udall. Posters of tenants to spread the word of artists' and makers' work to the broader community.

Figure 20. Volunteers working in Mosley office, 2013. Image by Portland Works. Volunteers working together to refurbish a room in the building.

<sup>285</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>286</sup> Portland Works, *Volunteering at Portland Works* (2023) <<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/volunteering/>> [accessed 3 March, 2023].

<sup>287</sup> Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 120, 121

<sup>288</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>289</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>290</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

This project adopts several modes of organisation, such as relying on direct contact with members, for example, through regular mails and meetings. In contrast, it can also rely on other organisations for support acquiring a more formal structure to communicate with its members.<sup>291</sup> As an example of how participants can operate within a group organisation structure, Udall's role was crucial for the project to evolve and shift toward a more integrated perspective of different understandings and knowledge about which approach to take. She mentions 'there was always the risk that the neighbourhood could be gentrified in the future. So, I tried to say to people. We have to think about this broader set of issues.'<sup>292</sup> Having a mode of working that allows many people to join and contribute could also lead to negative results. For example, there is an element of risk when new people join the project and are unaware of the tenant's story, their needs, and, most notably, the relationship they had created with the building. Therefore, Udall argues, they had to adopt a mode of working that was participative and directed by Portland Work's community in which people's participation and decision-making were heard and, in that way, maintaining the collective vision of the project, avoiding the traditional position of running a project where few people make decisions, and others do the work.<sup>293</sup>

The openness to contribution allowed the community to be more creative, building a solid attachment and ownership toward the project because it was framed by people everyone had a part to play, and activities were organised around what people had to offer. As Udall mentions, there were also challenges along the way. There was a moment when the group reached a point where the motivation and people's energy dropped because of the lack of financial support to start necessary building repairs.<sup>294</sup> Nevertheless, regular meetings in the building helped the group identify the urgent repairs, so in order to achieve their goals, the community organised themselves into different working groups, such as the steering group, where the project's vision came together. The working group was where the plan and research came into place, and the building group was in charge of the refurbishment priorities of the building.<sup>295</sup> In 2014, the urgent repairs the building required was concluded by a group of volunteers, and also, a large area where the studios are located was renovated. The Heritage Alliance has recognised Portland Works as Heritage Heroes for their work, and it is an example of what the community can achieve when working together.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 122, 123.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>293</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>294</sup> Interview with Julia Udall, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix A, p. 154-161

<sup>295</sup> Derek Morton, *December 2009 – December 2010, the Campaign* (2023) <<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/the-campaign-to-save-portland-works/>> [accessed 4 March, 2023].

<sup>296</sup> Derek Morton, *Postscript – August 2014* (2023) <<https://www.portlandworks.co.uk/the-campaign-to-save-portland-works/>> [accessed 4 March, 2023].



Figure 21. National Festival of Making, 2018. Image by Festival of Making. Blackburn city centre becomes a scenario where artistic expressions take over the streets.

## Blackburn is Open

## Blackburn Is Open, A Creative Community

Lancashire's prosperous textile industry holds a unique place in the region's history due to the Industrial Revolution, which was responsible for the county's prosperity, becoming a significant economic force during the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Later, the region eventually became the centre of the cotton-weaving industry, and several towns near the river Ribble became significant textile-manufacturing cities, including Blackburn.<sup>297</sup> The flourishing textile industry in Blackburn led to the construction of printworks mills, so the town is known for being a town of makers and for its creative industry, which is part of its history. According to Andy Phelps et al., until the late nineteenth century, Lancashire's textile mills continued to have an impact on the local community. This resulted in landscapes that shaped the urban areas. For example, the construction of terraced dwellings for workers in addition, on these streets were also found in small industrial buildings dedicated to textile trades, civic buildings, schools, pubs, and shops, as well as parks and gardens, which were constructed in Preston and Blackburn.<sup>298</sup> But in the late twentieth century that industry suffered an abrupt and irreversible fall. The determinants were the industry structure, profitability, capital accumulation, and technological choice that contributed to its decline. In particular, business owners attempted to establish links between the industrial organisation and the economic decline. As a result, the poor performance of cotton textiles was based on the lack of investments in new technology.<sup>299</sup>

The project Blackburn is Open sought to bring back somehow the craft identity that once characterised Blackburn in the past. Claire Tymon (a creative practitioner and researcher) worked in partnership with the Darwen Borough Council to find a way to regenerate Blackburn's town centre; at the beginning, the project was set to look at spatial regeneration of the town centre, but the project took a turn out and switched into a project that tried to find strategies to develop opportunities and capability for local entrepreneurs to grow their business. The projects started in 2012 with the aim of transforming St. John's church located in Blackburn City Centre into an art centre. According to Tymon, many social enterprises had their offices in the church, such as the voluntary community service and other charities but the church started to become vacant as many organisations decided to move their offices out. In order to activate the church and transformed into an art centre it was needed to identify the existing community of artist in the town.<sup>300</sup>

Mobilised by the idea of transforming a vacant church into an art centre, artists and local music industry professionals formed an arts organisation to bring life into Blackburn's town centre again. With the support of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, The Bureau Centre for the Arts CIC (Community Interest Company) was established with the purpose of running diverse arts programmes open to community members taking into consideration the heritage of the building.<sup>301</sup> According to Melucci, Della Porta and Diani, they refer to collective identity when people recognise

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<sup>297</sup> Andy Phelps, Richard Gregory, Ian Miller and Chris Wild, *The Textile Mills of Lancashire: The Legacy*, ed. by Rachel Newman (Oxford Archaeology North, n.d), p. 1-3 in, <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/textile-mills-lancashire-legacy/textile-mills-lancashire-legacy/>> [accessed 13 December, 2022].

<sup>298</sup> Andy Phelps, Richard Gregory, Ian Miller and Chris Wild, *The Textile Mills of Lancashire: The Legacy*, ed. by Rachel Newman (Oxford Archaeology North, n.d), p. 1-3 in, <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/textile-mills-lancashire-legacy/textile-mills-lancashire-legacy/>> [accessed 13 December, 2022].

<sup>299</sup> Steve Toms, 'Growth, Profits and Technological Choice: The Case of the Lancashire Cotton Textile Industry', *Journal of Industrial History*, 1, (1998), 35-55 (p. 36).

<sup>300</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>301</sup> The Bureau Centre for the Arts, *History of The Bureau* (2022) <<https://bureaublackburn.co.uk/history-of-the-bureau/>> [accessed 19 January, 2023].

themselves within the group, and for that reason, they feel part of it.<sup>302</sup> In the case of the group of artists formed a community interest company that advocates arts as a means to regenerate the town centre and to bring together the existing community of artists in Blackburn. The community of artists took over the church as a space to engage with artistic practices and programme the space to serve the wider community. They used the space as a social gathering, organising club nights and gigs, classes and workshops for families and young people so the broad community could engage in various artistic activities.<sup>303</sup>

To understand the role of the church and the business model within the space, identifying the main actors and how they use the space was crucial for the development of the project. Tymon argues most of the shops near the church were vacant, so focusing only on the church would not have a broad impact on the city centre. Thus, the project had to wider its scope and considered the vacant shops near the area where the church was located. Once it was identified the strength and challenges the town centre had, the idea of testing temporary interventions came out as a strategy to activate the town centre and not just limit the project to the church. In that way, the town centre could be programmed with activities that could take place at different times of the day.<sup>304</sup> The project Blackburn is Open, which started with the initial idea of transforming the old vacant St John's church into an arts centre for the community, extended its approach and supported the local art business at a broad level.

It is a common practice for an organised group to reclaim a space in an urban setting through protests and campaigns. So, collective action is a result of purposes constructed by a group of actors within a social relation. The individuals acting together construct their action in groups which leads to strengthened relationships, and they start to see themselves as acting together.<sup>305</sup> Therefore, campaigns were organised to get people involved and discuss the type of activities that could be programmed for the town centre. Then, in collaboration with the community, Tymon mentions, she could identify artists, designers, photographers, local businesses, and other groups related to arts activities. In a participatory event, they discussed how the project could bring back Blackburn's arts and craft identity into the town centre again, to achieve that collective goal, the idea of getting in touch with Wayne Hemingway, a renowned designer from Blackburn, came out of the group conversation.<sup>306</sup> Hemingway was a crucial actor in the project's starting point due to his work being well-known across the UK, and it opened the opportunity for the project to have an echo not just in Blackburn but also in the nearby cities. The community of artists in Blackburn is diverse, so the project looked to bring an identity to the initiative that represents the community of artists. As individuals that perceive themselves as part of the same group, they share emotional involvement and a common definition of themselves.

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<sup>302</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements, An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 113.

<sup>303</sup> The Bureau Centre for the Arts, *History of The Bureau* (2022) <<https://bureaublackburn.co.uk/history-of-the-bureau/>> [accessed 19 January, 2023].

<sup>304</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>305</sup> Alberto Melucci, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in *Social Movements and Culture, Protest and Contention*, ed. by Hank Jhonston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 44.

<sup>306</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.



Figure 22. Blackburn is Open before and after, 2019. Image by Hemingway Design. The church and the adjacent shop that was converted into an Urban Room for makers to exchange ideas and curate businesses.

Figure 23. Blackburn city centre view, 2017-19. Image by Festival of Making. The city host artists as to showcase their talents.

Figure 24. Arte Et Labore Manifesto, Blackburn is Open Manifesto handbook, 2013. Image by Hemingway Design. 'By skill and hard work' is the motto Blackburn is Open adopted in a manifesto that was distributed across the city.

Consequently, they identify with a collective group rather than as single individuals.<sup>307</sup> In creating an identity for the project, Tymon points out she developed a framework called 'a town centre of excellence or creative excellence.' That framework in mind led her to recognise and define the identity of the initiative. So, when she got in touch with Hemingway, the idea of creating pop-up shops where the creative community could be involved in programming activities that could happen in the town centre started to take shape.<sup>308</sup> Tymon recognised there had been no initiative or project that focused on bringing people together and building a community around a common identity, such as creative art in Blackburn. Therefore, Blackburn is Open was the first initiative to build a creative community where the target audience for the project was artists and local manufacturers.

The project embraced creativity in its wider context, and anyone from the community who wanted to become active by sharing ideas was welcome to join the initiative. With its brand identity, the project reflected its aim very well as Tymon points out 'Blackburn is open to ideas, Blackburn is open to business, Blackburn is open to creativity, Blackburn is open to you.'<sup>309</sup> The initiative promotes those lines in a manifesto to invite people to join the project revealing the creative industry is a sector that brings income to the town and that Blackburn still holds its reputation of being known for its manufacturing sector. The statistic in the manifesto shows that at least twenty-five per cent of the population in Blackburn work in the manufacturing sector, and around a thousand people work in the textile industry.<sup>310</sup> So it is clear that the creative industry is a way of living for people in Blackburn as Tymon highlights 'If the majority of the community is working in that industry, then let's make a town that is accessible, and that is why I have got the Festival of Making to celebrate it.'<sup>311</sup>

The manifesto that Tymon and Hemingway used for communicating the resources of the town worked as a tool to get the wider community interested and engaged. Tymon argues, 'it was a successful tool to communicate and what was built from that was a website which unfortunately discontinued shortly after I left Blackburn.'<sup>312</sup> Even though the website did not last long, the small magazine they created was circulated for over two and half years, completing seven editions and was distributed around Manchester, Liverpool, and Preston.<sup>313</sup> The magazine reveals and showcases the existing creative community in Blackburn, showing the arts and crafts the town has cultivated. It was another successful tool to disseminate the work the creative industry develops in the town.

## A community of makers

Blackburn is Open was part of Live Projects in 2013 and 2015. They worked with students at the Sheffield School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield to help Blackburn's creative community to build a new vision for the town. Master students developed strategies based on a collaborative approach with the community that explored how the role of arts and the creative

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<sup>307</sup> Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', in *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, ed. by Mary Jo Hatch, Majken Schultz (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 59.

<sup>308</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26th July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>309</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26th July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>310</sup> Blackburn is Open, *Blackburn is Open, Arte et Labore a Manifesto*, ed. in collaboration with Wayne Hemingway and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (2014), p. 1-10.

<sup>311</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26th July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>312</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26th July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>313</sup> Claire Tymon, *Blackburn is Open, a Case Study* (2014) <<https://clairetymon.co.uk/blackburnisopen>> [accessed 20 January, 2022].

industry could regenerate the town centre.<sup>314</sup> Practitioners are the main driving force behind a project, they launch initiatives and carry out forward. They play a significant role in initiating and involving communities in the process of finding solutions to local projects by facilitating co-design process. They constantly act as mediators by implementing tools, such as workshops and public events, to prompt communication between participants identifying clear ideas to build an achievable framework for the project.<sup>315</sup>

In Blackburn, many shops, pubs, and clubs in the city centre were closing down, putting the entertainment economy at risk. Looking at the context of the city, Blackburn is a town of makers, artists and many others that work in the field of creative practices.<sup>316</sup> With a thriving community of makers, the leading advocates for the project were Tymon and Hemingway. Together, they created a manifesto to express the importance of the arts and manufacturing industry in the town, emphasising ideas of reintroducing making and manufacturing activities back into the town centre. The initiative looked at strategies to involve the creative community to share ideas that could be implemented to reactivate the town centre that was slowly losing its distinctive characteristic where shops are dedicated to local arts and the manufacturing industry.

Apart from the manifesto, that communicated the town's assets and how empty shops in the town centre could be transformed into creative spaces, and to maintain the creative community engaged, the initiative also created a social media webpage to inform the activities and events happening in the town and in that way reach a bigger audience. In addition, as part of the communication strategy, the initiative owned a shop that was transformed into an Urban Room, the space was for the community to have a conversation, generate ideas and plan activities that could contribute to the creative culture of Blackburn. Tymon mentions the idea of setting up an Urban Room was to communicate to the community 'we are not the experts, but we are here to work with you, to try and make this place better.'<sup>317</sup>

To activate the town centre, the initiative established partnerships with stakeholders such as the council, local councillors and local organisations that delivered services on behalf of the council, as well as the creative community were involved as primary stakeholders such as photographers, makers, artists, and designers, however, in order for this network of people to be sustained a relational process must be nurtured through networking, tools for engagement, and cooperation so, they share values and becomes active agents.<sup>318</sup> Working in collaboration entails a strong relationship with participants involved based on trust. To achieve that, it is crucial to be open and transparent with them about the project aims and how the ideas will be implemented in the future. Tymon highlights, 'they need to trust us that we are not going just to take their ideas and do them ourselves.'<sup>319</sup> When working with the community, being honest about the process will create a close relationship with people. Therefore, through engagement and dialogue with people, design practices see people as co-creators in generating ideas for the project instead of seeing them as final users. The notion of co-design is that people become active and competent participants that add value to the design research becoming an integrated process with the people in addressing social issues.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Live Projects, *[Re]create Blackburn* (2013) <<http://www.liveprojects.org/2013/recreate-blackburn/>> [accessed 02 February, 2022].

<sup>315</sup> Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process, *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 7. Issue 3-4: Socially Responsive Design, (2011), p. 208.

<sup>316</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>317</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>318</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Being-in-Relation and Reinventing the Commons', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 101.

<sup>319</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>320</sup> Thomas Binder, Eva Brandt and Judith Gregory, 'Design Participation(-s)', *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 4.1, (2008), 1-3 (p. 2).



With the help of the community in sharing their ideas and inspirations, the initiative tested and carried out many activities to join arts and community in one place. For example, the project ran a twelve-month programme called 'first Thursdays,' which consisted of every Thursday of the month for businesses in the town centre to be opened until late.<sup>321</sup> On the street, there were exhibitions and activities for people to engage with the creative community. For example, in an event planned during Blackburn is Open initiative, the practitioner suggested reopening an empty old cotton exchange building and reprogramming it for cultural events; reactivating the old building inspired the community to raise funds to transform it into a permanent independent cinema.<sup>322</sup> Tymon argues she takes inspiration for her work from her interaction with the community in her daily life. 'I take inspiration from everywhere, and the local community would come to me and have a conversation, share their thoughts, fears, and feelings... so I would take inspiration from it and try to create something.'<sup>323</sup>

For the project to succeed and to look at the initiative from the perspective of the community as the main beneficiary of the project, it is crucial that people feel identified with the project, so they become proactive and trust the approach of the project, which gives the practitioner the confidence to communicate the leadership and vision of the project. Tymon continues arguing, 'I have run community programmes before, and it has many challenges. One of them is mainly around local politics. That is why I was keen to have someone like Wayne involved. So, the decision-making, or the advocator, was coming from a good place and I think having someone who is neutral is important.'<sup>324</sup>

## Enablers and the community, a mutual collaboration

Effective community practice can be understood as a strategy for addressing large and small social problems. Eventually, most social work is shaped by engagement and evaluation processes such as meeting an individual's basic needs, developing leadership skills, and organising communities and groups to generate change in the social setting.<sup>325</sup> Community initiatives start with a common concern gathered in the community and the willingness to find strategies to overcome and create changes that bring positive outcomes to the community. Tymon as enabler of the project Blackburn is Open, recognised there was no strategy to reactivate the town centre that was in decline. Therefore, her vision and approach for the project were to generate ideas with the community and test them on the streets. The user participation in the design process and the action they perform to make the project into reality reveals the user's creative autonomy which lead to citizens having control in the decision-making process.<sup>326</sup>

Taking this approach, there is always a risk when taking into reality because the ideas, when applied to the context, could be different from the outline of the plan of the project. As Tymon affirms 'what if it was to fail? and, if it fails, we learn from it and build on it.'<sup>327</sup> Testing out ideas is a constant

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<sup>321</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>322</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>323</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>324</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>325</sup> Benjamin Shepard, *Community Projects as Social Activism* (SAGE Publications, 2015), p. 4.

<sup>326</sup> Maria Eggertsen Teder, 'Placemaking as Co-Creation – Professional Roles and Attitudes in Practice', *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 15.4, (2018), (p. 290).

<sup>327</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

process of success and failure, and identifying the element that did not work well, analysing and reflecting, will inform better practice. In other words, it is a learning process where failures and challenges are part of the experience and learning from them would bring meaningful outcomes to the project in the future. Tymon argues working in partnership with the city council and other stakeholders are demanding because they want to see immediate results and what will come out of the process.<sup>328</sup> It is challenging to predict, as Tymon's work with Blackburn is Open project was based on testing ideas and seeing the opportunity that ideas could bring to the project. However, it is possible to anticipate potential effects the project could have, but it is still ambiguous because each context has its distinctive features. Although her approach still carries that element of risk, she firmly believes that building a relationship with people, testing their ideas out and bringing them into the process is a decisive aspect for the project to thrive.

The role of the practitioner could take many types, from advocates to enablers, facilitators and even activists. The architect becomes as Petrescu indicates 'a connector of people, things, desires, stories, and opportunities', is seen as the curator of the project positioning herself/himself among institutions, clients, and users and at the same time acts as a mediator between the people involved.<sup>329</sup> The project Blackburn is Open started with initial funding from the City Council and Tymon as activist organised a campaign to get funding from the Arts Council to support the project with the help of the City Council and the planning and licensing department at Blackburn Council. In an agreement with the City Council under a two-year contract, the initiative had access to five shops in the town centre to test temporary shops related to arts with the local community of artist.

Furthermore, with the funding raised by the campaign they organised workshops and designed charettes to discuss the development and design identity for the shops' frontage<sup>330</sup> so, the community of artist were involved in the creation of it. Instead of presenting a design proposal, practitioners actively engage participants in conceiving design proposals. Thereby, they transform the problem into a solution, co-creating the outcome.<sup>331</sup> The initiative achieved its goal of engaging the community of artists in creating a design identity for the town centre; public institutions facilitated activities and contributed to the initiative by supporting with the planning permission to transform empty shops into workshop spaces. The initiative motivated collaboration between the community of artists and local institutions in creating strategies to reactivate the entertainment industry in the town.

Working together drove the creative community to take the initiative further and organise events such as markets, workshops, and street movies, offering creative alternatives for the community to get involved with Blackburn's manufacturing and craft industry.<sup>332</sup> Tymon mentions trusting the process and working with talented people was a good incentive for the initiative to scale up. The activities helped local artists to improve their businesses, display their products and show their skills to the local community whilst taking ownership of vacant shops to promote public events.<sup>333</sup> The interesting aspect of the initiative is that it considered different perspectives. For example, the arts community and local artists had a space for them to show their work by taking ownership of vacant shops. An Urban Room was also set up for the broader community to discuss the future of the town centre and to draw ideas on how the town centre might look in the future. Therefore, the project did not limit its approach to just looking at one specific building, the St. John's church, as it was set at

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<sup>328</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>329</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Losing Control, Keeping Desires', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, 1st edn. (London Spon Press, 2005), p. 43-63.

<sup>330</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>331</sup> Sidse Carroll and Kamilla Nørtoft, 'Co-Designing Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Spaces in Copenhagen: Starting with an Age-Friendly Co-Design Process', *Architecture*, (2022), 214-230 (p. 216).

<sup>332</sup> Claire Tymon, *Blackburn is Open a Case Study* (2014) <<https://clairetymon.co.uk/blackburnisopen>> [accessed 20 April, 2022].

<sup>333</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

the beginning. The project opened possibilities to include the broader community in imagining the future of the Blackburn town centre.

Despite the fact, the community were an essential participant in the initiative, Tymon highlights 'there is still work to carry on' because the St. John's church that once was set to be an art centre suffered a severe fire in 2018.<sup>334</sup> The incident forced the community of artists to negotiate with the City Council to find a new place to move to so they could continue their activities. Tymon recalls, 'the fire incident did not stop the motivation of the community to keep working,'<sup>335</sup> the Council agreed on a long-term lease with the community of artists to take over an old, abandoned factory in the town known as Thwaites Brewery. Therefore, local authorities and public institutions should assume the role of enablers, sponsors, and administrators, in addition to residents and civic organisations, to work in a collaborative process where not only the residents are putting their effort to change the city but also the institutions.<sup>336</sup> The fact the community of artists worked in organising campaigns to fundraise and the action they took to continue adding to the Blackburn is Open initiative reveals the strong commitment the community built toward the project.

## The Festival of Making, legacy for the community

As mentioned in the beginning, Blackburn was once a bustling town dedicated to manufacturing services and cotton production. Hence, the initiative's ambition was to bring back to the town the identity of the manufacturing industry and its heritage of making. With that strong identity in the creative sector, the initiative raised public interest and generated collaboration between the community of artists and public institutions; the project was seen as a long-term rather than a temporary intervention happening in Blackburn's town centre. People were involved in the project in different ways. For example, some people had a business idea to put in place, people who would like to try a pop-up shop for their business, and people who also joined the initiative because they had ideas for a community workshop or event. With all those ideas collected during nine months of working with the community, the Festival of Making took shape, a programme that combines arts, manufacturing, making and community<sup>337</sup> to join the creative sector in one place and bring back the cultural experience to the town again.

This event celebrates all the work the project had been developing with the creative business and community. During the initiative Tymon mentions, 'We helped twenty-five new businesses start up over the programme, which is quite an achievement.'<sup>338</sup> The first edition of the festival was launched in 2016 to promote cultural regeneration in the town after that the Festival gained momentum and started to develop its foundations to become, now the National Festival of Making with over fifty exhibition showcasing talent artists, workshops and talks in twenty two locations in the town centre.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Claire Tymon, *Blackburn is Open a Case Study* (2014) <<https://clairetymon.co.uk/blackburnisopen>> [accessed 20 April, 2022].

<sup>335</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>336</sup> Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu, 'R-Urban or how to Co-produce a Resilient City', *Ephemera Theory & Politics in Organisation*, 15, (2015), 249-262 (p. 256).

<sup>337</sup> The National Festival of Making, *The Festival* (2023) <<http://festivalofmaking.co.uk/about/>> [accessed 24 January, 2023].

<sup>338</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

<sup>339</sup> The National Festival of Making, *The Festival* (2023) <<http://festivalofmaking.co.uk/about/>> [accessed 24 January, 2023].

Looking at the beginnings of the Festival of Making started as a test-out idea with the initiative Blackburn is Open, which ended in 2017, to transform it into a festival that is organised yearly. According to Tymon, in order to establish a meaningful project within the community requires at least three years of continued work. In addition, collaboration with others, such as the creative community, grassroots groups, and institutions crucial to identify funding and opportunities to turn ideas into reality. Referring back to the theory of the roles of practitioners in conceiving and bringing projects into reality using their knowledge and skills to initiate and sustain conversations on possible futures,<sup>340</sup> as a primary advocate, Tymon and the community of artists advocated and worked on planning a strategy for the initiative to be sustained over time.

Moreover, her role covered many other positions, such as (1) initiator: initiating the project Blackburn is Open, connecting people and opportunities for the project to expand its scope (2) enabler: mediating between the local community of artists and institutions to find support (3) facilitator: organising and facilitating activities for people to join and discuss the future of Blackburn's town centre (4) activist: campaigning to get more fundings for the initiative to thrive (5) curator: launching the first edition of the Festival of Making. The work she conducted with the community-led other groups to emerge, such as the Community of Interest Company (CIC), which deliver cultural programmes across Blackburn, and is the group responsible for curating the Festival of Making.

Besides the different roles, Tymon argues the indicators for a project to remain and continue is to establish external partnerships with organisations and grassroots groups that can contribute with fresh ideas and are willing to work, in addition building a relationship with public institutions is crucial for creating strategies to support plans for community development. From the collaboration they established with the art Council during the initiative Blackburn is Open, Tymon points out, 'the Arts Council has a new ten-year strategy that promotes co-production and co-design with the community, and I think they have learnt a lot with initiatives like Blackburn is Open and the impact they have.'<sup>341</sup> The initiative demonstrated a collaborative engagement between the local community and public institutions is essential to organise events that converge arts, community, and activities to reactive the town centre by identifying the capacity and resources available in the community. The practitioners, with their expertise and skills, provide the community with the resources they need to carry on with a plan, an action they wish to take forward. They create approaches and act as catalysts to equip the community with tools and resources, thus taking their common objective forward.

## Reflection on Blackburn is Open and Portland Works

Collective identity is the driving force behind why people participate, take action and join a group or movement; it is a decisive factor for people to participate because the interaction created between people determines their engagement. For example, if the individual identifies with the broader communal aims of the projects (collective identity) and if the action brings personal satisfaction (individual identity), the individual will feel part of the group. Thus, the identity of "being together" is the foundation to achieve a collective goal and, therefore, for a project to continue developing. The existing bonds of a group are reinforced when members that resemble each other acts together, for example, in the project Blackburn is Open, artists recognised their similarities in skills, approaches to work, and techniques used in art and craft. In the process of sharing skills, there

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<sup>340</sup> Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process, *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 7. Issue 3-4: Socially Responsive Design, (2011), p. 213.

<sup>341</sup> Interview with Claire Tymon, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix B, p. 162-168.

is a constant cycle of learning sustaining 'continuity.' So, when shared, those skills could be transferred while learning new techniques that could add to their future practice similarly happened in the project Portland Works.

Therefore, Continuity in both projects are seen as an achievement that brings significant impact in the community through actively engaging actors (community and practitioners) in a collaboratively design strategies that contribute to the rediscovering of arts as a collective identity, can have a long-lasting impact in a community that recognises artistic practices as being part of their lives in the city. In the process of building a collective identity the role of the practitioner, in particularly of the architect and designer, is crucial in acting as a connector of people and opportunities, in which her/his role can be expanded from designer to advocator and enabler in facilitating the conversation between stakeholders, organisations and institutions to find financial support, besides other roles such as, facilitator, activist and curator. The architect and designer acts as the main actors in the establishment of partnerships with institutions and grassroots groups. Thus, both initiatives demonstrated that nurturing the current collective identity will have a meaningful impact on the community of artists and the broader community by identifying a collective identity and building social relationships between people, the projects opened the possibility of generating collective ideas based on a shared identity (art industry).

It can be argued that Blackburn is Open is an initiative that focused on building a community of artists that reinforced the town's identity not just locally but also nationally by recognising the independent artists and self-employers who work in the crafts trade, contributing to the economy of the city while providing opportunities for independent crafters to initiate a business. On the other hand, the partnership created between the community of artists and the Darwen and Borough City Council was key in developing the project. The Council and other stakeholders supported the initiative with funds and provided vacant shops for artists to transform into creative workshops, which allowed the town centre to be reactivated. The project went from reprogramming a single building to considering the context of Blackburn's based on a collective identity of arts and crafts originating the Festival of Making as a legacy for the community of artist.

On the other hand, the Project Portland Works shows how a community of artists mobilised to save the building from a planning application that was put in place in Sheffield City Council to give Portland Works a new usage. The value of Portland Works goes beyond a building recognised as heritage due to its manufacturing history during the industrial revolution. It is home to skilled people who hold their workshops to produce bespoke and unique objects contributing to the Sheffield local economy, the change on the characteristic of Portland Work would have put at risk small businesses and skills would have been lost. Therefore, with the slogan, 'Saving Portland Works' the community of artists forged a network of people that consisted in volunteers and community members to retain the building as a community asset. As a form of continuity, the building was purchased in 2013, converting Portland Works into a community enterprise managed by the local community of artist.

# Chapter Four

Practitioner positionality

## Artist-led

Case study projects:

Organisational Diagram for Everyday life (Middlesbrough, UK)

Artist House 45 (Leeds, UK)

The Industrial Revolution in Britain brought a profound social and material transformation of the landscape during the nineteenth century, and those events were recorded in the form of treatises, pamphlets, inquires, essays, articles, poems, plays, and novels. 'If the industrialisation in Great Britain took place in factories and mines, the industrial revolution took place on paper.'<sup>342</sup> For example, artists such as Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg and Joseph Wright portray daily life and societal differences. These paintings are not only a record of mundane activity but also a criticism of workers' living conditions during the industrial period and the effect on the landscape.<sup>343</sup>

The role of artists is of a creator because of their creative capacity to bring concepts into reality. 'Art also holds the power to communicate on various levels, from visual imagery to triggering subconscious thoughts and emotions.'<sup>344</sup> Therefore, art is a medium of expression that establishes a legacy through documented realities, for example, in paintings. It also goes beyond visual imagery, provoking discussion, or prompt critical thinking through poems, plays, and novels. Art can also be a catalyst for generating a collective form of collaboration through sharing information, stories, skills, or approaches, enabling the production of knowledge where people can come together through sharing experiences.

This chapter contextualises the social act of community participation led by artists as an act of citizens being involved in the process of decision-making that shapes their future as an aspect of continuity. It argues that community participation and "arts" are aligned where continuity takes place through conversation to reclaim, propose, co-research, govern and caring for the space. The term community participation is associated with ideas of citizen empowerment through the redistribution of power in which citizens influence the plan of the project for their neighbourhood or city. Citizens can also reclaim power through actions such as protests, campaigns, and community groups.<sup>345</sup> Community participation starts with a degree of partnership with different organisms such as organisations, public and private institutions (local government, grassroots groups, local university) because it enables citizens to negotiate strategies of collective concerns.<sup>346</sup>

Organisations support community participation in partnership with volunteer trustees, stakeholders, and practitioners promotes participation and engages communities in activities where they could be responsible for findings strategies to improve their neighbourhood.<sup>347</sup> For example, East Street Arts, as an artist-led organisation linked to the project Artist House 45, has been working with artists all over the UK to stir change and take control in developing projects that influence the local community to reflect on their current political, social, and economic situation.<sup>348</sup> Therefore, organisations articulate processes where different actors are collaboratively involved in imagining and finding strategies to steer social change. To achieve this objective, practitioners (architects, artists, designers) act as facilitators elaborating a series of tools to engage people in the project. They also act as mediators in engaging stakeholders, municipalities, and public and private sectors in supporting community projects.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>343</sup> Christopher Powell, 'Some British Artists and the Industrial Revolution: Interaction between the Arts and Eighteenth-Century Science and Industry', *Science and Technology Information for Art*, 38.3, (2002), 9-25 (p. 14, 15).

<sup>344</sup> Amy Karle, 'Art of the 4th Industrial Revolution and its Contributions to Humankind', *Conference book of 3rd International Interdisciplinary 3D Conference*, (2017), 1-6 (p. 2).

<sup>345</sup> Organising Engagement, *Ladder of Citizen Participation* (2023) <<https://organizingengagement.org>> [accessed 11 February, 2023].

<sup>346</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, (1969), 216-224 (p. 217, 221, 222, 223).

<sup>347</sup> Fundación Hogares, *Hacemos Comunidad, Misión* (2023) <<https://fundacionhogares.org>> [accessed 2 March, 2023].

<sup>348</sup> East Street Arts, *We are East Street Arts* (2023) <<https://www.eaststreetarts.org.uk/>> [accessed 2 March, 2023].

<sup>349</sup> Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo, 'Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process', *International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 7. Issue 3-4: Socially Responsive Design, (2011), p. 202.

In this chapter, I examine two projects, Artist House 45, and Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life from the perspective of community participation led by artists and how participation took place in both projects. In setting out a project the practitioner also plays the role of initiator for example, the Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life aimed to promote the local art gallery (Saabat Gallery in Middlesborough) as a community hub where people could receive support by joining activities related to artistic practices and as a space to host events and exhibitions that support community meetings. Therefore, the project led by Helen Stratford (architect and artist) tried to identify existing skills and knowledge in the neighbourhood through recording daily routines that later became a booklet to rediscover an area that was seen as deprived but that carried stories of collective memories around care and community work. Whereas the project Artist House 45 Supported a community of artists in Beeston, Leeds, in providing long-term accommodations for artists interested in initiating short-term projects involving the local community (citizens). This flexible mode of practice allowed artists in both projects to settle roots in a location for a long period (up to twelve months) or to establish themselves in a location for a short period (three months) to develop their work, which consisted of setting up interventions that generate conversations and express community needs through artistic expressions as a tool to improve the living conditions in the neighbourhood.





Figure 25. Sharing everyday thoughts, 2018. Image by Helen Stratford. Everyday routines as part of knowledge of daily existence.

## Organisational Diagrams for Everyday Life

## Organisational Diagrams for Everyday Life, an Activity of Involvement with the Community

A local artist, Adrian Moule was interested in supporting the community using the Saabat Gallery located in an old Baptist church in Middlesbrough, South Bank, as a place to promote health and wellbeing through arts. The initiative invited different artists to develop a project that engaged the community with the gallery. According to Helen Stratford (Artist and architect), the artist's vision was to programme the space and transform it into a community hub where people could experience different arts and crafts activities and recover from health issues as well as discuss about social issues affecting the area. This could be done through a series of activities involving arts, for example, in Boal's work the theatre of the oppressed, communities find alternatives to overcome fear and become aware of existing capacities to respond to perceived challenges offering an alternative way of analysing social, economic, and political difficulties oppressing the individual and the community through theatre.<sup>350</sup>

Stratford mentions she was part of the initiative working for three months in the neighbourhood known for being an industrial area. During her visit on-site, Stratford argues, the project had a particular premises 'to make people's lives better.'<sup>351</sup> With that idea in mind, Stratford decided to reframe the initial question of the project and looked at the initiative under a different scope. Hence, she developed the Organisational Diagrams for Everyday Life a project, which intended to critique ideas of productivity. Stratford mentions 'I was quite critical on that because I do not want to go in and tell people how to live their life,'<sup>352</sup> she mentions productivity is very much imposed, especially in the working sector putting many people under pressure to be efficient and reach specific goals often affecting their wellbeing and mental health.<sup>353</sup>

The idea of productivity also includes roles and activity that occurs outside the market, from that perspective, many people remain productively engaged after they depart from the labour market. However, their contributions may be unnoticed, undervalued, or overshadowed by the society. On the other hand, society does not fully provide opportunities, especially for retired adults to stay productive; consequently, they are unable to remain active.<sup>354</sup> Stratford highlights the project explored different activities that can help people stay motivated. For example, such activities could be related to any outdoor sport or maintaining a healthy diet and reducing the consumption of certain foods.<sup>355</sup> In her work, Stratford wanted to challenge the idea that a particular lifestyle does not necessarily fit with many people's everyday lives.

On the other hand, the neighbourhood she was working in was not seen as economically worthy of investments. Stratford says, 'it was seen as very unworthy of any money and, for that reason, is worthy of attention.'<sup>356</sup> Deprived neighbourhoods might not attract investors or secure funding from governmental bodies,<sup>357</sup> but the community carries personal and collective memories attached to that place they consider their home, so the community has valuable stories and experiences to tell, making the area worthwhile in an intangible aspect.

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<sup>350</sup> Nisha Sajjani, 'The Theatre of the Oppressed: Drama Therapy as Cultural Dialogue', in *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy*, ed. by David Read Johnson and Renee Emunah, 2nd edn. (Charles C. Thomas Publisher, LTD., 2009), p. 408.

<sup>351</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>352</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>353</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>354</sup> James Hinterlong, Nancy Morrow-Howell and Michael Sherraden, 'Productive Aging Principles and Perspectives', in *Productive Aging: Concepts and Challenges* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 5, 4.

<sup>355</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>356</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>357</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

Stratford mentions when she joined the initiative, a group of women volunteered at the local gallery, so there was already an active group working on promoting the gallery as a space to share activities related to art and craft. She points out, 'it was a Community Coffee morning, it was a group of ladies who set up this sort of arts and crafts morning, and they had a local artist who came in and did things with them.'<sup>358</sup> Stratford joined the session as a facilitator and asked the group of women if they would like to take part in the Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life project.<sup>359</sup> Stratford's proposal for the community to engage with arts required approaching people, so she decided to go on the street and collect memories and stories from the neighbourhood. Conversations offer a way of understanding the context and the issues around it; it departs from a non-linear way of thinking without a well-defined purpose allowing the speaker and the listener to be in the moment and be open to establishing unforeseen connections.<sup>360</sup>

Her approach toward the project was from a position of a listener that is open to meeting people and mapping the relationship with the space by understanding their lifestyle and connection with the area. Stratford mentions 'from my experience when I have worked in the past, whenever you show interest in people's lives, they are very happy to talk to you about them.'<sup>361</sup> Conversations are a practice that encourages thinking out loud and sharing concerns and knowledge by listening to each other while building empathy and respect, keeping the conversation open to discuss various topics. It opens an opportunity to build a bridge of engagement between people through trust despite gaps and interruptions that may occur during the interaction. It invites people to reflect on hesitations and doubt, considering redefining the meaning of success in the context of the community's challenges.<sup>362</sup>

Therefore, when a bond of trust is built between people, conversations are meaningful because it goes from informal and casual to much more personal, allowing mutual learning and awareness to understand issues. For example, Stratford argues she met a man whose knowledge of the area was extensive in terms of art projects, buildings, and important characters and facts in the history of the area, but before the initiative, the community's stories were not known because of the lack of space to share collective knowledge and experiences.<sup>363</sup> In addition, Stratford adds, in her journey of interacting with people, she met a woman whose grandmother used to bake pies and distribute them around steel factories in the industrial period with the purpose of raising funds for a local charity.<sup>364</sup>

So, the community had a history of helping each other and building solidarity around different activities. Stratford collected all those memories and organised an event to share their stories and build a cohesive community around those memories, using the local gallery as a hub for meetings. On the other hand, Stratford adds there were also challenging times. For instance, in some shops, you are not allowed to interact with people because they are busy or not interested enough to start a conversation; therefore, sometimes, it is necessary to change the approach and identify the right opportunity to interact with people.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>359</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>360</sup> Nel Janssens, 'Collective Sense-Making for Changes: About Conversations and Instructs', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 153.

<sup>361</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>362</sup> Liza Fior, Elke Krasny and Jane Da Mosto, 'Making time for Conversations of Resistance', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 160, 161, 167.

<sup>363</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>364</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>365</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

## Interaction with the local community through daily life conversations

The project was set up to give attention to an area that was rich in people's stories with a view to collecting these memories so that they would inform the project's final output. Stratford describes how she approached people in busy spaces such as the library and markets carrying a flowchart template to record people's routines. People feel connected to the place where they live due to the stories and memories they have collected around that place; this can be their own or their past relatives' stories that somehow contributed to the community.<sup>366</sup> Narrating and storytelling of memories is a set of methods that act as tools to critically enquire about spaces and how cities consist of a variety of cultural expressions considering that cities are transformed around cultures, identities, and pasts.<sup>367</sup> Therefore, the project could be considered meaningful because it allowed residents to share their stories, adding value to every day on a personal basis to build collective knowledge often forgotten or put aside and giving more attention to analytical frameworks where quantifiable is seen as reliable. In contrast, other observations are considered curiosities or indicators.<sup>368</sup>

The project approach involved interaction with people and participation Stratford argues the people shaped the project through conversations. She points out 'I did not sit down or ask them what they would like, but the conversation I had with people led the project.'<sup>369</sup> Therefore, people participated as storytellers, and their stories about their daily routines and experiences created the project. As Stratford adds, 'without them, the project would not happen. Their knowledge and their input influence the way the project developed.'<sup>370</sup> The encounters with the community helped the practitioner to take notes and understand the way of living and the needs of people. Hence, the decision-making process comes indirectly, mainly through conversation that occurs on-site. As Stratford argues, 'I have worked with people with different opinions, which brings to light issues within the area and that cannot be perceived by someone experiencing the site for the first time.'<sup>371</sup>

During her interaction with people, Stratford mentions the people she met got involved in the initiative and out of those conversations, participants organised activities in the community. The network of people was crucial to move forward with the project, for example, people involved run the arts and health group at the local gallery acting as a facilitator for the community's activities. Others worked as collaborators baking pies for the event or leading a community walk to learn about local history and art and some participants documented the event by acting as evaluators of the project.<sup>372</sup> In addition, there were a group of people that conducted an open exhibition to the community to contribute with their family's photos that represented people's memories, and the local vicar, an amateur magician, officially opened the activities programmed by the community.<sup>373</sup> Stratford adds 'I guess for people with these skills, the project became an opportunity for them.'<sup>374</sup> The conversations on the ground helped identify people's interests and shape the project according to their skills and knowledge about the area. Thus, Social relations are a communication channel to promote initiatives, facilitating the growth of mutual trust and solidarity between different groups. Therefore, social bonds

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<sup>366</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix G, p. 214-221.

<sup>367</sup> Ragnhild Claesson, 'Doing and Re-doing Cultural Heritages: Making Space for a Variety of Narratives', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 43, 44.

<sup>368</sup> Sara Brolund De Carvalho and Anja Linna, 'Urban Caring: Fostering Relationships, Foregrounding Diversity and Building Subsistence Economies', in *Feminist Future of Spatial Practice: Materialism, Activism, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections* (AADR - Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 256.

<sup>369</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>370</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>371</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>372</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>373</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>374</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

are crucial for people to join a group because, through communication, they perceive each other as compatible.<sup>375</sup>

Establishing a link of people and delegating work is a way to give to the community agency and let them know they have the skills to continue the project. The relationship and networks established by individuals in a group are crucial for the involvement of people in collective action because those connections will sustain action over time. For example, individuals create connections through their participation in social and cultural activities (reading groups, festivals, community events, etc.), so social activities offer an opportunity to expand the social network contributing to the transformation (new people joining or leaving) and maintenance of the group (social bonds built over trust).<sup>376</sup> Hence, it is crucial to identify the community's capacity and, from there, organise activities that align with people's skills. Stratford recalls, 'I was not there the whole time. I was only there for one week of the third month, and in between times, we just communicated and organised things.'<sup>377</sup> The initiative was shaped to collaborate with many artists and the community. According to Stratford, after her project ends, other artists could carry on with different activities that would contribute to building a community around the art gallery.

Stratford's contribution to the initiative brought a different scope to the project, highlighting the importance of people's stories and lifestyles. The project appreciated people's stories and why they have adopted certain lifestyles rather than imposing routines to improve their quality of life. As Stratford mentions 'I do not want to be in that position because that implies, I know better.'<sup>378</sup> With this thinking in mind, Stratford switched the initial focus of the initiative and decided to focus on looking at people's way of living as valuable. The project, Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life, was a collection of a set of people's routines and stories that positioned the community's resources and abilities in the first place. Stratford emphasises 'I sort of facilitated this kind of situation, and I had the idea that maybe people would join.'<sup>379</sup> The connections built on the ground were significant for the project to gain strength and thrive. As Stratford argues, 'I think you need somebody on the ground who knows people already, who can approach people even if they have not worked with them.'<sup>380</sup> Stratford argues that if those connections do not exist, building them requires time and effort, and without a connection already established, the outcome of the project could take longer to impact the community positively.<sup>381</sup>

The routines collected during the project Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life later ended up in a booklet that was distributed to people in an event to celebrate the people's participation. The booklet was a collection of routines and conversations that originated from the interaction with people on the street.<sup>382</sup> During her work with the community, Stratford points out the community had the chance to look differently at the area and talk about it through memories they had in the neighbourhood that later were recorded in a document that originated a booklet so it could inform future developments in the area based on the community's voice. As Stratford argues, working with people is much about being open to having a conversation and, from that starting point, building an activity or workshop<sup>383</sup> because there are inspirational stories that can provide interesting insight into

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<sup>375</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements, An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 116.

<sup>376</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements, An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 117.

<sup>377</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>378</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>379</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>380</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>381</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix C, p. 169-176.

<sup>382</sup> Helen Stratford, *Project Documentation Helen Stratford* (Helen Stratford, 2018), p. 24 in, <<http://www.helenstratford.co.uk/>> [accessed 28 February, 2023].

<sup>383</sup> Interview with Helen Stratford, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix G, p. 214-221.

people’s relationship with the spaces. The events and exhibition of daily life activities and people’s stories in the art gallery invited the local community to hear the hidden voices of others. Through different people’s narratives, the community was aware of the existing diversity within the community, paying tribute to and highlighting people’s contributions to the community.

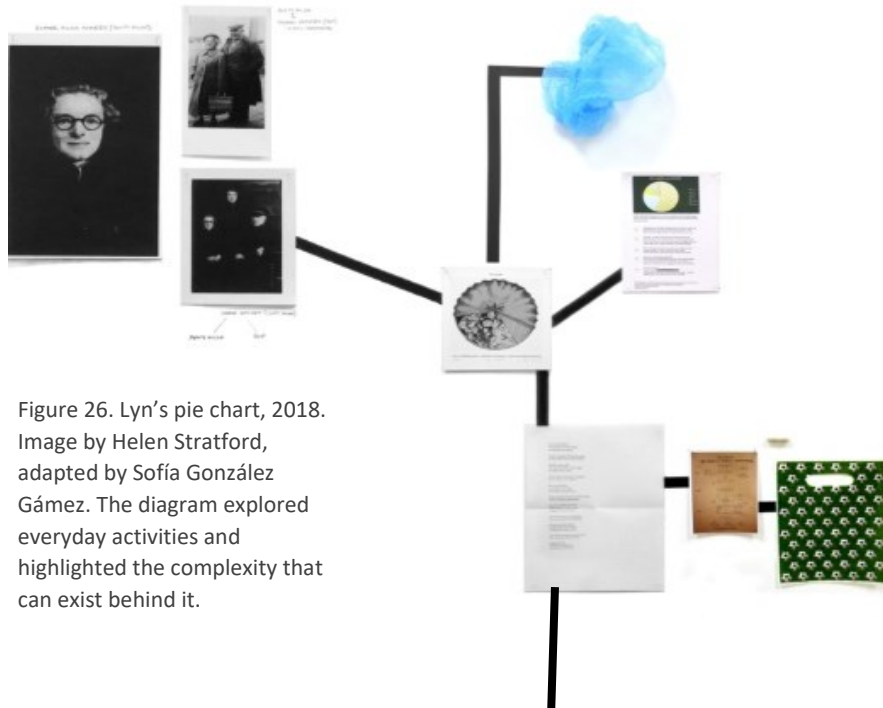


Figure 26. Lyn’s pie chart, 2018. Image by Helen Stratford, adapted by Sofía González Gámez. The diagram explored everyday activities and highlighted the complexity that can exist behind it.

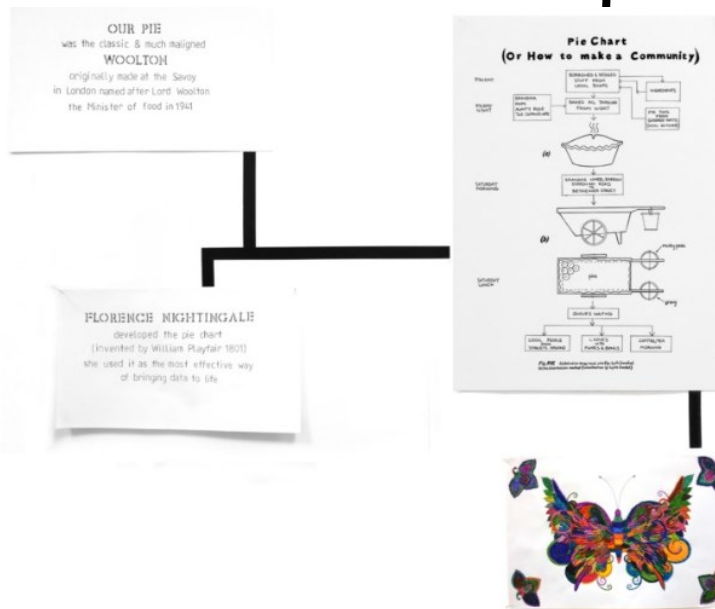


Figure 27. Organisational Diagrams for Everyday Life activity, 2018. Image by Abboud Mahjouh. Stratford invited participants to record their activities at the local supermarket.



Figure 28. Artist House 45 living room, 2015-2017. Image by Andrew Wilson. Inside Artist House 45 during Lloyd-Wilson's residency.

## Artist House 45

## Artist House 45, An Experimental Artist-led Housing

Artist House 45 is an experimental pilot project in a back-to-back terrace house in Beeston, Leeds, that started in 2015 and continued until 2020.<sup>384</sup> The house is run by an artist-led organisation called East Street Arts which has been working with artists to provide studio spaces. While working with them, they noted artists often struggle to find long-term accommodation, meaning they cannot put down roots in a particular city, affecting the continuity and viability of practice. According to Jonathan Orlek (architect and director of Studio Polpo), from the artist's perspective, they recognised living and working in the same space permitted the development of long-term projects that could bring together arts and the local community.<sup>385</sup> The arts organisation saw an opportunity to support the community of artists and their work by providing long-term residency of twelve months (or more) and an average of four weeks<sup>386</sup> in a house where they could share with other artists exchange knowledge, nurturing creativity in an environment that merges daily life routine with arts and community. During their residency, they are able to work in collaboration with other artists engaging the local community in artistic practices, debates, participatory approaches and urban interventions through creative outputs.<sup>387</sup>

Artist-led practice can take many forms, such as curating exhibitions and workshops to provide art education, managing studio space, and running art galleries. In the art context, depending on the project developed by the artist, it could be or not be linked to a particular building or site. For example, the work of Toby Lloyd and Andrew Wilson 'Trajectory of the Everyday' consisted of regular publications in the local newspaper South Leeds Life to prompt and provoke conversation about concepts and beliefs of shared spaces, daily routines, and social boundaries, bringing into discussion topics affecting South Leeds such as housing crisis, green space, participation, politics, inequalities among other topics.<sup>388</sup>

The artist's role is constantly changing, and instead of being a self-own creative practice, it expanded toward the collective and invited people to be part of it. One example that illustrates the role of the artist in the community is *the theatre of the oppressed* developed by Augusto Boal, which consists of a series of techniques which create a safe space for people to initiate a discussion about a situation that is oppressing, allowing the exchange of experience and dialogue between participants helping them to take further action once they are fully aware of the situation. *The theatre of the oppressed* also performs plays in which current social issues are presented on stage and to the public. In this artistic practice, actors represent through a play a social issue enabling participants to raise their concerns in an open debate.<sup>389</sup> From the idea of Boal's work *theatre of the oppressed* as an example of how arts can be embedded in social issues, East Streets Arts, as an organisation run by volunteers and committed trustees, works at the grass-roots level viewing arts as a tool to instigate change, influence decision-making and creating opportunities within the local community.<sup>390</sup>

Due to the fact that many artists are in constant movement, travelling and experimenting with their practice, the opportunity of finding studio spaces and housing that can offer flexibility of short

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<sup>384</sup> Jonathan Orlek, *Artist House 45* (n.d) <<https://artistlivework.net/artist-house-45/>> [accessed 7 February, 2023].

<sup>385</sup> Interview with Jonathan Orlek, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Appendix D, p. 177-180.

<sup>386</sup> Toby Phips Lloyd, *Artist House 45 for 'In the Region of Utopia'* (2015) <<http://www.lloyd-wilson.co.uk/PDF/ArtistHouse.pdf>> [accessed 7 February, 2023].

<sup>387</sup> Jonathan Orlek, *About Artist-Led Housing* (n.d) <<https://artistlivework.net/about/>> [accessed 7 February, 2023].

<sup>388</sup> Toby Lloyd and Andrew Wilson, *Trajectory of the Everyday* (2015) <[http://www.lloyd-wilson.co.uk/html/trajectory\\_everyday.html](http://www.lloyd-wilson.co.uk/html/trajectory_everyday.html)> [accessed 7 February 2023].

<sup>389</sup> Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the oppressed*, trans. by Emily Fryer, 2nd edn: Pluto Press, (2000).

<sup>390</sup> East Street Arts, *We are East Street Arts* (2023) <<https://www.eaststreetarts.org.uk/about-east-street-arts/>> [accessed 7 February, 2023].



and long-term contracts are limited. As a way of providing a space where the artist can live and work at the same time, the project Artist House 45 consisted in managing, programming, and inviting artists to live in a house while running their own practice. This approach is based on, according to Orlek, 'bringing artists together to engage with different partners and organisations.'<sup>391</sup> The mode of working that Artist House 45 offers creates constant movement of artists; for example, if one artist starts a project and leaves after his/her tenancy ends, the next artist that takes the residency has the option to continue with the project or starting his/her own project allowing previous projects to continue or new projects to emerge.

By embedding artists in the community and launching different projects, the community is expected to act as co-producers by sharing their experiences, learning in groups, and building social relations within the neighbourhood.<sup>392</sup> Orlek highlights some projects could be more socially engaged than others. For example, two artists worked closely with the men's social club through encounters introducing art and craft to the community, strengthening community cohesion, and enabling groups to build strong relationships through integration and solidarity. However, some artists could conduct an introspective project; for example, some artists developed a project that consisted of painting the everyday life of the neighbourhood depicting people's mundane routines that tells the story of the neighbourhood and their residents. The paintings documented daily routines positioning the area in a way it was not visible previously to others representing the culture of the area and showing the relationship of citizens with the urban space.<sup>393</sup>

The interesting aspect of the initiatives led by Artist House 45 is the exchange of knowledge that occurs from one residency to the other, maintaining projects in constant transformation. Although the projects that artists carried out within the community varied from working with the community in a more collaborative approach to self-managed projects, the examples mentioned reflect that artist-led practices involve participation through storytelling and collective meetings using people's experiences as a source of inspiration in shaping projects that respond to the local social situation.

## Artist-led housing and the constant flow of artists

East Street Arts questioned the spaces in which artists exhibit, work and stay, consolidating and creating a hybrid space that combines housing and studios that frequently is seen as two separate spaces within the artistic production. Therefore, the project Artist house 45 enables artists to set and adjust the space according to their needs hosting different practices. Various projects emerged within various residencies, and the constant movement of artists moving in and out of the house brought new projects to life, maintaining the initiative ongoing for five years.<sup>394</sup> Artists living in the house created opportunities for residents to be involved in various activities incorporating an element of arts as a means of expression.

As a form of empowering communities, participation aims to develop and explore the desires of communities while addressing diverse needs, thereby contributing to the production of a more just

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<sup>391</sup> Interview with Jonathan Orlek, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Appendix D, p. 177-180.

<sup>392</sup> Madeleine Walton, *The State of Arts, Artist House 45* (2015) <<https://www.thestateofthearts.co.uk/features/artist-house-45/>> [accessed 7 February, 2023].

<sup>393</sup> Interview with Jonathan Orlek, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Appendix D, p. p. 177-180.

<sup>394</sup> Jonathan Orlek. *Moving In and Out, or Staying in Bed: Using Multiple Ethnographic Positions and Methods to Study Artist-Led Housing as a Critical Spatial Practice*. 2021. p, 124.

space. Consequently, it encompasses diverse activities such as networking formation, claiming, proposing, co-researching, governing, caring, and building.<sup>395</sup> As an example of the socially engaged project within Artist House 45 that incorporates networking formation, claiming, governing, and caring, Andrew Wilson and Toby Lloyd supported a group of residents (The Green Patch group) committed to cleaning up a green space, the Garnet's green area in Beeston. Therefore, the artists and residents knocked on doors to invite people to join the activity and campaign together for the City Council to review their building plans to keep the green area.<sup>396</sup> The campaign was also published in the local newspaper, the South Leeds Life, as part of the project, the 'Trajectory of Everyday', for the community to be aware of the situation. The involvement of the artists in the community offered the chance to identify issues within the neighbourhood and create interventions that could help the community to expose the issues within the area using artistic expression so it could be visible to others.

East Street Arts, as an organisation embedded in social practices, opens the possibility to artists engaging with local issues and developing a method that aligns with community participation. Following the idea of participation as a means of expression through events, the project 'Broadcast Bartender' established by Wilson and Lloyd encouraged networking, proposing, and co-researching. It consisted in setting up a bar installation in a public building as a way to meet and talk as a way of providing an alternative form of gathering and initiating conversation in a free format which means any topic concerning people could be drawn to the table. The recorded conversation was released as a radio broadcast for the wider community to be informed about what people were saying and join the conversation. The events allowed the collective to share experiences through socialising and let people decide which topic they would like to address in the conversation. The topics for the event are not planned from the start but depend on the interests and desires of the participants involved in the conversation.<sup>397</sup>

Although East Street Arts are receptive to new ideas, listening to artist experiences, and developing critical reflective practice, the organisation leads the overall decision-making with two creative directors, Karen Watson, and Jon Wakeman, who are involved in the final decision. Apart from them, some trustees work with the organisation and add another layer of decision-making to the process regarding projects, opportunities, and events led by artists and the community.<sup>398</sup> Orlek says 'people represented diversity and different interests in the area, and they were involved in the early decision-making around the project when it was initiated by East Street Arts.'<sup>399</sup> The organisation listens to artists reflecting on each residency, developing a continuous critical approach that enables this hybrid model to explore art and social projects.

Critical appraisal allows artists to adopt an individual position or collaborative approach that engages the community.<sup>400</sup> Therefore, delegating power is another step toward participation, and it requires organisations to hand over citizens certain control, for example, in the managing and making decisions of the projects or programmes. Finally, citizen control is when residents or a community organisation run and have absolute control in managing and establishing a programme in which they

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<sup>395</sup> Julia Udall and Anna Holder, 'The 'Diverse Economies' of Participation', *Footprint- The Participatory Turn in Urbanism*, 13, (2013), 63-80 (p. 63).

<sup>396</sup> Madeleine Walton, *The State of Arts, Artist House 45* (2015) <<https://www.thestateofthearts.co.uk/features/artist-house-45/>> [accessed 7 February, 2023].

<sup>397</sup> Kim Trogal, 'Open Kitchen or 'Cookery Architecture'', in *Altering Practices Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space*, ed. Doina Petrescu (Routledge, 2007), p. 173,174.

<sup>398</sup> East Street Arts, *What Do We Do? Intervention Through Art!* (2023) <<https://www.eaststreetarts.org.uk/>> [accessed 8 February, 2023].

<sup>399</sup> Interview with Jonathan Orlek, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Appendix D, p. 177-180

<sup>400</sup> Jonathan Orlek. *Moving in and Out or Staying in Bed: Using Multiple Ethnographic Positions and Methods to Study Artist-Led Housing as a Critical Spatial Practice*. 2021.

are the ones who make the final decisions.<sup>401</sup> For example, introducing the view of the community through initiating conversations, as in the case of Bartenders Broadcast and taking action, as the Green Patch group, which are narratives within the city, connecting people to place and vice versa. These narratives probably will not generate the creation of space; instead, they make visible issues affecting the collective to create arguments and prompt reflection<sup>402</sup> for the future creation of space.

Figure 29. Broadcast Bartender project, 2015. Image by Andrew Wilson. The project is a conversation event where people meet and talk about any current topic.

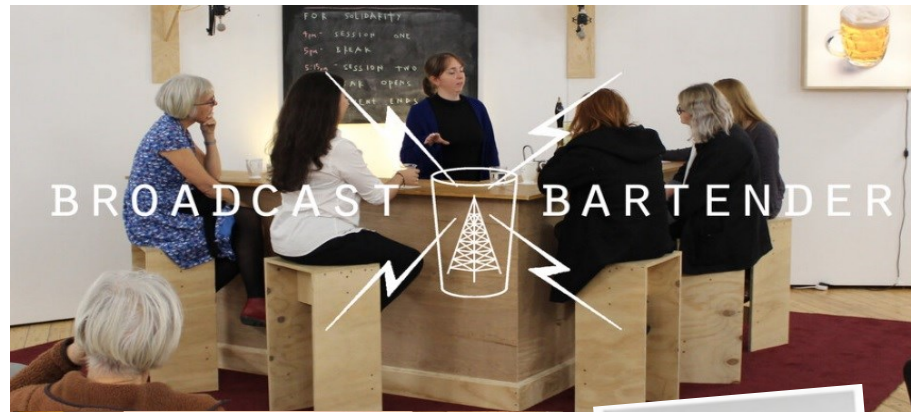


Figure 30. Artist House 45 Wilson-Lloyd residency, 2015. Image by Andrew Wilson. Andrew Wilson and Toby Lloyd during their residency in Artist House 45.



Figure 31. The pub and the people, 2015. Image by Andrew Wilson. Broadcast Bartender as a project that involves residents in starting a conversation about the neighbourhood.



<sup>401</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, (1969), 216-224 (p. 217, 221, 222, 223).

<sup>402</sup> Prue Chiles, 'What if?.. a Narrative Process for Re-imagining the City', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till (Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), p. 190,191.

## Reflection on Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life and Artist House 45

These two case studies reveal that the creation of partnerships and working in collaboration with organisations and institutions are essential for community participation to thrive. This alliance is also a way of empowering the community to take ownership of the project so continuity can occur and, at the same time, developing agency through reclaiming, proposing, co-researching, governing, and caring. From that starting point, the community are able to run and manage a programme in their community and, in that way, have control of the decision-making. Therefore, with the support of artists, the community can identify issues within the neighbourhood, leading to activities that use artistic expression to make it visible to the broader community.

Therefore, arts are neatly aligned with community participation because encourage people to build networks to reclaim space, as the 'Green Patch' project by Wilson and Loyd revealed. In addition, proposing and co-researching are also forms of community participation, and the booklet created in co-production with the community during the 'Organisational Diagram for Everyday' project shows citizens can contribute with their knowledge about the area in future decision-making. In addition, as an example of governing and caring, the project 'Broadcast Bartender' established by Wilson and Loyd explored conversations about social issues in Leeds around a bar table, promoting citizens' expression as a powerful instrument for questioning forms of governance.

Different activities emerge from those conversations based on people's experiences, and both projects demonstrate that community stories, experiences and daily activities have the potential to strengthen community relationships and, in that way, create a cohesive community, reinforcing the idea that community participation strengthens relationships between members, leading to collective action. However, community participation can take different approaches to stir conversation and reflect on issues around the neighbourhood through art. To give agency to the community, citizens need to act as co-producers of the projects by sharing their experiences, learning, and making decisions contributing to the final output delivered to the community. Even though the project Artist House 45 was set to last five years and Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life, one year, the constant flow of artists brought different projects into action, allowing the community to explore their collective desires while addressing common concerns in the neighbourhood.

These two projects show how forging a supportive structure that enables collective action can engender a sense of direction and involvement that go beyond the project's initial objectives, thus contributing to the understanding of the multiple possibilities that exist for the continuity of community projects. Therefore, community participation is intrinsically connected with the level of commitment and caring of the community for the space, and the level of commitment will lead to social cohesion, generating long-term engagement. Social cohesion needs to be reinforced by identifying shared values and goals the community has or expects to achieve to strengthen bonds in social relations and, in that way, reflect the support individuals offer to one another in their community by creating a network of people that works toward a common good where cooperation creates a long-lasting relationship due to mutual supports creating bonds between individuals.

Continuity in these projects is seen as an opportunity for engagement through conversation and daily life experiences of a particular community. As Artist House 45 and Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life reveal, both projects are 'dialogue-based approaches' opening up the discussion for democracy and agency for citizens.

# Chapter Five

Practitioner Positionality

## Architect-led

Case study projects:

Tei Community Centre (Bucharest, Romania)

City School 1

Public spaces are considered political spaces where civic life happens. 'They are significant arenas in which political power can be expressed, maintained, and indeed enhanced.' For example, as an early response to the fall of communist and the beginning of the post-communist period, in Bucharest in December 1989, protesters undertook a rebellion against the communist state to erase and cleanse communist symbols and emblems from public spaces. However, before the uprising, in communist Romania, the political regime used public spaces to proclaim their ideologies and to shape a communist mentality through the planning of urban spaces where visual elements such as monuments and statues were part of the landscape, as well as naming urban spaces to reflect the agenda of Romanian communists.<sup>403</sup>

As a consequence of reshaping urban spaces, it left a problematic legacy in the culture of public space in the post-communist period. The government has failed to address the urban landscape, and a period of neglected urban spaces started during the 1990s with leftover buildings that slowly started to deteriorate, turning into marginal places that, at the same time 'these left-over socialist spaces have now been fully claimed by capitalism'.<sup>404</sup> Therefore, the city went through a 'radical, paradigmatic reversal: from a space shaped by the socialist state [...] to a space shaped by unleashed private economic interests.'<sup>405</sup> In response to the privatisation of public spaces in Bucharest, the city became a scenario of several protests that brought people together to reclaim public spaces as commons. This form of collective activism represents a means of protecting public spaces from being seen as restricted enclosed spaces imposed by capitalism.<sup>406</sup>

This chapter analyses the social action of collective action as a temporal and spatial practice that involves community groups and practitioners united by shared values and aspirations to reach a common objective. It argues that forging a sense of purposeful collective action underpins the possibilities of continuity in community projects. Continuity is seen as acting together, creating networks and social relationships to facilitate the growth of mutual trust and solidarity between them due to the similarities they share that can be attributed to collective identity. Therefore, the network they forge through collective actions is crucial for the involvement of people in sustaining community projects over time.<sup>407</sup>

Melucci argues that collective actions are a response toward a crisis or imbalance around a common belief that tends to threaten shared values, so individuals act in an attempt to stand up for the common good.<sup>408</sup> Hence, people mobilise and become engaged in various forms of collective action related to different social issues for which people advocate and take action; generally speaking, the three components of collective action frames refer to a sense of injustice, a factor of agency and an element of identity. As William Gamson writes: (1) Injustice refers to the salience of issues related to hardships and inequities that stimulate emotions such as compassion, resignation, and frustration. It relates to beliefs about the acts or conditions that have caused people to suffer from unfairness; (2) Agency is related to the awareness it is possible to make changes through collective action; and (3) Identity refers to defining the 'we' based on similar values and interest.<sup>409</sup>

People who join collective actions are active, knowledgeable, and determined to achieve social changes. Their participation mainly involves voluntary activities, and they persist due to the

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<sup>403</sup> Duncan Light and Craig Young, 'Public Space and the Material Legacies of Communism in Bucharest', in *Post-Communist Romania at Twenty-Five: Linking Past, Present, and Future*, ed. by Lavinia Stan & Diane Vancea (Lexington Books, 2015), p. 42, 43, 44.

<sup>404</sup> Duncan Light and Craig Young, 'Reconfiguring Socialist Urban Landscapes: The 'Left-over' Spaces of State-Socialism in Bucharest', *Human Geographies – Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography*, 4.1, (2010), 5-16 (p. 8).

<sup>405</sup> Ivan Kucina, 'Commoning of the Uncommonness: Developing Urban Commons in Post Socialist City', *Rivista di Storia delle Idee Patrocinata dall'Università degli Studi di Palermo*, 5.11, (2016), 106-116 (p. 106).

<sup>406</sup> Cristian Borcan, 'Constructing Temporary Urban Commons Through Civic Engagement in Bucharest', *Ephemeral. Built Not to Last, Studies in History and Theory of Architecture*, (2022), 159-168 (p. 159, 160).

<sup>407</sup> Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements an Introduction*, 2nd edn (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 91, 92, 116.

<sup>408</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes Collective Action in the Information Age*, 2nd edn (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 14.

<sup>409</sup> William A. Gamson, 'Constructing Social Protest', in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 90.

hope they place in a better future. Even though their effort may not make much difference, they feel they contributed to society with their actions.<sup>410</sup> Practitioners (architects as activist) can act as a catalyst for stirring collective actions by working together with the community to develop a strategy and conduct research that involves local people in the process of acting collectively to produce a change in their neighbourhood. The role of the practitioner is to trigger discussions in which the community feels identified, helping them articulate their needs and, from that position, allow communities to organise themselves, facilitating activities for collective action, expecting that once the community feel identified with the project, they can be responsible for continuing the action and keep growing existing networks.

This chapter looks at the projects Tei Community Centre and City School 1 run by two practitioners (architects), Cristi Borcan and Alex Axinte, who advocate for public spaces in Bucharest. In partnership with different actors, such as residents and civic groups, they aim to recognise public space for social interaction while offering resources for learning and nurturing knowledge in a context where public space is threatened and constantly suffering from privatisation due to its political past. The project City School 1 reveals how social relations are strengthened through the re-opening of the local library. The project seeks to reflect and criticise the decline of public spaces by prompting discussions to engage residents in reclaiming public spaces. On the other hand, the project Tei Community Centre is an example of how a group of neighbours (Lacultei) built a temporary installation in Circus Park to host community meetings, workshops, and events. The civic group carried forward a project to demonstrate public spaces are for the community to build social relationships and engage in activities related to reimagining the city, being the first project to be conceived, built, and managed by a group of citizens in Bucharest.

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<sup>410</sup> Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), p. 4, 13.



Figure 32. A civic group, 2015. Image by Studio Basar. Lacul Tei group is a group of citizens who decided to respond to the management of public spaces in Bucharest.

## Tei Community Centre



## Tei Community Centre, The Emergence of a Civic Group

Civic groups in Bucharest started to appear as a reaction toward local authorities' decisions regarding the public realm. Public spaces were constantly under threat due to privatisation and centralisation concerning design planning and decision-making. Throughout the years, the state became absent, and most of the public spaces in Bucharest were neglected or privatised.<sup>411</sup> The project Tei Community Centre started with a group of neighbours, Lacul Tei Civic Initiative Group (LTCIG) and Studio Basar (an architecture practice based in Bucharest, founded by Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan). The civic group began to argue about the process and mechanism adopted in urban planning by the authorities in the city of Bucharest through a series of workshops organised by Studio Basar with the aim of imagining different scenarios for public spaces in Tei neighbourhood.<sup>412</sup>

They identified that Circus Park, located in the 2nd Sector, Bucharest, needed more benches and spaces to meet. Therefore, the initial group's vision of building a temporary installation for the park's users came into place during the workshop. They worked on developing scenarios for the park that involved a self-building space as a meeting point. The proposal consisted in building a temporary installation, a pavilion formed by a platform with benches and a board for people to be aware of the public talks programmed to take place in the space.<sup>413</sup> According to Borcan, architect, and founder of Studio Basar, after organising many activities within the community and operating as a civic group, they started to change their position. Instead of being reactive, they became proactive and began proposing ideas to local authorities to improve the quality of public spaces. Thus, they actively began to work with NGOs such as Resource Centre for Public Participation (CeRe) to exercise control over public spaces in their neighbourhood. As a result, in partnership with Studio Basar, the idea of self-building a temporary community centre in the park emerged.<sup>414</sup>

Social movements are recognised as networks in which participants, organisations and groups play a role in transforming ideas into action.<sup>415</sup> They operate in many ways and different settings advocating for a common view they identify as an issue. As groups become more active in their community, they organise public demonstrations, sign petitions, and raise their voices about their discontent, becoming crucial actors in city life.<sup>416</sup> Borcan mentions, looking at the trajectories of LTCIG, they started as a protest group, campaigning on the street and reclaiming urban spaces. With constant action, they gained visibility, opening up the possibility to dialogue with local authorities in the decision-making for future design projects; as an active group, they demand public participation. Borcan points out, most members are not professional activists; they started as a group of neighbours that gathered around an urban issue and dedicated their time to organising public meetings and inviting people to join.<sup>417</sup>

People participate in producing a collective good through a series of activities and interactions in an effort to make visible their demands in the distribution of power through public demonstrations.<sup>418</sup> During their work with the civic group, Borcan explains, the project helped him and

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<sup>411</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar) 'In Action: Searching for the In-Between City,' in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 285.

<sup>412</sup> Studio Basar, *A Place in TEI* (2017) <<http://www.studiobasar.ro/?p=6646&lang=en>> [accessed 8 March, 2023].

<sup>413</sup> Studio Basar, *A Place in TEI* (2017) <<http://www.studiobasar.ro/?p=6646&lang=en>> [accessed 8 March, 2023].

<sup>414</sup> Studio Basar, *Tei Community Centre* (2017) <<http://www.studiobasar.ro/?p=8284&lang=en>> [accessed 8 March, 2023].

<sup>415</sup> Mario Diani, 'The Concept of Social Movements', in *Social Movements a Reader*, ed. by Vincenzo Ruggiero and Nicola Montagna (Routledge, 2008), p. 267.

<sup>416</sup> Hank Johnston, *What is a Social Movement?* (Polity Press, 2014).

<sup>417</sup> Studio Basar, *Tei Community Centre* (2017) <<http://www.studiobasar.ro/?p=8284&lang=en>> [accessed 8 March, 2023].

<sup>418</sup> Charles Tilly, 'Social Movements and National Politics', in *Social Movements a Reader*, ed. by Vincenzo Ruggiero and Nicola Montagna (Routledge, 2008), p. 187.

his colleague Axinte to change their position as practitioners, and they started to adopt a participatory approach in every project they were involved. They found the approach allows them to work with the community collaboratively, listening and following the community's needs closely.<sup>419</sup> Therefore, participation becomes meaningful when both parties benefit from the collaborative process. Borcan says 'the idea for a space for the community centre was not ours. It was a need that the group identified in the community.'<sup>420</sup> As practitioners, Borcan and his colleague Axinte gathered together with members of the organisation Centre for Public Resources and other members of the community to make decisions about the community centre, for example, where it is going to be located, how it is going to be built, the materials, and all the technical part of it. They knew they would have to apply for funds to build the centre, and the application form was done with the community.<sup>421</sup>

From the beginning of the initiative, the process was in collaboration with the community, which contributed to strengthening the relationship with other participants. As Borcan mentions, 'so, in a way, we knew each other, which is very important in a community project because otherwise, you are just a technocrat, and there has to be trust between you, as an architect and the community you want to work with.'<sup>422</sup> To embrace participation, people must be involved from the beginning of the process, building trust with other members. Borcan points out, 'we had a history together with this group, so it was not a project that started from a blank slate. It was important they knew us, and them.'<sup>423</sup>

## A temporary structure for the community

According to Borcan, the structure of the temporary community centre was a shipping container due to it is forbidden to build in public spaces and placed in a space where the group claimed ownership. As practitioners involved in the initiative, Borcan and Axinte recognised the project was meant to be short-term, the initiative had three-year permission from the City Council to manage the community centre located in the park.<sup>424</sup> The civic group were engaged with the initiative from the beginning, and as a result, the sense of ownership was strong because it was planned and self-made by the community for the community. The project reveals how the civic group operated with the support of other actors involved in the process, such as Studio Basar. According to Borcan, the idea of the community centre came from the group that already held meetings in cafes or private houses, so the need for this group to have a space to hold their meeting was critical for the continuity of the group.<sup>425</sup>

People participate in activities to produce a collective goal; in their view, if they do not mobilise, the good will not be produced, so they feel the urge to act because of the feeling of responsibility and solidarity they have developed toward the social cause they are advocating.<sup>426</sup> Borcan argues that the group adopted round tables to discuss different subjects regarding public

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<sup>419</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>420</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>421</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186.

<sup>422</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>423</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>424</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>425</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>426</sup> Bert Klandermans, 'Mobilisation and Participation: Social-Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilisation Theory', in *Social Movements a Reader*, ed. by Vincenzo Ruggiero and Nicola Montagna (Routledge, 2008), p. 249.

spaces to learn from other participants' opinions. In addition, another way of communicating their cause was through physical interaction with other neighbours and talking to people on the streets. Part of the group's action was to invite people to public meetings they used to organise in the park, and around fifty people used to participate.<sup>427</sup> The meetings were informal, and people joined to discuss their vision and how to improve public spaces around the neighbourhood. For the group to organise themselves and acquire expertise in organising community activities, the organisation Resources Centre for Public Participation supported the civic movement by providing tools and resources to the group to carry on their activities in the neighbourhood.<sup>428</sup>

According to Axinte and Borcan, Tei Community Centre was the first community centre in Bucharest that was built by a civic group,<sup>429</sup> and they planned to extend the authorisation to continue occupying the park, but in the process of renewing the permission, the Covid pandemic took place.<sup>430</sup> The restriction and confinement ended in postponing the approval, affecting the group's activity. As a result of the two years of lockdown and restrictions to socialise, the community centre remained inactive, compromising the structure that was slowly declining. As a result, the City Council issued a document to evict the centre from the park.<sup>431</sup> Borcan points out the group decided to move the structure from the park and give it another use by donating to another organisation ceasing the group's activity temporarily.<sup>432</sup>

Borcan and Axinte were involved in the initiative as architects and activists. They helped the community achieve the goal of having a space for community gatherings. As practitioners, they were engaged for three years, hoping to build a solid foundation for the group to continue with the activities in the park.<sup>433</sup> However, the future of the group is uncertain as they no longer have a space to organise meetings and continue with their activities. Despite that, the group became visible in the community due to being active in the neighbourhood and on social media, promoting public activities that advocate for public spaces.<sup>434</sup> Borcan argues civic groups tend to be temporary because it depends on factors such as dedicated time and funding.<sup>435</sup> Hence, civic activities have ups and downs depending on the factors affecting them.

The involvement of Studio Basar was significant not only in supporting the civic group but also in shaping the community centre project. As a practitioner of the built environment, they share the same value but disagrees on how the resources are used, therefore the aim of people involved in the action is to defend their interest.<sup>436</sup> Borcan recognises architects in the past were trained to provide strategies and solutions in a one-way approach, often neglecting the community's voice. However, as collaborators and designers of the project, they have learnt from the initiative to organise events and interactions that put the community in the centre of the project, steering community participation and nurturing the sense of ownership that people build over getting involved in the project.

Participation was part of the initiative from the beginning; the civic group and the practitioners involved identified the needs for the community centre. Borcan argues they applied for funding as a group, revealing the commitment to the project, and he adds it was led by women in their fifties and sixties that are regular visitors of the park. As part of the group, there were also people

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<sup>427</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>428</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186.

<sup>429</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan, 'Towards an Intermediary Practice: Bucharest Laboratory', *Architectural Design*, 88.5, (2018), 39-43 (p. 43).

<sup>430</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>431</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>432</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>433</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>434</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>435</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>436</sup> Alan Touraine, 'The Importance of Social Movements', *Social Movement Studies*, 1.1, (2002), 89-95 (p. 90).

from different ages, skills, and backgrounds, making the group diverse.<sup>437</sup> As Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver mention, social ties are crucial for collective action owing to the fact participants are recruited through pre-existing social relations. Thus, mobilisation is more likely to happen when participants have already built a social tie between them.<sup>438</sup> According to Borcan, 'there were groups in Bucharest that started to be very closed and did not evolve.'<sup>439</sup>

In contrast, the group Lacu Tei is characterised by being open and welcoming people from different groups, building a strong network of members around the area. Borcan points out, 'many of these women have a different relationship with the city. It is more about care, care for the city.'<sup>440</sup> The project Tei community centre unfolds a different way of practising architecture in the Bucharest context, revealing a collaborative approach where the community is part of the process. This initiative is an example of a community organisation because the idea of building a community centre emerged from an active civic group that reclaimed, as Axinte and Borcan points out 'local spaces for cultural dissemination, educational production and community interaction.'<sup>441</sup>

Figure 33. Tei Community Centre, 2016. Image by Studio Basar. A group picture in front of the self-made community centre.



Figure 34. Inauguration event, 2016. Image by Studio Basar. A community event organised by the community centre in Circus Park.



<sup>437</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>438</sup> Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver, 'The Critical Mass in Collective Action', in *Social Movements a Reader*, ed. by Vincenzo Ruggiero and Nicola Montagna (Routledge Student Readers, 2008), p. 129.

<sup>439</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>440</sup> Interview with Cristi Borcan, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Appendix E, p. 181-186

<sup>441</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan, 'Towards an Intermediary Practice: Bucharest Laboratory', *Architectural Design*, 88.5, (2018), 39-43 (p. 43).



Figure 35. Inside Militari public library, 2015-2016. Image by Studio Basar. An informal workshop that engages participants to come up with ideas to reopen the local library.

## City School 1

## City School 1, From a Series of Workshops to a Consolidated Project.

The project City School 1 started in Bucharest with the aim of setting a programme for students from architecture, urbanism, sociology, and other related fields of the built environment. Besides the intention of becoming a programme for students that could be added to the Architecture course curriculum at the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu, the project looked to develop research that identifies potential opportunities in the context of the Militari neighbourhood so residents could engage in the production of space, nurturing the existing network in the neighbourhood and from there build partnerships with stakeholders to test new tools that can contribute to the management and production of space.<sup>442</sup>

The project looked at a local library as a space with a powerful potential for people to access knowledge through books, archives, and technology. Alex Axinte (architect and researcher) mentions public libraries in Bucharest are all around the city and are mainly located near collective housing neighbourhoods. In the Militari neighbourhood, most of the time, the public spaces available around flat units need to be in better condition. The library is not an exception because it often suffers from budget cuts and a lack of support from the local government. However, Axinte and Cristi Borcan who runs Studio Basar, an architecture studio and a public space practice that focus on urban culture and public spaces,<sup>443</sup> saw an opportunity to establish a partnership with the library, architectural students, and the local community to get involved in an action that involved the reopening of the library through the production of space and, in that way, strengthen the existing network of residents to manage the local library. The discussions, ideas and proposals for the library brought cohesion to the group and motivated residents to generate future initiatives.<sup>444</sup>

After creating a partnership with a group of neighbours and students, Axinte argues they received permission from the local Council to reopen the library as a learning laboratory where people could engage in workshops and conversation about public spaces and its appropriation. As part of the initiative to reopen the library, they started a conversation about what activities should happen in the space, apart from discussing ideas for the interior and exterior space of the library. Through the opening discussion, residents slowly began to raise interest in reclaiming the library and campaigning to reopen its door for the public as an alternative space to learn while exchanging knowledge with other residents. Axinte highlights there was a need to generate resources for the library to refurbish shelves, add new furniture and acquire more books. To fill that void, they organised events to raise funds and invest in the regeneration of the space.<sup>445</sup>

Looking back, the project City School 1 originated from a series of workshops (Public Space Workshop) that took place in 2011 as an informal educational live projects for students to test and experiment with accumulated knowledge in a real setting and to use the city as a laboratory for learning while practising architecture.<sup>446</sup> According to Axinte, in 2011, the art gallery organised exhibitions on the street as a way of engaging people with artefacts and temporary installations. Artists, performers, and architects helped create installations that contributed to the manifesto on the importance of public spaces in social activities. Out of this concept, a series of events and workshops emerged to generate discussions regarding the importance of public space in the city's life.

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<sup>442</sup> Studio Basar, *City School 1* (2017) <<http://www.studiobasar.ro>> [accessed 12 February, 2023].

<sup>443</sup> Studio Basar, *Studio Basar Profile* (2017) <[http://www.studiobasar.ro/?page\\_id=3&lang=en](http://www.studiobasar.ro/?page_id=3&lang=en)> [accessed 12 February, 2023].

<sup>444</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar) 'In Action: Searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 294.

<sup>445</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>446</sup> Studio Basar, *Public Space Workshop* (2017) <<http://www.studiobasar.ro>> [accessed 12 February, 2023].

Axinte mentions, 'so, we encounter public space through a gallery space... we were trying to critique, improve and add to the public space.'<sup>447</sup> Axinte and his colleague Borcan worked on a project that combined a temporary installation with urban furniture as a space to meet and chat.

People engage in collective actions when they are motivated to bring about social changes, also, collective identity encourages people to take action when they feel they are part of the group because of the shared similarities in terms of goals and emotions.<sup>448</sup> Axinte argues, after the art event, a group of students found it inspiring and organised another event inviting local art and architecture studios to deliver outputs that could be beneficial for public spaces, not only in terms of infrastructure but also to conduct research on how people interact with public spaces in their neighbourhoods. Around this event, Axinte and Borcan developed a partnership with students to produce temporary installations that promote social encounters, so a team emerged. Therefore, social ties motivate individuals to participate in collective action. If the effort of the participants has a noticeable effect, the existing network will tend to increase<sup>449</sup> Axinte highlights that most students from courses related to the built environment volunteered and collaborated on a short-term basis, progressing from testing, and delivering ideas with other students into a formal partnership. So, they started working as a group, buying tools, creating strategies, and designing temporary installations in public spaces. Their partnership resulted in the creation of Public Space Workshops as an opportunity for students to experiment with real practice and learn while collaborating with other students.<sup>450</sup>

After working with students in a series of workshops, Axinte mentions, 'It was a bit out of the artistic type of intervention toward a more pedagogical and placemaking.'<sup>451</sup> Therefore, they developed a broader vision of how the users perceive public spaces; consequently, Axinte and Borcan considered it necessary to rethink their approach as practitioners and started to create opportunities at the local level. Axinte argues creating opportunities such as workshops and projects that support the local community was a gap in Bucharest, so they decided to test ideas and create opportunities in their home country that could combine research and conversations with local people about the use of public spaces. According to Axinte, 'after a while, we said, let us ground ourselves in our city; let's settle down and create opportunities.'<sup>452</sup> Due to, Bucharest in the past suffered from a totalitarian state compromising public spaces with the privatisation of public infrastructure, and after the decline of the state, taking self-action to reclaim public spaces was a common practice including for architects<sup>453</sup>

## The public library as space for the community to meet

Communist Romania reshaped the urban landscape in its own image by demolishing historic buildings and housing in the city centre to erect monumental landscapes adding public statues and particular symbols to memorialise the regime ideal. The regime sought to build housing states characterised by regimented apartment blocks where the population could be efficiently

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<sup>447</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>448</sup> Louis Winnifred R., 'Collective Action—and Then What?', *Journal of Social Issues*, 65.4, (2009), 727-748 (p. 728).

<sup>449</sup> Roger V. Gould, 'Collective Action and Network Structure', *American Sociological Review*, 58.2, (1993), 182-196 (p. 182,184).

<sup>450</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>451</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>452</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>453</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar) 'In Action: Searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 287.

accommodated and controlled.<sup>454</sup> In addition, the government imposed organisational structures affecting free expression; for example, the film industry and theatres could only produce and present plays on a pre-approved system, and schools and libraries were under ideological control by the communist government.<sup>455</sup> Even though the government supported libraries and schools, they controlled access to knowledge by censoring certain books considered a threat to the state. Despite that, public libraries in Bucharest remained a space for people to access knowledge.<sup>456</sup>

After the communist state lost power, citizens rediscovered an interest in regenerating public spaces. The civic society started to take action to revitalise public spaces through free acts to intervene, but also private investors negotiated with the city administration to transform and manage public space, so public spaces in Bucharest suffered from decoration by the totalitarian government to the privatisation of public spaces to almost its extinction.<sup>457</sup> According to Axinte, libraries have a special meaning because they have remained in the context of dismantling public infrastructure to replace it with restaurants and stores. So, public libraries survived, but some have closed their doors due to the lack of resources.<sup>458</sup>

Public spaces became accessible for people to share and inhabit collectively; they were open and free to use for anyone interested.<sup>459</sup> The lack of outer spaces to socialise in collective neighbourhoods made residents rediscover libraries as a space for interaction. Therefore, public libraries are seen as the manifestation of achievements of people's democracy by educating people through books, documentation, and information via promoting science and technology.<sup>460</sup> In the effort to reopen the Militari's library, it was crucial to understanding who the primary users of the library were; Axinte points out that in the block of housing, there are groups of people, especially elderly groups and other groups such as parents, single mothers, young people, and migrants from the peripheral neighbourhood that use the library as a space for learning and getting access to free knowledge through workshops and activities that involve reading and writing, therefore, libraries are valuable spaces for people to socialise while learning.<sup>461</sup>

Actions are oriented toward a set of beliefs that inspire social movements activities because it implies a desire for some form of action; while making decisions, conflicts may arise over which particular position will prevail, but what will keep people together as a group are those similarities they share.<sup>462</sup> The action produced by a group of people is not linear but emerges from interaction, negotiation, and opposition in opinions.<sup>463</sup> To start a conversation with residents, students interacted with local neighbours and asked about public spaces and how the creation of urban furniture can help to create a space to socialise and meet in the external area around the library. The conversation

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<sup>454</sup> Duncan Light and Craig Young, 'Public Space and Material Legacies of Communism in Bucharest', in *Post-Communist Romania at Twenty-Five: Linking Past, Present, and Future*, ed. by Lavinia Stan and Diane Vancea (Lexington Books, 2015), p. 43,44.

<sup>455</sup> Hermina G.B. Angheliescu, 'The Ceaușescu Era: Survival of the Library Profession and Institution in Communist Romania', *Journal of Swedish Library Research*, 14.3, (2002), 33-45 (p. 34).

<sup>456</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>457</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar) 'In Action: Searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 287.

<sup>458</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>459</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar) 'In Action: Searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 287.

<sup>460</sup> Hermina G.B. Angheliescu, 'The Ceaușescu Era: Survival of the Library Profession and Institution in Communist Romania', *Journal of Swedish Library Research*, 14.3, (2002), 33-45 (p. 34).

<sup>461</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>462</sup> William A. Gamson, 'Constructing Social Protest', in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 89,90.

<sup>463</sup> Alberto Melucci, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 43.



generated enthusiasm among residents, and the idea of reopening the library and extending it outside the current building was an action neighbours decided to take further.<sup>464</sup>

So, they started planning and designing a temporary infrastructure that could host reading spaces and outdoor activities through the appropriation of the space in the external area. Axinte argues the library is in the centre of the collective block of flats, so it is strategically located in the term of accessibility for the public; however, the interaction between residents encouraged collaboration and solidarity but also brought conflicts. Axinte mentions the library remained closed for a while due to a disparity in reaching an agreement between residents and the City Council. The conflict originated because libraries are still part of the state, and the City Council is responsible for managing them. Axinte recalls, 'It was a conflict we did not manage to solve at all.'<sup>465</sup>

On the other hand, collaborating with residents and students generated valuable knowledge through testing and working together to find a solution according to the available resources they had in the neighbourhood. The approach contributed to student learning by applying theory into practice and from the community's side to have close contact with the students building a partnership to create opportunities to be active participants in their neighbourhood. Axinte argues there is still installed in the collective memories of people the idea of the communist state as a threat that in the past was associated with negative values, so words such as 'collaborative practice', 'community solidarity' and 'community participation'<sup>466</sup> are approaches that need to be introduced slowly into a society that has suffered repression from the previous government in the past.

Therefore, the project's central methodology encouraged active participation through collective discussion. Those conversations generated during the interaction with residents to reclaim the library as an available resource for the community to access knowledge helped them see the library as a community asset. As Axinte mentions, 'we discovered it was a very fruitful experience and not only for the student but also us as practitioners because we were discovering things together.'<sup>467</sup> It was a mutual learning process in which they (students, practitioner and residents) had to work together to find solutions for the challenges unfolding along the project, for example, managing the budget, solving issues in the design of the installations, and making decisions regarding materials and furniture.

### **A group of people working together to reopen the local library**

People join groups because they believe their collective actions have the potential to alter conditions or policies. For the action to take place, they need to perceive the group as united and able to protest against a common issue, and also, they need to perceive the political context as receptive to their claims. Therefore, group efficacy can occur, which is linked with the perception that group-related problems can be resolved through collective effort.<sup>468</sup> Axinte mentions civic groups in Bucharest tend to be from middle-class society, people who worked in companies or retired teachers, and they have time to dedicate to the group's work, the resources to do it, and the skills to communicate and design projects. Therefore, there is a tendency for these groups to represent themselves, advocating for their concerns, instead of looking at the broader society and including

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<sup>464</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>465</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>466</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>467</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>468</sup> Jacquelin van Stekelenburg and Bert Klandermans, 'The Social Psychology of Protest', *Current Sociology Review*, 61, (2013), 886-905 (p. 889).

marginalised groups that do not have a voice in society.<sup>469</sup> Civic groups in Bucharest are still in the process of formation and awareness of the impact their actions can have on the broader society. So, there is a need for civic groups to expand their vision and be inclusive in their actions without limiting themselves to a specific situation that only will benefit the minority.<sup>470</sup> In the project City School 1, they worked with a group that was not crystallised; the group of residents was formed around the initiative, so there was a need to guide them toward making decisions, identifying needs, negotiating disparities, and defining the group values and identity to push the project forward. Before identifying the 'we', which is linked with values and interests, the potential of collective action is likely to remain abstract because it requires a consciousness of the issue to be addressed and an identity of 'we' that will bring that change.<sup>471</sup>

However, community-driven projects promote a bottom-up and participatory approach to urban intervention, emphasising those directly affected by an issue and actively mobilising to address it.<sup>472</sup> According to Axinte, during the project, students had more active participation, leading steering groups, organising, and managing the project; they began to transition from participants to leading and organising events, sharing, and discussing ideas with their peers and residents. Therefore, Participants started strengthening bonds through cooperation and agreement, exchanging ideas for spatial intervention, such as repairing the library furniture and building a temporary installation in the external area of the library. So, it was through the creation of objects the community strengthened their social relationship. As Axinte argues, 'you cannot do everything by yourself. You need help from your neighbours, for example, to take care of the space around the library. In some cases, it was a tacit awakening of some memory of collective cases.'<sup>473</sup> Being in action as urban activators by employing tactics and supporting users' actions was what students and practitioners (Axinte and Borcan) did, they transformed and occupied the space through a series of micro tactics to make places inclusive, flexible, and reversible.<sup>474</sup>

As an approach that was centred on participatory action research because it assembled residents from the block of flats followed by actions that involved local actors (students, residents, and practitioners) in the production of space to intervene the environment.<sup>475</sup> Axinte says, 'at the beginning, they were still calling us to give them a hand, and after a while, they organised themselves',<sup>476</sup> and the project built a network of people working together to reopen the library. According to Axinte, due to the available funding, the project had a strict timetable to deliver the outcomes designed for the library, changing the dynamic of the group and, as a consequence creating a hierarchical and formal structure in the group. Axinte argues no one in the community decided to take the lead and give continuity to the project. He highlights, 'we were too many leaders in the project, and I think others did not feel empowered enough to say, we are going to do the next City School 1 edition.'<sup>477</sup> The hierarchical structure had a negative effect, and the community felt they needed to feel more confident to take the lead in the project. Axinte mentions they have seen the

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<sup>469</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>470</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>471</sup> William A. Gamson, 'Constructing Social Protest', in *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. by Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (UCL Press, 1995), p. 89,90.

<sup>472</sup> Neil Brenner, 'Is Tactical Urbanism an Alternative to Neoliberal Urbanism? Reflection on an Exhibition at the MOMA', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p. 115.

<sup>473</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>474</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar), 'In Action: searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p.287.

<sup>475</sup> Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (StudioBasar), 'In Action: searching for the In-Between City', in *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture - Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Routledge, 2017), p.288.

<sup>476</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>477</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

initiative as StudioBasar's project instead of an initiative that is collective and part of the community.<sup>478</sup>

In terms of continuity, Axinte believes for the project to have a subsequent edition, it is crucial to have support from different institutions, especially from an educational institution such as the university. Axinte argues, 'this is how I see the future, people from different institutions joining forces and making this a programme.'<sup>479</sup> With the support of the university as the main advocator, the project could have a significant impact in many other neighbourhoods by creating a programme such as Live Projects or an Urban Room that could contribute to expanding the network of people creating new partnerships and opportunities for students and citizens to be civically active in their communities. Even though the project did not have a further edition, City School 1 is an example of a partnership between Militari's residents and students working together to reopen the library and build temporary installations that brought back social activities in the neighbourhood, so their common goal made residents become active participants in transforming the reality in their neighbourhood through collective actions.

Figure 36. Militari library, 2016. Image by Studio Basar. The abandoned Militari library facade before residents took ownership.



Figure 37. Community participation at the library, 2016. Image by Studio Basar. A community meeting during the project City School 1 that aimed to refurbish the space to open its door to the public.

<sup>478</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

<sup>479</sup> Interview with Alex Axinte, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Appendix F, p. 187-199.

## Reflection on Tei Community Centre and City School 1

People join collective actions to achieve social changes, challenging the system to rethink power distribution by including the community in decision-making regarding urban spaces. The role of architects has been key in fostering citizens' active participation in co-design changing the view of traditional participation, in which citizens do not have complete control of the project, to the idea that participation is seen as an integration of active citizens, which advocate for a social architecture design in which communities and active groups are involved in design processes that comprises creativity and resilience. Therefore, collective action is aligned with continuity because it seeks constant changes in the production of space with the expectation of achieving a collective change.

The projects Tei Community Centre and City School 1 in Bucharest reveals that giving agency to a community in reclaiming a space that holds collective value is a vehicle in which architects enacts criticality. For example, the project Tei Community Centre started with a dissatisfying group of people that were regular visitors and users of Circus Park, as a way of gathering public attention regarding their discontent they intended to set up a temporary installation in park to discuss the current situation of public spaces in Bucharest as most of the public spaces in the city were threatened by privatisation. A group that started with an informal structure gained local visibility as they started campaigning on the street to reclaim public spaces in the area and established civic group known as Lacul Tei. Their action as a group allowed the possibility to initiate a dialogue with local authorities to demand public participation in future decision-making. Therefore, their open format attracted other citizens to join the group, leading to an organised structure that reclaimed space in the public park by building a temporary installation used as a community centre.

On the other hand, the project City School 1 through a series of workshops and activities that involved residents in the production of space. Activities such as temporary installation and co-design were the primary approach adopted by a team of students and practitioners (architects and university tutors) to address knowledge gaps regarding collective action as a means to reclaim a space. Even though the project did not continue due to lack of fund, as a form of continuity the approach promoted knowledge exchange between residents, students, and practitioners on the role of the library as a space for learning and socialising. Therefore, both projects reveal individuals mobilised in response to an imbalance around a collective concern that threaten common values.

As a form of continuity, the projects Tei Community Centre and City School 1 are examples of a consolidated group that started organising public meetings for collective discussions. Even though, in the project Tei Community Centre the centre was dismantled by local authorities, the project defended local interests using protest to advocate for what they believe should be public and accessible to everyone similarly with the project City School 1. Community groups shows they do not limit their actions to expressing a conflict or disagreement with the system; it also pushes the conflict beyond the limits breaking the imposed rules and setting its own non-negotiable objectives as a way of challenging the distribution of power.<sup>480</sup>

As a result, both projects are a representation of how community projects can borrow elements from social movement and be aligned with collective action theories, in the ways in which the projects demonstrate collective efforts performed by small groups that had a specific duration and organisation, which led them to develop a strong solidarity for the cause they supported. This is also evident in the way the continuity of the two projects was understood in multiple ways: as a community process that involved building structures, networks and alliances that negotiated the possibility of securing a community asset and resources, as an inspiration for other community projects and civic groups to follow the same route, and, ultimately as a legacy for the community that required ongoing work and commitment to support, care for and maintain the community asset into the future.

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<sup>480</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 30.

## Chapter Six

# CONTINUITY AND COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOURS

In this thesis, I argued that to understand continuity in community projects there is a need to look at the changing dynamics of communities, actors, and conditions over time. Continuity can be defined as a “start, development and onward journey” that represent the trajectory of a community project. It is important to identify the circumstances that define a community project and its trajectory, to understand how continuity occurs. The continuity of community projects can be interrupted and not follow a linear process because of the changing dynamics that occur in a group. For example, conflicts can arise when new members join and others leave, and when other members stop identifying with the group. As a natural process of group dynamics, groups change over time, sometimes affecting, or reframing the initial goal of the project. In other examples, other times, groups have defined a strong identity, and even if the group has undergone changes, the objective remains the same. Also, a sense of continuity can be impacted by a pause or temporary stop to the project, that later is resumed.

The research has interpreted the changing dynamics and the social actions of community projects that enable the projects analysed as case studies to have lasting impacts on the community. I asked the following three questions: What is continuity in a community project? What are the factors that enable continuity? What social actions are related to continuity?. These questions explore the trajectory of community projects through the analysis of case studies. They also examine the social context, actors, instigators, and networks that support community projects. Therefore, the thesis explored the relational aspects of continuity and the social implications of community projects in different contexts: the UK (Sheffield, Blackburn, Leeds, and Middlesbrough) and Romania (Bucharest).

Examining the projects in their contexts revealed the challenges each project faced in fulfilling its collective aspirations to reclaim a collective identity and, in that way, reappropriate space in the public realm. For example, the projects situated in the UK (Live Projects, Portland Works, Blackburn is Open, Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life, and Artist House 45) and Bucharest (Tei Community Centre and City School 1) reveal collective identity has the potential to shape and transform spaces through collective efforts, which include knowledge of the past to understand the current dynamics of the space and the reason why it has significant collective value. Therefore, this research identified a collection of interrelated theories in architectural community practice and sociology as the foundation for understanding the complex relationship between continuity and community projects. Hence, this research identified a collection of interrelated theories in architectural community practice and sociology as the foundation for understanding the complex relationship between continuity and community projects.

In order to understand continuity in community projects, this thesis explored cooperation, collaboration, alliance, and partnership through the analysis of feminist theory and activism, community and identity, and the role of practitioners in community projects. This thesis is structured in five chapters in which the case studies are categorised according to the practitioner role being these: Student-led, Community-led, Artist-led, and Architect-led and in which I argue that for continuity to occur in community projects, **social actions** defined as collaborative endeavours towards a change (*Civic engagement, Collective identity, Community participation, Collective action, and Social movement*) are factors that enables continuity through *Feminist collective theory and activism, Community and its common identity and Practitioners, their work and interaction with the community* explored in the literature review section of this thesis.

Continuity is understood as a nonlinear process in which groups engage in community projects because they feel identified with the project (*civic engagement*), and together, build a *collective identity*. Throughout the process, they strengthen relations (*community participation*), and the collective identity is well defined. When people identify with a project they share a common vision, and for that reason, they act together toward the same objective (*collective action*). Once they have a clear structure, the group moves from acting together towards creating a formal structure to the

establishment of a group creating networks and associations with other groups, institutions, and organisations (*social movement*).

Once a group has identified their collective identity, they see themselves as “we” instead of a single entity, they act together, having a clear structure and a collective shared vision that allows them to establish and expand their networks, forming partnerships with other organisations. The continuity of community projects is sustained by a well-defined collective identity supported by social actions. In addition, pedagogical approaches, public institutions, communities, organisations, and practitioners play different roles within the community in strengthening social relations, reinforcing collective identity, and enabling collective action. Therefore, continuity is defined as a set of related and relational collective efforts that are supported by a collective identity. Thus, continuity is a collaborative process involving active citizens and practitioners (students, community, artists, and architects) moving toward a collective aspiration that, to be sustained over time, requires commitments to shared actions and outcomes, which depend on collaboration, motivation, temporality, and legacy for a community project to have a long-lasting positive impact.

### **Social actions as key factors in understanding continuity in community projects**

In order to achieve a collective goal, cooperation and collaboration between groups must occur through coordinated actions, leading a group toward a collective outcome that is collaboratively achievable and involves practitioners in expanding the group network. Achieving a collective goal could benefit a group or provide individual satisfaction, and it could involve a sense of civic engagement or “duty” to work toward a common good. In addition, working collectively could impact the group structure, for example, through choices of leaving or joining a group, engaging or not in group interactions through work that could change the operation or characteristics of the group<sup>481</sup> So, by recognising each other and becoming part of a ‘we’ (identity of the group), an individual has the opportunity to decide what they have in common with other members and define if he or she feels identified with the action the group set for the future.<sup>482</sup> Therefore, when a group is actively taking action toward a common goal, it creates a sense of belonging, strengthening the identity of the group based on trust and the assurance that the group will perform actions to benefit the group.<sup>483</sup>

Collaboration refers to a group of people sharing knowledge to reach a common objective while simultaneously creating a community around their common interests. Besides cooperation and collaboration, there is also co-production which involves delivering an outcome in a collaborative relationship between practitioners and communities, and it can be understood as David Boyle says, ‘shifting the balance of power, responsibility, and resources from professionals to individuals by involving people in the delivery of their own services.’<sup>484</sup> Therefore, involving people in design and decision-making requires and allows an open and inclusive conversation with groups that are excluded from the decision-making processes. Regarding participation in architecture, feminist practice advocates for inclusivity, enabling design practices to be integrated into society through care and

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<sup>481</sup> James Griesemer and Ayelet Shavit, 'Scaffolding Individuality: Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration and Community', *Philosophical Transactions B*, 378.1872, (2023), 1-9 (p. 3).

<sup>482</sup> Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 16.

<sup>483</sup> James Griesemer and Ayelet Shavit, 'Scaffolding Individuality: Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration and Community', *Philosophical Transactions B*, 378.1872, (2023), 1-9 (p. 3).

<sup>484</sup> David Boyle and Michael Harris, The Challenge of Co-production, How Equal Partnerships Between Professionals and the Public are Crucial to Improving Public Services (2009) <[https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/312ac8ce93a00d5973\\_3im6i6t0e.pdf](https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/312ac8ce93a00d5973_3im6i6t0e.pdf)> [accessed 4 December 2022].

fairer participatory processes that seek to integrate community into the design by nurturing the relationship between the user, the space, and practitioners from the built environment. Thus, feminist practice, as Lori Brown points out, invites us to re-frame power by creating opportunities for communities and their diversity.<sup>485</sup> Therefore, continuity enables the development of a social network where collective endeavours are expressed through social actions (Civic engagement, Community participation, Collective action, Collective identity, Social movement) that advocates for inclusivity, care and agency and it can persist over time due to the solid network established among participants, which generates unity and builds commitment toward community projects.

Building community through the design process means moving from a singular individual to **collective practices** that involve different groups in the appropriation of spaces through the act of resistance and collective mobilisation to produce a social change in the public realm and, in that way, give new meanings to the space.<sup>486</sup> As Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk say 'community is not a given, a readymade locatable entity; rather, community has to be produced and reproduced' through acting collectively and relying on practices that involve sharing.<sup>487</sup> Through relationships created between individuals, the act of being and sharing suggests the idea of community, as Doina Petrescu understands it, as is being in "common" and with the view of what is "public" and accessible for people arguing how space in the city is socially constructed and used.<sup>488</sup>

As a result, individuals organise themselves into groups in an effort to transform their environment, as Krasny and Schalk say 'united in a common political struggle of opposition to forms of domination that are not only pervasive but systemic.'<sup>489</sup> Therefore, for continuity to occur, commitment must be consistent within a solid social relationship to sustain people's participation. To establish a commitment, individuals must feel identified with the initiative or cause they pursue, followed by motivation. However, engagement can vary over time, affecting the group's structure (people leaving or joining at different times), in which resilience plays an important role in sustaining participation because of the capacity groups have to adapt to changes.

The "right to the city" means more than access to urban facilities, resources, and fundamental human rights. It is about empowering citizens to reshape the city according to their needs and future vision of the place. Through the right to participation and civic engagement, citizens are involved in the **production of space**.<sup>490</sup> Therefore the right to the city is connected to the appropriation of the space, which reflects the desires, needs and meaning people give to the space. Individuals take action to reclaim public spaces and modify the urban context through actions that allow them to exercise the right to the city.<sup>491</sup> This occurs, for example, through social actions that advocate for activism, such as civic engagement, collective identity, community participation, collective action, and social movements. These are understood as social actions that seek opportunities to integrate communities in participatory practices toward the construction of a just society.

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<sup>485</sup> Lori A. Brown, 'Constructing the Feminist Practices Framework', in *Feminist Practices, Interdisciplinary Approaches to Woman in Architecture*, ed. by Lori A. Brown (2011), p. 1-12

<sup>486</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, 'Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 139.

<sup>487</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, 'Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 140, 141.

<sup>488</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Community and Space for it', *Seminaire*, (2007), p. 1.

<sup>489</sup> Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, 'Resilient Subjects: on Building Imaginary Communities', in *Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, ed. by Meike Schalk, Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé (AADR – Art Architecture Design Research, 2017), p. 140.

<sup>490</sup> Chendan Yan, *Who Owns the 'Right to the City'? Moving Towards Urban Inclusivity* (2016) <<https://resources.environment.yale.edu/blog/2016/06/who-owns-the-right-to-the-city-moving-towards-urban-inclusivity/>> [accessed 14 April 2021].

<sup>491</sup> Mathias Lecoq, *The Right to the City: An Emancipating Concept?* (2020) <<https://metropolitics.org/The-Right-to-the-City-An-Emancipating-Concept.html>> [accessed 20 May 2021].



The role of the practitioner (students, artist, community members, architects) is essential in engaging the community in the design process and thus exercising the right to the city through design. The right to the city is exercised when community led actions and social mobilisation takes place to reclaim a common space in the city. Practitioner skills could also be recognised as **enablers** in helping the community to achieve their goals through feasible design and **facilitators** in providing guidance and assisting communities in formal processes to get access to funds. Then the role of practitioners moves from enabler and facilitator to **activists** when conducting socially engaged projects or initiatives, as an **advocator** when supporting social actions such as campaigns and protests stirring social changes. In addition, practitioners can also act as **initiators** in triggering and promoting collaborative design involving local communities in the decision-making process and, in that way, being active participants in designing the future of the city.

The practitioner's role could also be extended as a **mediator**, for example, when designing with the community, making sure the communication between participants is clear and between the community and potential stakeholders, as Ezio Manzini and Francesca Rizzo write 'to develop concrete ideas to make the framework project implementable.'<sup>492</sup> A community/continuity practitioner 'is one who effects change through the empowerment of others,'<sup>493</sup> by switching positions and breaking down hierarchies between traditional practitioners (that often are seen as "they know better") and communities (who have accumulated knowledge based on their experience with the space).

So, empowering comes from allowing others to take control over the space through tools that encourage participation<sup>494</sup> and are inclusive and accessible for the community to get engaged. Self-organised individuals act as active agents in their community, interacting between them and organising themselves into groups to carry out actions that will benefit the community in which they live. They are a group of individuals that interact, negotiate, and build alliances with other actors, such as the local government, organisations, and institutions, to find support and exchange knowledge for future decision-making.<sup>495</sup>

However, in community projects participation is seen as a dynamic process involving people at different times. For example, it could be voluntary: an individual is involved because of a strong sense of civic engagement they pursue. It could also be short-term participation: it happens when an individual is committed to a project for a determined period, and their engagement can be constant or intermittent. It could be a longer commitment: an individual is actively engaged in the decision-making process related to the project. The continuity of community projects is motivated by shared interest, desires and alliance that allows **community networks** to expand their connections in the trajectory of achieving a common goal. In the journey toward achieving a collective vision, practitioners help communities to identify available resources, strengthen collective identity through community participation, and act as a driving force in supporting collective actions.

The thesis has explored the question of continuity of community projects by identifying a set of themes that allow, in Manzini and Rizzo's terms to state, 'groups behave actively and collaboratively in order to imagine and realise desirable social changes,'<sup>496</sup> in other words, to explain

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<sup>492</sup> Ezio Manzini & Francesca Rizzo, *Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process*, *CoDesign International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, (2011), p. 206.

<sup>493</sup> Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', *Delf Architecture Theory Journal - Agency in Architecture: Reframing Criticality in Theory and Practice*, .4, (2009), 97-111. (p. 99).

<sup>494</sup> Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', *Delf Architecture Theory Journal - Agency in Architecture: Reframing Criticality in Theory and Practice*, .4, (2009), 97-111. (p. 99).

<sup>495</sup> Elisabeth Schauppenlehner-Kloyber and Marianne Penker, *Between Participation and Collective Action—From Occasional Liaisons towards Long-Term Co-Management for Urban Resilience*, *Urban Resilience and Urban Sustainability: From Research to Practice*, (2016), p. 5, 6.

<sup>496</sup> Ezio Manzini & Francesca Rizzo, *Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process*, *CoDesign International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, (2011), p. 202.

how community groups enact continuity through collective efforts. This research bases its foundation on social action theories (explored in the theoretical framework section) such as:

**Civic engagement and group dynamics:** which involves the participation of citizens to address issues concerning the collective with the desire of improving the quality of life in the city. This action is related to being socially engaged. This action contributes to continuity in enabling the development of a social network through partnerships and collaboration.

**Collective identity:** An individual joins a group because the group's purpose, objective, or cause aligns with the individual's belief; they feel identified and, therefore, part of the group. This stage defines the "we" and contributes to continuity because, through a collective identity, the sense of belonging will emerge or be reinforced.

**Community participation:** is considered an action that transforms and renews the city through groups that actively take part in the decision-making process toward a just society. In this stage, groups aim to take agency, which contributes to continuity because when power is evenly distributed, citizens have control in the decision-making process.

**Collective action:** is produced when it involves actions driven by a group of individuals with similar values and aspirations toward a common objective. They act together to achieve collective goals that could not be attained as single individuals, contributing to continuity in setting up objectives that benefit the group and the collective.

**Social movement:** where a group acts collectively, establishing partnerships with other grassroots groups, organisations, or institutions. At this stage, the group forms a structure that involves a stable pattern of interaction in which each member has a role to play. Once the group is established, social movements intend to make changes in society, challenging those in power to reconsider decisions that affect the collective. Thus, they contribute to continuity in identifying social matters that inspire people to act collectively.

Continuity is related to a set of social actions taken and, as a result, creates a connection that allows groups to achieve an objective over time through collaboration, temporality, and motivation. In order for continuity to happen, there is a need to identify a collective issue that will inform the direction that the project will take. The research has identified social actions as collaborative endeavours that enable continuity with the support of practitioners as instigators in community projects. These actions create a network that has the potential to sustain commitment over time through collaboration, motivation, temporality, and legacy, in which factors such as engagement, activism, advocacy, acknowledgement, provocation and reappropriation promote continuity and could be either identified at the start of the project or throughout the trajectory (development of the project).

However, collective identity sustains participation, builds solidarity, and leads groups to continue their action through civic engagement, collective action, and community participation. Continuity is a dynamic and nonlinear process, but the aspiration towards a formal structure often accompanies the trajectory of the project. In order to visualise the different stages groups undergo to reach a formal structure, figure 27 shows the "stages of continuity" based on social actions theories in the understanding of continuity in community projects in which civic engagement is identified as the stage of being socially engaged, collective identity as the stage of defining the "we" or the group identity, community participation as the stage of taking agency, collective action as the stage of acting together and social movement as the stage where groups reach a formal structure of organisation.

In the trajectory of community projects, the practitioner plays an essential role in helping communities take forward actions by supporting, enabling, and facilitating the initiative in building connections for a group to achieve a positive change that will have a long-lasting impact on the community.

A community with a strong sense of civic engagement seek to establish partnerships with organisations, public institutions, and educational institutions, and practitioners are the key actor in building and facilitating those connections. On the other hand, an individual with similar values, visions, beliefs, and convictions is more likely to join a group that shares the same similarities. A group may not have a well-defined identity, but because they share similar goals, they act together; however, a clear collective identity will maintain the group in solidarity, fostering goal expansion.

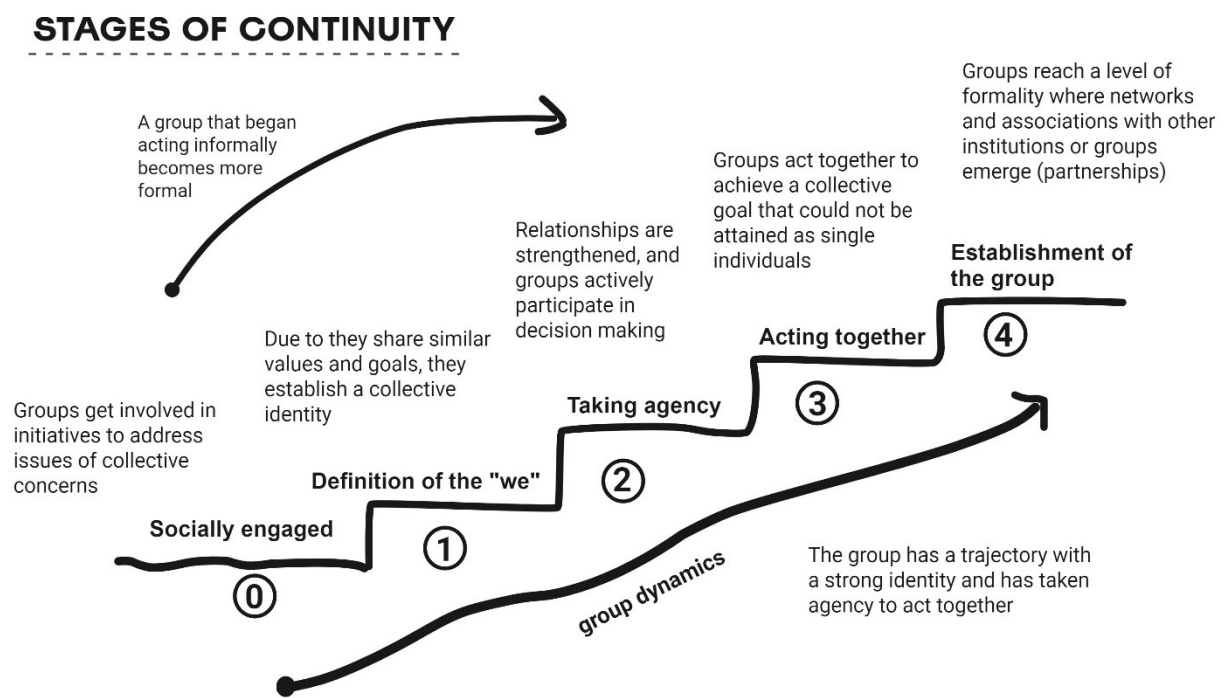


Figure 38. Stages of continuity, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. The 'stages of continuity' show the stages groups undergo in the continuity of community projects. Each stage explores collective efforts reaching the 'establishment of the group,' in which groups are consolidated and begin to formalise their structure, expanding their networks and establishing partnerships.

## Continuity and its complex interrelation

Active citizens and practitioners are considered instigators in the continuity of community projects. They play different roles within community projects, strengthening social relations, reinforcing alliances, and establishing partnerships with other groups, organisations and institutions that advocate for community projects. In the continuity of community projects, each case study had different trajectories and durations; therefore, continuity occurred in different ways. However, the seven case studies analysed in this thesis have five characteristics in common: (1) the willingness to identify collective concerns, (2) the mobilisation of resources to tackle collective concerns, (3) a strong sense of identity and civic engagement attached to perseverance, (4) a collective aim to reclaim and reappropriate the space, (5) an organised effort and coordinated action to achieve a shared vision. Therefore, continuity is understood as an ongoing process that can be interrupted and later resumed that involves collaboration, motivation, temporality, and legacy, in which forms of engagement, activism, advocacy, acknowledgement, provocation, and reappropriation are key factors in the continuity of community projects to have a significant impact. Each case study revealed continuity through forms of:

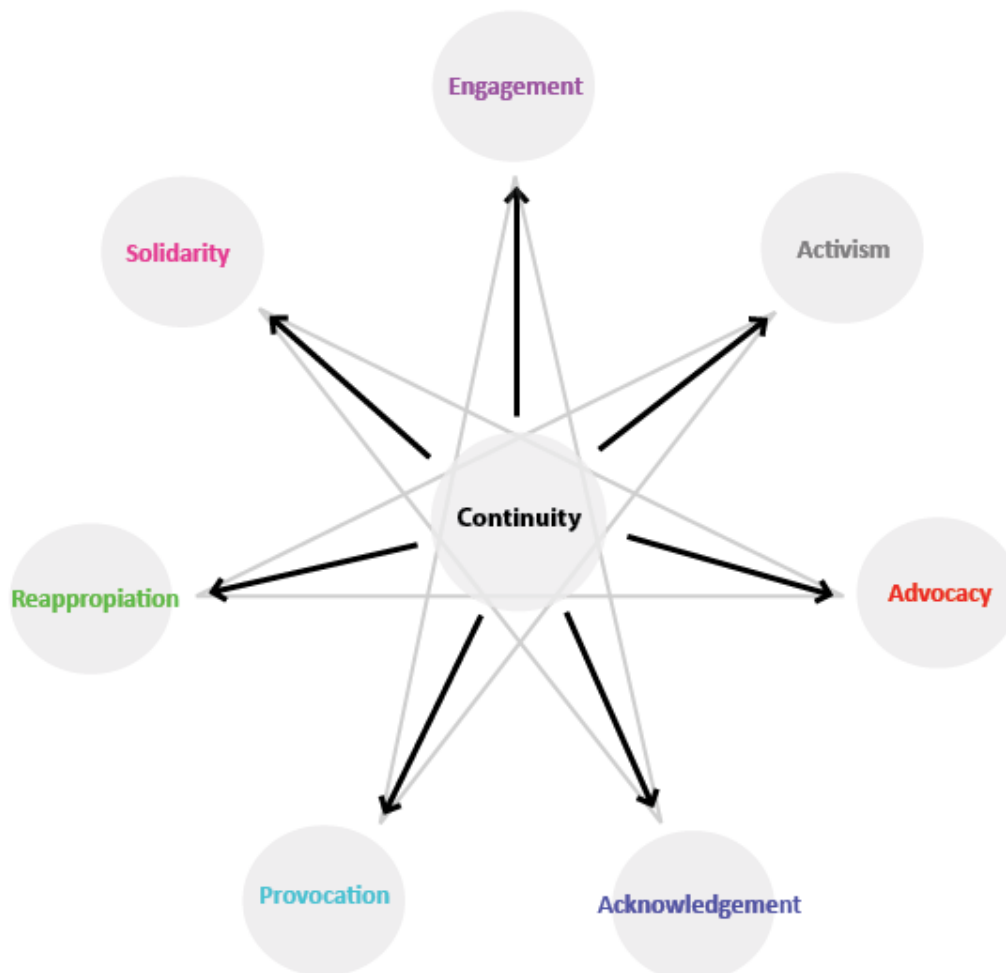


Figure 39. Continuity and its interrelationship, 2023. Diagram by Sofía González Gámez. The diagram shows the way in which continuity is interconnected with different actions that enact continuity.

**Live Projects:** reveals engagement between students and community clients in addressing current cities' issues through design. This collaborative mode of working consists of sharing mutual knowledge to develop strategies that reflect community clients' needs.

**Portland Works** and **Blackburn is Open:** reveals activism and advocacy as actions to achieve a group's ambition. These actions depend on collective efforts, which entail dissemination (for example, through campaigns or an urban room as a collective space to rethink the city) and require volunteering for the project to be sustained over time.

**Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life** and **Artist House 45:** both projects are seen as an opportunity to initiate dialogue as a means for democracy and resistance by recognising daily life experiences and identifying current social, political, and economic issues of a particular community.

**Tei Community Centre** and **City School 1:** demonstrate reappropriation and solidarity as an action to build networks and alliances that negotiate possibilities of securing resources for a group to carry out activities that consist of rethinking the usage and management of public spaces.

Despite the duration of the projects, each initiative allows possibilities and opportunities for collective actions to take place fostering continuity. Each case study holds significant value because it brings a legacy in the form of:

**Live Projects:** feasible outputs developed by master students at the University of Sheffield School of Architecture that can take the form of a toolkit, a set of reports, handbooks, strategic planning, or even a website design. The pedagogy programme allows continuity through its reflective approach and collaborative research (supported by Live Works, the University of Sheffield Urban Room), questioning the role of architecture in society.

**Portland Works:** a campaign led by tenants and volunteers to save the historical building, which was at risk of losing its industrial characteristics. The collective effort allows continuity by purchasing the building as a community asset and managing it through tenants who established their workshops years ago.

**Blackburn is Open:** an event that allows continuity through a network of artists originated during the initiative that shaped and established the Festival of Making, a national art and craft celebration that happens every year in Blackburn city centre.

**Organisational Diagrams for Everyday Life:** a booklet to inform future projects in South Bank, Middlesbrough, originated by gathering and bringing together people's knowledge. The project allows continuity by recognising people's skills and expertise as valuable input.

**Artist House 45:** a set of artistic expressions, such as a temporary newspaper, campaigns, and roundtables that empower communities to take agency. The project combines community participation and arts as a tool to communicate social discontent, allowing continuity through critical reflection encouraging social expression.

**Tei Community Centre:** a temporary installation built in a public park (Circus Park) by a group of citizens with the technical support of architects (Studio Basar) to set up a community centre for gatherings. The project allows continuity by initiating conversations that raise awareness of the importance of public spaces as commons.

**City School 1:** a workshop in which residents, practitioners, and students worked collaboratively to reclaim a local library located in Military neighbourhood with the support of Studio Basar (an architecture studio) and the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu. The project allows continuity through negotiating with the city council for the library to reopen its doors for the community.

Examining each project in its different contexts, the UK (specifically North of England) and Bucharest (Romania), reveals the concerns each community has and the challenges they faced during its trajectory. Each project analysed in this research has been centred on the practitioner's point of view during their work with the community. As I analyse the projects, I argue that some case studies exemplify continuity in community projects, and some are developing modes of continuity.

In the context of the North of England (Sheffield, Leeds, and Middlesbrough), the projects explored in this thesis emphasise culture, heritage, and civic engagement. For example, **Live Projects** as student-led pedagogy approach supports communities in a wide range of possibilities, such as developing a feasible designs and strategies that reflects upon the present and future of cities. This could involve proposing toolkits to help communities identify available resources to reach their objectives. The programme advocates community participation and civic engagement in which students and the community work together in two ways learning process trough collaboration and co-design. Live Projects happens every year as it is part of the educational programme at the Sheffield School of Architecture.

Live Projects contributed to the development of two initiatives that started as part of the programme, **Blackburn is Open** (2012-2016) and **Portland Works** (2011-2014). For these two initiatives, Live Projects acted as a driving force in empowering local community clients in their vision toward the materialisation of it. Due to its pedagogy-centred structure, Live Projects has established strategies to achieve a long-term aim through Live Works (the University of Sheffield Urban Room). It allows Live Projects to continue developing design and research supporting citizens in community-led projects. Live Project's trajectory started in 1999, building an extensive archive along its way, allowing the programme to learn from previous experiences and rethink, restructure and improve its approach. The main characteristics of Live Projects are its socially oriented architecture and reflective nature, which expands its scope beyond tangible results and enables conversations about the future of cities.

**Portland Works** and **Blackburn is Open** came out of the Live Projects programme and is an example of collective efforts and mobilisation toward a collective goal. It reveals dissemination as a medium for engagement and a tool to grab social attention for support, for example, through campaigns, regular meetings, events, street exhibitions, magazines, and flyers marketing materials. In the trajectory of both projects, Live Projects played an essential role in researching, analysing, identifying, and helping civic groups to develop tangible outputs to achieve support and apply for funding. The value of both initiatives as community-led projects is caring for collective identity in art and craft as these two projects stand up for preserving art, culture, and heritage due to the history of both cities, Sheffield and Blackburn, where skilled people established their workshops to make a living out of small-scale manufacture products during the industrial revolution.

On the other hand, the projects **Organisational Diagram for Everyday Life** and **Artist House 45** reveal how artistic practices could open possibilities for participation, reinforcing collective identity through stories and community experiences for the community to take action with the support of artists who advocate for social change. The continuity in both projects sits on community participation that aligned with art as a form of expression to steer conversations and to identify collective concerns affecting their neighbourhood (Beeston in Leeds and South Bank in Middlesbrough). Both projects helped identify existing skills and knowledge through participants' stories, experiences, memories, and routines. These insights are valuable resources for informing future development plans and rediscovering an area seen as deprived, but that holds a collective memory built around care and community work.

Therefore, in the process of building agency, citizens need to act as co-producers by sharing their experiences, learning in groups, and making decisions that will have the potential to collectively transform and give new usage and meaning to public spaces. Therefore, arts are aligned with community participation because they encourage expressing opinions and generating collective debates involving networking, reclaiming, proposing, co-researching, governing, and caring. However, artist-led projects are characterised by short-term interventions, which makes it challenging to evaluate their impact on a civic society. Although artist-led projects involve citizens in the process of reimagining the city, the tendency is toward a reflective approach, especially for the artist to reconsider their role and the impact their practice has in society outside of galleries and exhibitions, as is expected.

In Bucharest, it is about reclaiming public spaces due to the long history of the country being under a dictatorial communist regime until its collapse in 1989, in which citizens could have the freedom to take over public spaces. Therefore, civic groups dedicated to working toward decentralised decision-making started to appear as a reaction, either toward the privatisation or negligence of the state concerning public spaces. In response to the absence of the state, the project Tei Community Centre and City School 1 are examples of collective effort in the reappropriation of the spaces because both projects empower and encourage agency for citizens to negotiate the management of public spaces through a series of workshops and activities that involve citizens in the production the space.

The project **Tei Community Centre** relies on voluntary work of a group of citizens that established a civic group (Lacul Tei) and gained visibility as they started campaigning on the street about the importance of preserving public spaces as a common good for society. The continuity occurred when their action as a group opened the possibility of initiating a dialogue with local authorities to reconsider community participation in future decision-making processes. Even though the community centre was meant to be temporary, the group's action inspired other civic groups to protect public spaces from disappearing as a consequence of privatisation and investment in private projects that have put at risk the existence of public spaces contributing to spatial inequality.

Civic groups, specifically Lacul Tei, exemplify collective unity due to their partnership with an architecture studio (Studio Basar) and civic organisations to outline strategies for taking control of resources they value. Tei Community Centre looks like an ordinary and simple installation that uses a shipping container to host events in a public park, but the significance of the project is present in the action taken by the civic group to challenge the system by reclaiming a public park (Circus Park) and protect it from the free-market speculation. Thus, due to a strong sense of civic engagement and solidarity, the group advocated for the cause they supported by sharing knowledge about strategies that could be implemented to raise public awareness of the risk these spaces are exposed to in the city.

On the other hand, in the project **City School 1**, in collaboration with Studio Basar, architecture students and a group of neighbours started to visualise the library as a space not only for learning or getting access to resources but also as a space for creating community. With no investment from the local state and the scarcity of funds to invest in public spaces, the project emphasises knowledge as a powerful tool for people to recognise they hold power in managing public spaces. Residents in the Military neighbourhood struggled to keep the public library afloat, and the group responded to a collective discontent that threatened shared values, mobilising toward reopening the library through a 'do it yourself' approach to restoring damaged shelves and repairing.

Even though the project City School 1 did not continue to have a third edition due to the lack of funding, the project was an example of student involvement with the local community that, in the future, could lead to an educational programme similar to Live Projects. For example, students and civic groups can use the city as a live laboratory to experiment, test ideas and build temporary installations in the public realm as a way of reclaiming the space.

Therefore, participation encourages communities to find strategies that could be implemented in their neighbourhood to trigger changes, for example, by working collaboratively with other groups to identify collective concerns and desires through a series of activities that includes group discussions. Besides that, the project City School 1 had a significant impact on the neighbourhood's library because the project aimed to trigger the sense of 'being together' and thus built a strong collective identity for people to get involved and join community groups.

### **Contribution to knowledge and further research on the topic**

Collective identity and, in consequence, the understanding of social actions such as civic engagement and group dynamics, collective action, and social movement are the main factors as to how continuity in community projects can occur. Groups need to be socially engaged to strengthen their collective identity and, therefore, define themselves as "being together", which will lead them to take action. Thus, the thesis considers the relevance of social actions to continuity for practitioners of architecture engaged with community projects. In the trajectory of a community project, the "start, development, and onward journey," crucial actors, such as practitioners, organisations, and institutions, support community groups in identifying available resources such as funding, potential stakeholders, and partners and in strengthening collective identity through community participation allowing the community to build a strong foundation by establishing partnerships expanding the group's network.

Despite being trained to design and understand spaces, practitioners can also act as activists in conducting socially engaged design initiatives for the community. Their skills can also be extended to other roles, such as facilitator, and still, their role can include being the initiator of a project. The case studies explored in this thesis show that the role of the practitioner in a community project goes beyond designing a project. They can also act as advocates, initiators, enablers, facilitators, activists, curators, and perhaps other roles that could be attributed to the practitioner in the future.

Continuity is understood as a series of interconnected interventions that can happen continuously over time or that can be interrupted and later resumed where timeframe or the duration of the project is a crucial factor in identifying the project or initiative's impact on the community. Thus, there is a need to continue exploring the trajectory of the case studies presented in this research to determine the multiple and diverse changes and transformations the projects have undergone and may yet undergo in the future. The thesis has been concerned with revealing and understanding the social re-production of continuity. The projects are ongoing and unfinishable; in this sense, continuity is intangible and difficult to define and identify. Yet if continuity is looked out for, thought about, and cared for, then it opens up the potential for a project's continuity to be supported, allowing opportunities for collective agency to emerge.



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# APPENDICES

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# APPENDIX A

## Portland Works

Interviewee: Julia Udall

Udall is an architect and researcher. Her interest is the intersection of artistic spatial practice, critical architectural pedagogy, and design activism. Her works explore ways to re-make urban space by supporting forms of collectivity, interdependence, and mutual support, between humans. Currently, she is a lecturer in architecture at Sheffield Hallam University.<sup>497</sup>

Date: 15/04/2021

the MArch course at Sheffield University where we're invited by Colin Havard who is the director of Sharrow Community Forum which is a neighbourhood organisation where Portland Works is located and he was very interested in John St triangle which is kind of triangular conservation area, is a triangle of metal work buildings and it was a really important area for the neighbourhood because it was a place of employment. So, there were lots of people who came to work on metal trade but also on another kind of work beyond that. He invited us just as kind of architecture studio to look at what the future of that might be. At the time there were a couple of key issues that played into that. It's has been designated as a conservation area and with that came certain implications about the development of the area, but also it was under intense pressure because at the time, it was before the financial crisis in 2007 and in terms of Sheffield city, was actually the kind of second hottest area for increased office in the whole country and there was a real kind of push in terms of development.

Alongside that, there were a push for accommodation in various forms. I think a lot of developers were very much interested in historic buildings, because it was kind of seen as a fairly cheap and easy area to develop. So, you could get industrial property for quite a low value, get it through planning and then make a lot of money on it, whether or not you've developed that housing. There were a potential kind of financialization of the area to make a lot of profit. So, he was interested from the community development perspective, in terms of what might happen in the area. So, as a group of students we went into a very precise and careful surveys of the area. One of the key buildings was Portland Works. I don't think the forum were aware of how much went on within that building and it's kind of richness in comparison with other buildings.

We did a very careful mapping, and we produced a report which then was presented to the council, describing the area and that was before any kind of planning application that went into place. I think that was really interesting that Colin had that insight into the importance of the area and the potential change that it was going to happen. I carried on with my MArch studies and ended up being employed by Sharrow Community Forum as a community architecture researcher, because I was going quite active in that project and within that role, I developed something called the distinctive Sharrow toolkit, which was kind of looking more broadly at the neighbourhoods as a whole. So, I looked at the adjacent district centre and what might happen with that from the urban design and spatial perspective, but also very much in this kind of community development. The question was, what are these kinds of places providing for the local community in that neighbourhoods, but also the John St triangle and other areas, I was trying to understand the relationship between these different parts of the

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<sup>497</sup> Sheffield Hallam University, *Staff profiles* (2023) <<https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-profiles/julia-udall#firstSection>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

neighbourhood. So, those kinds of things were coming in place first and then in that role as a community architectural researcher, I got approached by Frances Cole who worked on Portland Works. She was working for Wigfull Tools, she worked there, I think for 40 years or something or close to that and or maybe for 20 or 30 years. She has seen the planning application for Portland Work to convert it into flats, so that was basically those moment where it looked like the landlord is basically saying 'we are closing this building, we are going to evict all the tenants because we're going to make a change of use of the building' and it can no longer exist this zone as a kind of factory area anymore.

I supposed in terms of what I can contribute kind of looked at that, the landlord put together an application planning that took advantage of the existing buildings status, so he was kind of saying that through this process and changing use from a cutlery factory to housing. He was kind of saying that it wasn't economically viable and none of the businesses in there had any kind of particular value because they were very precarious and that's why it could be this kind of shift. He presented the planning application that he made and argued that the analysis particularly from China concluded that none of the businesses are viable, but he didn't show any of the kind of activity or any of the listed building. So, at that point there was a need to draw previous research that I've done, but also develop my research further.

**What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

To start from community, I think the history is important. I guess this understanding where the project started is key because, I think was already a kind of an understating of issues around employment within that neighbourhood and the good quality work. There was an understanding of the need to develop the buildings and landscape in a way was called back to neighbourhood and be valued for developers. That was the strategy from the community, and I think it was also questioning a particular set of skills and knowledge in ways of making and working that it was present within those building and were potentially under threat. So, I guess that were the key issues and I think, also something that kind of emerged through the campaigns. Something that I felt it was really important, it wasn't just Portland Work known very much for its kind of metal working and of the phenomenal numbers of skills metal worker but also artists, musicians, and different forms of making kind of happening and sometimes a bit about on the different times of day or night that the kind of 95 or the 87 of the metal workers a day. I think that need for space that could accommodate all those different people side by side. That real mixed and rich place of work was critical and that I really tried to push to the course of the campaign. I think a simple narrative around heritage or metal workers was quite popular and it was always important to talk about the other kind of pieces of that building as well.

All these questions needed action and people had concerns around things like employment or this kind of longer-term questions, but I think the making of this planning application was a completely existential threat, because everyone would have been evicted and many of the businesses wouldn't never survive having to move. So, for example an Andy Cole is one of the last hammarite in the city so, that mean he could use a hammer day and night and there aren't many places where he could do that at all, they are just not granted anymore. So, he wouldn't be able to make noise but also it would cost £25,000 to relocate his hammer. He didn't make that kind of money to be able to do that and for others such as cabinetmakers, again they just couldn't afford to be relocated and then for others, they would just maybe come towards the end of their career, and they just wouldn't do that so, all those kinds of skills would be lost. I guess that seriousness of the fact that it would be complete wipe-out not only in terms of the building, but what we realised, I think a little bit from our initial research through the architecture course in the MArch.

Also, later with the support of students with the development of diverse economies that existed in the building and the survey of all different businesses within that neighbourhood showed that there were a ecology that was supported by them so, not only the formal connexion or maybe they may have somebody in the area that made the leather work for a knife but these kinds of connexions that was created. There were also informal things which might be about sharing tools or borrowing resources or helping one another out in different ways. So, it was this very closely connected community and businesses and if Portland Works was lost, so many other things will go as well. The community skills will be lost and also the kind of hubs with lots of key players within the area that were really important but also as soon as that became housing the prices will raise. The industrial value of the land is relatively low so rents could be low, and people could afford to run business that won't make huge amount of profit. They work long hours and really hard, it's not the case but they didn't have to completely growing their businesses always or employing lots of staff for doing all this type of work in a way they will be making thing. They were maybe able to be generous in terms of their time or give something to somebody or all of these ways of living and working that they've established were under threat, and as soon as it was open to financialisaton and increasing the cost of the land all of that would be lost as well.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

I think what sits on my mind about the project, is a knifemaker Michael May, he said a 100 years ago we wouldn't be known a 100-year time. The generations of his family had been knifemakers and his mum and dad had a business within the workshop that he worked in, previously in the building adjacent to Portland Works. There are people who pass on skills, and they really saw it in this kind of long-term thing, but it would be easy to characterise that as nostalgic or this kind of thing about keeping things the same, but it really wasn't. They were thinking in terms of develop their business and embracing new technologies, and thinking about what they made or how they make things might evolve, but not in the kind of sense that might be driven by an agenda that suddenly everything has to become digital, very much actually, ' I know how to make knives very well, my parents made it in this particular way, but actually through the Internet, I can have a close encounter relationship with customers and I can develop spoken knives', very much a collaboration designing with collectors. So, the knives went from making high volume of knives to very generic form to suddenly incredibly specialist, so taking new approaches or something but in a way that was appropriate for that business. I think along the way we tried to engage in the projects and think about it and develop this kind of work well, with these nuances and specialists being precise about the needs of all this different people within that context.

So, I think it kind of shifted into different roles. Initially I started out as student doing my masters research and I became employee of the forum, working in architecture research, very much of community development kind of position and often working with local authorities, local residents, thinks like that. Later, as a PhD researcher, but also as a director of the company as an activist at various points and campaigning as a local resident. So, taking a lot of different roles and understanding each of those roles, having different capacities and responsibilities allowed me to understand the project in different ways. At one moment I might be writing a business planning, I might act as director or have financial responsibility for the project, but also at the same time leading student projects. So, we worked with people and students that developed all those histories. So, I think my practice I suppose it allowed me to developing practice, which is very much about moving between these different roles and ways and kind of engaging and seeing the project as having different communities, different kind of capacities, different modes of working I supposed.

The thing that I think is the most important is that we didn't enter the project as experts. Everyone kind of entered into it with the willingness and not knowing and to find out together and allow it to emerge through our relationships and learning together about what it is. So, I think one of the roles I tried to take, it was kind of saying 'we don't have any financial resources', I guess maybe is an interesting counterpoint. We're trying for commissioned master plan and suddenly they come and said, 'well the district said there is not enough space work, all these problems were identified and what you need to do is change the whole way of working, you have to do all different.' Well, that was never going to happen because there wasn't the budget, there wasn't the resource, and it wasn't really building from the capacities, expertise, and skills of that neighbourhood. So, I think we've seen how that ended up this like with a costs of £20,000 for an extension from the roof and nothing ever happened to it, and actually we realised that there was a need to look at different way of working which was toward understanding the desires, the capacities, the resources that were available within the neighbourhood and to also draw in those skills and capacities that we already have and not to kind of just throwing people at loose track to what was important to the project. So, always centring the tenants and saying, you know, actually for them it's their businesses, it's really serious and risks are higher. Also, they have long-term relationships with the place and they understand how it works and valuing those knowledge, that experience but also to come and say maybe we need to explore together what model of management agent might be or, you know, what are the most important kind of issues here, how does it work and an example of that, it might be in terms of the way we thought about architecture refurbishment.

So, we quickly realised that actually if we if we got a huge amount of funding like £1.5 million and we couldn't afford to refurbish the whole place and if we close the building for 6 month, all the businesses will go bust and so, many projects going to go for that big funding, but what we need to do is actually think on something where we could work around the businesses, draw a bit of funding at the right moments to do bits of work that were appropriate. So, I was saying 'well, we can bring this new blocking into use if we repair the roof and prepare and then we can get tenants and we can increase our rental income and we've got a bit more money to do something else' and kind of understanding very closely and carefully how to work with what was available, and kind of filling in the gaps, and how to nurture without being too ambitious about the vision for the place as a whole. So, kind of saying you know, 'we want it to be known for 100 years, we want to be supporting in education, we want supporting across people' but just being quite careful the way we approach that.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

This was always really interesting to me because in a way with that kind of project people get involved in different ways and for different duration so, we tried to kind of open up this way so, somebody could come and spent a day and do amazing work either giving tours of the building or going on a gig or doing something that kind of contribute to the campaign and it could be this kind of many powerful small thing. Ken Loach raise something really nice for a campaign that we can kind of share, help and kind of promote project so, there is different ways of people, or they might be other people who turn very faithfully every Tuesday and do repairs and brickwork. They can have that much longer duration and they learn skills through that, and they make friends and they have that much longer kind of continuity of the project.

There might be people that want to come along to meetings, and I think few of them dedicated people few thousand hours to the project over a short period. So, I supposed there were lots of different duration and people can dropping in and out of that process but there was kind of a point where we change manager and somebody who hadn't been involved in any kind of campaign came and led the project for a while, and I was very interested in how you could be open to new people coming in and shaping the project and taking it forward and the way their skills and their understanding and their

kind of vision could contribute but also not to forget the kind of history and the memory. Why the decisions are made and why certain approaches were taken and how that work was done. Because I think, very crucially it was built on lots of different ideas, people contributed to lots of ways, and I think some people came and it didn't value that. They kind of thought 'well now we've done it and we can just kind of run it as a traditional business with a reasonable group of people, making decisions and other people doing the work'. Well for me, the reason why people did the work is because they felt very much part of how the project evolved and why it matters, and where was going so, I think is a very different kind of organisation that it needs to value that kind of history and decisions and labour I guess. The kind of hard work, the care, the thing that has gone past.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

I think lots of different strength, Francis kind of approached me and I started organising from a community forum, and we were organising meetings. I set up websites, blogs and invited people and talked about projects in various ways to different sets of people but then, Sarah was running a festival and tours of the building and tenants were talking to people about the planning application threats in the building and really showing their skills, telling their stories in the place where was happening and demonstrated to people the exciting unique and loving kind of place. So, that was kind of a way of gathering public as well. I think artists and musicians gathered other sets of people and it kind of built on that. I think it was through having multiple kind of stories, multiple centres and then somehow can pulling these together in order either organise campaigns to raise money or to raise awareness so, you know, to kind of understand the project.

Another kind of key moment was Cristina put together and we organise an event where we brought together different academics, different specialists in business development, architecture and urban design, heritage, conservation all of these kinds of things. Together with tenants and local residents we set a day where we kind of tours and we wanted to say, 'join in this day, we're going to understand a little bit about the history, the threats but also where we want to go in the future' and how we might do that and for some people it was about sharing what really matters from themselves. For the tenants, like how their business worked, for others it was about understanding the project and then. There were politicians or whatever and I think again this was another important moment to involving the public around that kind of issue in a more formal way. Maybe the kind of understanding, how different people might contribute to that were this kind of hinge moment moving between campaign against the planning application, campaign against the loss of the building into this four looking kind of project, about how do we forge collectively, how do we actually do more than just kind of save the building and hold it in time and actually move to a more creative, positive, kind of forward looking process.

So, first of all it was very much in informal meetings, which some of them were chaired forum and chaired by various people, first manager of Portland Works a really good kind of director. It was very much open, allowing lot of voices. It was about exploration, about campaigning then we went a phase where we had to become a bit more formal so, we developed a business plan, looking into finance, looking what we had to do, and we structured a steering group. Then a series working groups that looked at various aspects of the project development such as watching a business plan, developing a survey of the building, organising an approaching to education or outreach and smaller groups of people, and working collective to address that. Then we went to another phase, it was more formal where we own the building, and we had 2 directors and each of this had a financial liability if anything went wrong so that kind of change structure. So, previously were the steering group, other group have been quite open, and anyone can join, anyone can have a say. It was kind of feeling at that because of the responsibility of the directors suddenly it became more hierarchical, and they had the final say

and there were this kind of shift in the organisation. Then it went through another that were even hierarchical and meetings became close, and it became quite formal, that actually didn't work very well, and it was a challenging time and actually those people that we were doing the work, making the project happen were excluded from that process of decision-making and I think the motivations and the feeling of being part dropped quite significantly at that point and there were more employees and I think now there are much more kind of open structure again, although there are more formal roles within it but I haven't been so involved in recent years.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

We did manage to get over five hundred people. It was a huge amount of energy and a lot of time put into it and I think it was this thing of asking people what they could contribute and allowing them to do that rather than starting from 'this is what we need to do, we need to find people to do these things that we pre-determined' and if you are living locally, is like 'I've got a van and I can help with this event,' you know, and kind of organising and pulling that together and understanding how those pieces fit it together but I think that kind of openness to different forms of contribution tend to be really powerful.

I think we definitely went through some kind of difficult times from upsides and downs, but I think there were also really interesting skills in terms of the group so, certainly people that were very much, very good at describing the project, you know, doing that kind of public face to face stuff. There were people much more able to organise and had the experience in community or political organising, kind of bringing up, draw that kind of knowledge and people who run events could kind of pull off something that was really kind of fun and engaging do that outside thing. So, I think the fact that we had a hundred of active people involved and diverse set of skills and I think that also created bust, although there were lots of kind of boring meetings. Also, was a lot of fun and there are a lot of energy and people getting to know one another. I think, some people were very good at saying 'well, we all need to go and have a meal together and eat, chat and relax' and I think all those social gatherings happened outside the project. I think from my perspective, at the forum I was open about my role and I was allowed to spend a lot of time on site and in free time subsequently through the PhD. I guess also the PhD allowed me to invest time that you never get in the kind of community organising or if you're employed as architect and I think that being present, spending time with people, getting to know them, building trust, all of those kinds of things, or just trying to understand what matters I guess, or at least trying to do that it was quite critical.

I think Doina is going to be the big one for me in term of looking at the time. I think, with ecobox she started to talk about the production of desires and planning, the kind of the need for certain spaces in the city and I think that way of bringing people together, raising issues, raising concerns was a big one for me. I think we also Charles Morgan, we set it into a series of different examples about the UK so, everything kind of Hamilton house to the Riverside in Sheffield but kind of Hamilton house in Bristol but just looking at different ways they kind of structure a business or the way that they set the rent so, there were like a series of case studies that we develop. We were specific to a particular moment where we were looking at how do we buy the building, how do we run it, how do we manage it so there were kind of important and then, I think also there is a kind of longer history in Sheffield in the Sharrow neighbourhood. Alan was running that, and he has a long history in kind of running free parties, music events, festivals, and that kind of form of community organising but also within the neighbourhood, I think it was a community organiser who set in motion lots of strong work within the Sharrow neighbourhood. I think we just built on it, all those connexions were already there then we were just kind of working with that and adding to it.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

Genuinely I don't know if there was any participation because, I think participation seems to imply, there was a project first and people joined in, and I think it very much came from the forum and they needed architecture expertise. The artists were already talking about the planning application so, I think there was kind of potential of lots of different future practice. So, that was a time where we kind of looked at big European funding that would have been a very different approach to the project. So, there were very different possible projects that would have evolved with it, and I think a particular constellation of people that kind of got involved and shaped in a particular direction, but it wasn't always easy, and I think there were conflicts. I remember this kind of moment where people were quite tired and there was this feeling of 'let's just get a rich person to buy the building and the problem will be solved' and I was kind of trying to argue that it wouldn't solve the intrinsic problems around the rising in land value, and the way the businesses didn't necessarily want to grow, the diversity of businesses within that kind of context, because a rich person would probably want to come in and maybe fund bits of the heritage aspects unless you find this kind of ideal donor but also, the land value will still go up and it would be a private ownership. There was always the risk that at some point in the future could be gentrified and I was trying to say actually we have to kind of keep open, we have to think about this kind of broader set of issues that would bear on it.

I think sometimes the role I took and I guess was important in terms of how the project evolved because I think the reason behind the different clashes that were emotionally hard for everyone involved, because people were lovely and we wanted to get on and we did but that kind of trying to shift the frame of what the project was or mattered or how to integrate different understandings of forms, of knowledge and how we might progress. I was thinking from a very pragmatic level different set of people have time and energy to invest at different points so, it kind of got pulled towards their vision and approach, their skills set or their way of kind of understanding the project at different points. So, in a way the participation or the change in the project wasn't necessary from this kind of sense like it wasn't this kind of predetermined, we needed to evolve in this way and the set of people working in a particular way, there were this kind of questions that emerged through the conversation we were having and under maybe this conflicts that shaped how things went forward.

I mean on the kind of basic level there were a campaign which was very much about opposing, raising awareness, working in a political dimension I supposed and then, there was a kind of creative imagining what the future might be, opening it up and drawing people in, thinking about possibilities then there was this moment of 'oh my gosh we own the building, and it is falling apart'. We got no money and that kind of draw, I suppose awareness of that risk and maybe in a kind of a different phase, a kind of very difficult phase of new people coming in and maybe reconciling the kind of history of what they think the project is and how that works, and then now I think it feels like it's in a much clearer and stable phase and kind of thinking about what is the work they want to do, how do their business get support, a much kind of smoother phase I supposed.

We had kind a structure which a bigger kind of vision of the project came together in these kinds of series of working groups. In the working group, people who got involved with were more specialists. So, those work included half a dozen to a dozen people meeting regularly with the chair, they kind of set an agenda and different bits of research were done and then they would present back to the steering group and then the steering group would give an overall of what those working group were doing. So, there was a kind of back and forward for example the building group might kind of say these are our priority for refurbishments and would go to steering group and then, in that space will be



brought into relation to the finance group, who were talking about what the budget would be and there would be a kind of negotiation in that space between those different priorities. All those different aims and when it became more formal, there were 12 directors in the first kind of interaction and we would have to vote but once the building was owned there was the kind of wider membership, so they were 500 people in, however they invested between kind of £50 and £20,000 every single member to keep this it. So, the idea was that you could kind of buy influence within the project and actually everyone from the £50 investors drifted new investors that could kind of influence on the shape of the project, but I think that's the kind of formal picture. Informally I think in various points the building manager were there on site every day, having to deal with things in particular way because of their vision, because maybe they have certain people near and there were recent kind OF social meetings. Still, if you don't have structures power still exist and people listen to their friends more carefully, or support people that they already know, things that are familiar with. I guess those were the aspects throughout and people view whether that was a positive informal way of gaining them or a negative thing probably depend on were they sat and rose relationship and decisions. So, I think there were this kind of good democratic structure that weren't too heavy handed, too hierarchical that allowed the decision to be made and then there were also I supposed, a social liaises that existed in parallel that were often how thing were getting done and that I guess, you know, when it's volunteers and people are investing their time actually they have to be motivated, they have to kind of want to do it, they have to feel they gaining their away.

# APPENDIX B

## Blackburn is Open

Interviewee: Claire Tymon

Tymon is a creative practitioner. She initiates, directs, and delivers creative projects that include cultural place-based projects, programmes, and strategies. She works with a network of artists, makers, community groups and organisations to deliver creative outputs for the community.<sup>498</sup> Currently she is a doctoral research candidate in architecture at the University of Sheffield.

Date: 26/07/2021

So, I'm Claire Tymon and I am... well, I don't really have a job title and but I, I work with communities who are undergoing, some sort of change and mainly region, might change in terms of regeneration. So, it could be housing or town centre regeneration and, or social regeneration. So, it was in 2012, I was offered a position at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the job title was cultural planner and the premiss of the job was to transform a church in the centre of Blackburn into an art centre. The church was not being used as a church, and there were a number of social enterprises based in there. So, like CVS, which is the voluntary community service and a couple of other charities have their office based in there and I think as they were slowly moving out and the church was becoming more vacant, you know, someone had the idea of, 'oh, maybe we can turn it into an arts centre.'

When I was offered the position and I was given the brief to turn the church into an arts centre. My initial question was, well, what kind of art centre and who would the arts centre serve? So, is it for the local creative community? artists, designers, and photographers, or is it more of a community centre where they will engage in artistic practices? and no one could really answer that. And I also was asking questions, like, well, who is the art community? You know, who and how many artists are there in Blackburn, you know, and who would engage in in the building. So, because of my background, I mean, I come from a job where I was the kind of creative community engagement manager. So, I was working with lots of different community groups across the whole of East Lancashire. East Lancashire is made up of Blackburn and Burnley, and Atkinson and Pendle and lots of different local authorities, make Lancashire. I was working across; I think it was five in total. And I think my approach is normally, well what's already happening in the kind of wider community and what are the needs? And then maybe looking back to the church and understanding the role of the church, you know, all the business model for the church could be in the wider context of things.

That's where the idea was initiated. I did two things in parallel. I kind of commissioned the structural survey of the church and we commissioned an architect to look at the, you know, what the uses of the church could look like? So, could there be a cafe in there? What the access points and things like that, you know, and it also has some ground around it. So, what could the uses of that be? while we were doing that piece of research, I was then looking at the wider town centre and understanding, what the challenges were, what strengths were and what I quickly discovered was in that part of the town centre where the church was, 25% of the shops were empty. I saw that as an opportunity to actually do some temporary interventions and test ideas that could then, you know, be used to help build the case study, all the case model for the church. So, that that's kind of where Blackburn is Open started.

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<sup>498</sup> Claire Tymon, *Claire Tymon, art, place, community* (2023) <<https://clairetymon.co.uk/home>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

We developed or I developed a kind of campaign to get more people involved in the town centre, you know, what creative activities could take place, who were the artists in the community, who were the designers, who were the photographers and how can we build that sense of community and ownership of what can happen in the town. So, I was doing that piece of work alongside the structural and architect kind of surveys of the church, and someone said to me, 'oh you maybe you should talk to Wayne Hemingway'. So, Wayne Hemingway is a designer and it's quite well known, and he is from Blackburn, you know, he set his first Red or Deadshot, which is what he is well known for in Blackburn. I think at the time the council had given him a scholarship to go to get private education. He felt he wanted to kind of give something back to the town. He felt like his roots were there and he wanted to get involved in something that he felt passionate about.

So, I developed, it was almost like a framework that I called a town centre of excellence or creative excellence, and I identified just some very simple approaches. So, looking at the empty shops, building the creative community and the ecology and creating that kind of identity for the initiative, a programme that people could get involved and feel ownership of, and so, I got in touch with Wayne and I think he was quite inspired and though at that time, it was probably quite early in town to use pop-up shops and getting creatives involved. So, I think he was quite attracted to that idea, and we developed the Blackburn is Open initiative together.

**What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

The issues that I recognized were, at the time there was nothing to kind of bring the community together. You know, that creative community because they were a target audience or a target market for the project. I mean creative, is in its broadest sense. So, anyone who felt, who was innovative or had a really good idea, you know, we wanted them to be involved, if they were proactive and felt inspired by the work that we were doing. We wanted them to feel they could take part so, I think, well, there was some issues, in terms of, a lot of pubs were closing down. All the nightclubs were closing at that time. So, the night-time economy was not very good. There were more shops closing down, which meant there was more empty shops.

And also, I think for me, it's not a bad challenge to have, but is people understanding the way that I work, you know, it's kind of creating change by having some ideas and just testing them out. So, there's an element of risk there, what if it was to fail? and actually if it fails, we just learn from it and we build on it and it's iterative, we continue to develop those ideas and tweak things and it can be flexible. I think when you're working with counsellors and officers at the Council and other stakeholders, they like to know what will come at the end or as part of the process and you can't predict that, it's only through experience that you can say 'well I've tried this before and this is what happened, but this it might be different this time' because you're working with different people in different contexts and different places. So, I think advocating for the way that I work can be quite challenging and it's only by building that relationship with people and testing ideas and bring them into the process with you and that's when that kind of understanding starts to develop, but that can be quite time consuming. That's a big part of I suppose my practice and it's not always instant. So, the more advocates that you can develop, I kind of brought Wayne in as an advocator, you know, because he's well known, he's well respected and having someone like him in the project was really important.

We had a little bit of funding so, I raised some from the Arts Council and I think because the Arts Council were investing, then the council were confident so, the council gave us five shops for the two-year period for us to test some of those ideas. So, we had a little bit of funding and which helped, you know, with the fund we could organise some workshops and designs for new shop frontages and we

also were able to get more support from the planning department and the licensing department at Blackburn council which meant that there was a lot of people in the council who were really supportive of the initiative and basically, would try to make us do our activities and test our ideas, make that as easy as possible. So, we were given an empty shop and it might have needed a change of use planning permission then it was almost like we were doing a social master plan so they would try to enable for some of that activity to happen and make it as easy as possible. So, I think having those types of things in place provided that motivation.

Actually, I also think another motivator was that we had a really accessible and exciting brand identity for the projects, it was really striking. It was really attractive, and it felt like a really good quality to offer to people if they were going to be part of it, it was quite cool and it was really well designed so, I think that was a good motivator that people felt like they were joining something that was really valuable and attractive.

My motivation for it is that I have to work with artists and creatives in my work, that's what kind of drives my passion and ambition and I think, because we had the opportunity with the church to develop it into something quite special and unique I was just kind of trusting the process that kind of getting everyone behind this and working with loads of brilliant talented people in the town that would potentially, one day be able to set this church up as a centre for that activity. That was a really good motivator and another motivator for me was working with someone like Wayne Hemingway I think and he is incredibly inspirational and he is got huge amount of experience, he also has very high standards and working really closely with him and having his feedback on ideas and the documents and the design, you know, for me that was a real personal motivation to have that kind of advocate support and mentor I suppose.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

I very rarely work on short-term projects. So, my job, as I said at the start, I was offered this position of cultural planner at the council, and it was a nine-month contract. I was like, 'well, if this works then I felt confident I could put the argument forward to extend my contract', you know, if I was creating something that was generating a lot of interest, engagement, and deliverables outputs. Then I could basically create a really strong argument and that's what happened, it was extended. I think it was three-and-a-half-year programme and maybe longer actually, I think I started in 2012 and the first Festival of Making, because I left just after that launched in 2017. So yeah, so it kept growing and changing and expanding. I didn't think it would last that long as that and then I tended to deliver around kind of three-year programs of work because you need that amount of time to establish anything properly.

Well, I suppose primarily I was the initiator and so, you could maybe call me, I don't know, the director or the creative director. I mean this, like I said before job descriptions or job titles are difficult. I find them difficult in my line of work. When I started working 20 years ago it was called project manager, but now everyone's called producers and so, but I was definitely the person who would bring people together and provide that kind of confidence in the programme but I was also the liaison with the council, you know, I'd report to the chief executive, the deputy chief executive at the council about the activities and the outcomes. I was the fundraiser, and I was the kind of communicator and the evaluator. So, I kind of had many roles I suppose project management role and towards the end of the programme or initiative, I shouldn't really call it a programme because it was never set out to be a programme. The initiative I was looking at the succession plan. You know, how do each of the elements of what had been created? What, what was the succession, what did succession look like? How would it be become long-term and embedded, you know, into either the community or into policy or into

development plans, kind of looking at each aspect of it and looking at what's that kind of legacy plan look like for that particular part of the initiative.

I suppose this is where my PhD and research are about, it's something that I call sustainability indicators. So, it's kind of looking at what needs to be in place in order to make it sustainable? And, I mean, I've already mentioned, you know, having someone like Wayne there, as an advocate, as an external advocate to the council was a key kind of indicator. I need to find a word for it, but I really do need to find a word for that. It's those things that you need in place in order to make it sustainable and I don't think funding is necessarily, although you know, and I don't know how familiar you are with like Arts Councils new 10-year strategy, but it's very much about kind of co-production and co-design with the community. And it's, you know, I think they've learnt a lot about initiatives like Blackburn is Open and the impact it had. So, a lot of their new strategies is really promoting and supporting this type of activity. So, where I said before it takes so much time for me to advocate my practice and my approach, it's nearly 10 years on from Blackburn is Open, when that started in 2012. It's a lot more, you know, a lot more people understand this way of working and I think that can help make it sustainable.

I think another one is that the approach that I take is very much about empowering the local creative community, and so there's a lot of amazing talented creatives in Blackburn who are still running these initiatives. These different things that I mentioned and these different elements and are continuing now. And I think finding those really special local people and who are very passionate, very dedicated and very creative and empowering them, you know, so it wasn't about me, it was about them, giving them the resource, the tools and the responsibility to establish what they wanted to do. I think that's definitely what helped make it really sustainable. And then obviously the Festival of Making is still carrying on. So, I did that for, you know, for the first Festival but I then I felt well, I've done it now, that's what I went to Blackburn to do, was to kind of create that, that very successful sustainable approach to creative arts and I kind of thought, right? I've achieved that and that's now still carrying on and I think a lot of that is down to the way that we created that as a business. And the CIC, it's a Community Interest Company, that was another project that it was established as a community interest company and the bureau, which is the Bureau and the Centre for Arts. That's the CIC. So, there was three new, established Community Interest Companies that were set up during Blackburn is Open and they're all continuing, they're still running for five years later.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

I mean for me, I suppose you'd have to ask the community about, you know, all the other key, and advocates or champions, who are still carrying in the flag for those different projects, but they are... there is so much that still carry, that still exists, and it is... I mean that I don't know if you're aware, but the church that was set up as a centre for an art centre and unfortunately had a really bad fire. I think it was in 2018, in March 2018. There was a serious fire at the church and that group had to find a new venue and I think the council played a big part in that and they ended up taking over a visitor centre at Thwaites Brewery, and I think they've got a long-term lease on that. So, that's kind of testament to that community, they're just so amazing and strong and committed. I mean that was really tragic, but everyone rallied around and did lots of fundraising and which was amazing to see.

But for my practice, I've worked on... and I suppose when I left Blackburn and I'm now developing a similar type of initiative in my hometown, Glossop and it's called Glossop Creates. And it's like different because, again, like I said, it's different people, different contexts, different opportunities and but I've learned so much from that, the work that I did in Blackburn and now kind of advising or sharing that information with lots of different people in lots of different places but I'm also implementing it. It's my

learning in my hometown and that's what my PhD is basically about is kind of that journey and the learning experiences.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

So, the key... I suppose, the primary stakeholders were the council, absolutely the council and local counsellors and local organisations, like Blackburn youth zone, Blackburn college, and Capita, who delivered services on behalf of the council. So, another primary stakeholder is obviously the creative community. So, those who worked mainly in a professional capacity in the arts and creative sector. So, local, designers, makers and artists, photographers, etc. I think... and then we did run a couple of Live Projects with Sheffield University with Carolyn and I would say that they... that the School of Architecture was definitely a primary stakeholder in the project, in the initiative. And then I've also mentioned Wayne Hemingway and so, I think it's a really good question. Actually, I think they were the main kind of primary stakeholders, and the way that we communicated, we developed a Manifesto so, you know, probably six months into the project and we developed... I don't know if you've seen it, but I've got tons of them in my bedroom and well, but we've got that, we we've created the Blackburn is Open Manifesto as a way of using it as an advocacy tool to get investors and funders and decision makers interested in being involved in the program.

Also, as a tool to get, the kind of wider creative community interested in and engaged and well, it was really successful, it's a really successful tool to have to communicate and then what build from that was a website that was unfortunately discontinued shortly after I left Blackburn, but we had this fantastic website. We also created Dazine, like a small magazine that's available, is still available on issue but we printed, and we ran. I think there was seven magazines in total over the two and a half years and they were distributed to Manchester, Liverpool, and Preston as a tool to communicate other cool creative communities, that Blackburn is cool and creative. So, that was something we created, and we had social media as a way of communicating and internally, we use normal things like email, and we run network meetings as a communication tool, and we also had a shop. So, we had like a Blackburn is Open shop on the High Street, which was directly opposite the Town Hall, in the centre of Blackburn and that was open, you know, as often as we could open it for people to drop in and have conversations and have tea and cake and we make everyone know that we're available to talk through their ideas and... yeah, if they wanted to get involved in our events and activities.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movements/networks and organisation)**

That's a very broad question. I think you need someone; this sounds really big headed, but you need someone like me, you need someone who... or a couple of people who are really, proactive, and a very passionate, and trust in the approach if that makes sense. So, you know, or confident in the approach, because then you can advocate, and you can communicate that kind of leadership and vision that you have. I think that's really important. So, that could be down to one person, or it could be down to a group of people. I mean, I've run programme like, community programmes before and that have had incredible challenges, one of them being mainly around, kind of politics and local politics. So, that's why I was keen to have someone like Wayne involved. He wasn't a counsellor or a politician. So, the decision-making, or the advocator was coming from a good place rather than doing things to, you know, or making decisions based on what would win them votes. That's not to say that I don't value the role of those people in these projects because they can themselves be incredible advocates. But I've just, I've kind of been victim to where it hasn't gone very well. So, I think having someone who's neutral is really important.

What else for community? I suppose being very open and honest, and transparent about the process. That's something I strongly believe in. So, you know if we are talking to the community about future developments and especially the Blackburn is Open, we had these strap, these kind of strap lines, Blackburn is Open to ideas, Blackburn is open to business, Blackburn is open to creativity, Blackburn is open to you. So, we kind of use those for strap lines to build the program from and if we're inviting people to give us their ideas. They need to trust us, they need to trust that we're not going to just take their ideas and do them ourselves. They need to trust that we value their ideas and we're not going to make them feel silly. So, yeah being as open and transparent about how you're going to work with people and that's why we create the manifesto as well. That was trying to showcase that approach, that we're here to... we're not the experts, but we're here to work with you, to try and make this place better so, I think that's really important.

There was a lot of inspiration. On a kind of micro level and in a quite large level. So, for instance, we ran a programme called first Thursdays for twelve months, every first Thursday of the month, we encouraged businesses to open until late and we would put on exhibitions and activities. I had seen that, there was a first Thursday programming Cape Town, in South Africa. And it's... they've got a really...well, they've got a really lovely website, and it looked really cool and that's just something I came across. And I was like, oh, we could try that here and so, we did. We tried it for twelve months and it was brilliant. I mean, I'm incredibly inspired by everything that I come across and I come across to lots of different projects and initiatives and artists. There's a website called Pop-up City, that at the time were crowdfunding for their first book. Their first publication, which I've got a copy of, and you know, so they're a nice idea in there. So, I take inspiration from everywhere and the local community they would come to me and have conversations, share their thoughts, their fears, their feelings and I would kind of so call of that in and taking inspiration from it, and try to create something.

The Blackburn is Open shop was adjacent to a very large empty old cotton exchange building and I... it used to be a cinema, it used to have a rate. I mean, it was very empty, it's been stripped out. It's an incredible building and is now being used for cultural programming whilst, they raise funds to turn into something more permanent, but people would go, 'oh God I'd love to see in there'. So, we arranged hard tattoos and get people to go into the building. So, we'll kind of just... yeah, on a daily basis take inspiration from absolutely anything and everything.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

I think I've probably touched on this, we and we created the manifesto in order to attract participants, to attract people to either volunteer or develop their own kind of creative ideas things that they might want to do either in the town or their own business idea. So, in terms of participation there was never participatory kind of strategy I didn't have a set of key objectives of how we would engage people, but I do... I don't know. I mean, it's something I am looking to formalize a little bit more, but I'm having just works as a creative community engagement manager for a very large initiative across the whole of East Lancashire and developed... I suppose I've developed some good practice ways to engage people at different levels, which... you know, I'm really passionate that good practices is implemented when participate, when engaging the community so there was lots of different ways I mean, we also engaged local businesses to get involved and now there's a program that's running called Art in Manufacturing because I think when we set up Blackburn is open 25% of Blackburn's population worked in manufacturing, it's a really big industry in Blackburn and 'I was like, well, I want to engage the manufacturers', see how they can get involved.

The Blackburn is Open manifesto was all about kind of reintroducing making and manufacturing back into the Town Centre, looking at repurposing the Town Centre, we kind of thought, 'right, well let's fill the town with makers and manufacturers' if that's the majority of the community are working in that industry then let's make it a town that can make it accessible and that's why I've got Festival of making now to celebrate that.

So, we developed some brilliant partnerships with local makers and manufacturers like I don't if you've seen but the brand Blackburn is open, we have this big neon sign on our shop and that was made by a company that is in Blackburn, Parkinson signs. So, we kind of tried to that the Blackburn is open shop was painted with Graham and Brown paint and wallpapered with... who gave us? Oh no, the wallpaper came from Graham and brown and the paint came from Crown paints and they're both based in Blackburn. So, we really engaged that kind of manufacturing community. Honestly the participation came from so many different... I think there's a there's a blurry line between stakeholders and participants because it just felt like really inclusive and that everyone had a role to play.

Well, I mean, a big part of Blackburn is open was inviting ideas. So, people had either a business idea, so they wanted to start up their own business. We helped 25 new businesses start up over the programme which it's quite an achievement. So, people came to us with either a business idea and you know, to have a pop-up shop or they had an idea to do a workshop or an event and so whatever ideas they came to us with we'd basically, it's almost like a career service we'd kind of sit down and go 'right let's see how we can make this happen' and we can work with you on it or you go away with our advice and test it and come back and have another chat to us.

So, participants were almost the primary decision makers because it was then who were coming up with the ideas and I would then work with my colleagues at the council to either identify funding opportunities or investment opportunities to make those ideas happen or make it easy for them to have space in the public realm to run activities or events, or give them a pop-up shop to test, a retail idea and I mean, we had this small shop in the High Street that we had to start pop-up Centre, but as it started to get really busy and the event got bigger we then moved into the church and that's how this... the bureau set up because we then started to actually develop it as an art centre and that was all purely the participants who were coming up with the ideas and putting on these activities and we're just marketed it really. We're just like, everyone know that it was happening and support in that way. So, the participants were essentially, the ones making the decisions I think, but it'd be good to hear from them and what they think.



# APPENDIX C

## Organisational Diagram of Everyday Life

Interviewee: Helen Stratford

Stratford is an artist, architect, and researcher. Her research focuses on feminist approaches from art, architecture, ethnography, performance, and civic action as a way to expand participation in architecture and urban design. Currently, she is a lecturer in architecture at Sheffield Hallam University.<sup>499</sup>

Date: 27/07/2021

I'm not sure how helpful my research is going to be because I don't work with specific communities. I tend to make work that then the people who I meet through the project become a little community because it grows out of the work and I uncover them on the way, but one project I did recently which was more community focused approach was called Organisational Diagrams for Everyday Life and it was based in, Middlesbrough or South Bank in Middlesbrough. A local artist attends an open call inviting people to apply for a project, he was sort of very much part of this local community. He was running part of the gallery which was an old Baptist Church and he wanted to make it into a kind of community hub, where people could perhaps go and do all sorts of activities and he'd set up arts and health group there which is for people. There were people kind of recovering from stroke, people with various or complex needs and he was trying to build it up as a space so, he invited, and he asked artist to apply. The idea was that I would spend three months making work connected to local community, which would then open up the gallery. Let people know about the gallery space and so that they could drop in and use it and that was one project.

### **What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

It was an area classed as an area of deprivation. So, the council basically were not going to fund any more investment in this particular area because it wasn't economically worthwhile. The area had formally been quite an industrial area, which was based around the steelwork industry, but shut down, 20 years ago gradually and then there was nothing else to replace it. So, all the shops, there was hardly any shops, and they were closed. The only things open were like, betting shops and churches. So, there was really nothing there for local people. They've been various initiatives to sort of regenerate the area, people coming in doing studies, different proposals, different groups of architects but they've never really come to anything because the council hadn't put forward any fund and various other reasons.

They weren't investing in the area because from their point of view it wasn't worthwhile economically so, it was really run down and that was kind of half occupied houses and crime rates was quite high. It was a slightly stigmatized area and refugees moved in because the rent was low. So, there was slightly problematic relationship with local residents and refugees coming in. On the site there were lots of things which are kind of fragments or from the outside picture, like fragmented communities. The issue for me was, what I was going to do there? I was going into an area, which I had no connection

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<sup>499</sup> Sheffield Hallam University, *Staff profiles* (2023) <<https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-profiles/helen-stratford#firstSection>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

with, and it was miles away from where I lived, and it was kind of nothing I'd really experienced before in terms of levels of deprivation. The premiss of the project was to make people's lives better or that was kind of how it was set up, but I was quite critical on that because I don't want to go in, and tell people how to live their life, you know? So, my approach was different from premiss of the project.

I suppose I was looking at the time at this particular project which I was developing. A project that I was doing which was called Organisational Diagram of Everyday Life and I wanted to critique ideas of productivity, so I wanted to say, you know, there's an imperative need to be productive, in an economic sense, to make everything sort of economically worthwhile and to be independent, to be productive when working. So, I started to look at different devices or self-help devices, which supposedly help you to motivate yourself. It's kind of like an opposition to the idea of laziness or, you know, you might do yoga, you might take dog for a walk, or you might try reducing the amount of alcohol that you take, all these things that's supposed to really help you think positively and productively. I really wanted to challenge that I suppose to say, well, what about this idea of productivity? and to really say well, there are to recognise certain types of activities don't necessarily fit with people's everyday lives and to really critique that. So, in a way, this particular area, kind of led it out to do that because it was an unproductive part of the UK. You know, it was like seeing as very unworthy of any money and then worthy of attention. So, I guess that's why I wanted to give it attention but also to say, well actually these people... I mean, I didn't know that before I went, but these people have productive lives. They do, you know, have valuable lives. I know it's simplistic, but I think when you think about our lives and measure it according to particular bodies, according to like economic criteria, then people who live in areas of deprivation or have certain lives aren't valued in that context or aren't seen as being valuable. So, that was my motivation for working.

Well, it was Adrian, he is an artist, he was there. He already had quite a few connections. So, he had this arts and health group, he knew various people in the community. So, there was a group of women who met in the church. He has thoroughly made many links with them, and they're volunteers in the gallery. So, he kind of had a bit of a network of people working there. I think a key thing was that I wasn't arriving from outside trying to make those links. He already had those links already but then, I also approached people straightforward, you know, just like in Tesco, I sort of moved around in these public spaces, the library, the supermarket, and various other kind of public spaces. There was a local market at that time and I just kind of approached people and I had a flowchart template. I asked people, I just talked to people, and I just said, you know, what do you do every day? I think it was partly because I was interested in them and they could see it, you're also like a market researcher. I just wanted to collect these routines and I think from my experience when I've worked in the past, whenever you show interest in people's lives, they're very happy to talk to you and about them.

Then I find out lots of things about them, like there was a man who I met at the very first afternoon that I arrived, and he had this like encyclopaedic knowledge of the area in terms of arts, arts projects, and also historical projects. So, he basically listed all the spaces without going outside the gallery and then all the kinds of public art projects within them and also historical characters. He had this amazing knowledge and yet because he had hearings issues and he wanted to share his knowledge, but he hadn't had the opportunity perhaps to do so, but I'm not saying that my project was particularly gave permission to people. It was an opportunity for people to share what they knew and then, there was another woman who I met, Lin, who I met in Tesco, and she came to the gallery and afterwards with her daughter, and we were talking about community and the lack of community these days. Her husband said, her grandmother used to make community. So, I asked her about that, and she told me about her grandmother used to bake pies. Her grandfather and her grandmother used to bake vegetable pies every Saturday night, about hundreds of them and then take them down to the steelworks factory, the next day and then give them out, they were raising money for the Salvation Army, but really was like pennies. So basically, they made a community around this kind of activity and

I drew a diagram of that and then we did another event. I guess people wanted to tell their story, you know, people wanted to share with me, how there was a strong community in the area. They were very proud of that area and were connected to it, so they really wanted to communicate that to me. I think that was what motivated them

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

It was because Adrian set up the overall project so, he would then invite other artists later on after me. I was going to come for three months and then there was another artist who came for another three months. The idea was this project would carry on and beyond that and it will become a kind of hope. I have to say, unfortunately, because of various reasons, it didn't carry on beyond the next artist. So, although he does, Adrian is still working but in a different space, so he moved to another space. He's still trying to do the same thing, but my project was three months. After three months, another artist came and then worked, two artists, a local artist, and an artist from Leeds came in and they worked with the connections I made and then developed from that. There was a photography project where it was about taking photos of local families and then the other artists made sculptures in the gallery garden. So, it carried on for a little bit and now Adrian got a different space and he's still working with different communities, making workshops and things. So, he's trying to carry on.

My role was, I suppose I was a catalyst in a way. I was kind of brought in because I was quite sceptical. Like I said earlier, the premise of the project was to somehow make people's lives better but I had a conversation with Adrian like saying, 'well actually I don't want to be in that position because that implies that I know better' and so, I said, you know, I just want to talk to people about their lives and then we made a series of events out of the skills and expertise they had. So, from the man who told me about the local area he led a walk around that area. So, that was very much his walk and other people joined and then Lyn, who's grandmother used to bake pies. We did another event, which invited people to the area. There was an area of housing that had been demolished that been grasped green. They call it Greened. It's been green like basically became grass all the streets and just remains the lamps and so, it was like sort of crazy space, you know, like the past have been demolished yet the future hadn't been delivered yet because this regeneration programme had failed.

So, I was interested to talk, have a conversation about what could happen on the space because it was an open space, you know I wouldn't walk across it later at night, it was slightly unsafe, what could we do with it now? So, I had a workshop with various academics and practitioners and then local people joined in. So, it was really to think about what we could do now in that area, had some suggestions and then Lyn whose grandmother baked pies, she then made pies for all the participants. She was an amazing cook and she and Adrian made these pies so, it was really kind of living history, she was kind of really enacting her grandmother's. So, I suppose, I sort of facilitated this kind of this situations, you know, I had the idea that maybe people would join in within the gallery space saying, what could we do in this space and how can we involve other people? Actually, it didn't take much to do that because people were genuinely interested in, enjoying, so I was lucky in that sense.

A long-term project, I think it's just connections on the ground. So, I think the fact Adrian is still working and he's there and he's embedded in the area. I mean, in another project I was involved in, I was working in the city for four years already. So, I'm slightly more embedded. I didn't talk about that project because it's less community focused, I would say but I was aware of the sort of issues and then I could make interventions that responded to that. So, I think it just need somebody who's on the ground, who knows people already, who can approach people even if then they haven't worked with them or done anything specifically with them. I think going in without any of those connections, it's just impossible to make anything meaningful or with a long-term outcome.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

Well, as I said, it's still ongoing and I think Adrian was very happy with it and he said he still talks about it. I collected all the routines that I have conversations with. I mean, they were just a nice conversation with people and in the end, I made a book and I handed that to people. So, in that sense, there is a time, what was the question again? so there was continuity in the fact that there was a conclusion, and I gave the publications to people, and I think it started to make relationships with various people. There's an evaluation report that Adrian did, that's quite useful, it was funded by the Arts Council. He also had to evaluate the project but it's difficult to say. I mean perhaps just for a moment, people had the chance to change the conversation, you know, and talk differently about the area which they just been subject to this sort of like consultation fatigue, people coming in and analysing the area and asking them for their opinions and then promising things and nothing happening. So, I wasn't starting from that, I was just like, let's just see what you do now, and we'll just have conversation about it. So, I think for Adrian it was quite difficult to be in that area and embedded in it for a long time. He said it was useful for him for me to come in and be excited and to bring some sort of energy in the project he was struggling with at times.

I mean, not that we didn't have issues, we tried to get into various public spaces, shops and they just said, no. So, you get disappointments, I wanted to make connections with a group. It was like a mother and baby unit, and I really wanted to make connections with them, but they were too busy, you know, looking after their community and particularly vulnerable people. I think it's really difficult when you're struggling with everyday life and to sort to bring something else into that is quite difficult. So, anyway, I think it's very difficult to think about the long-term effects. I think it's more the moment. I think you'd have to talk to Adrian about how it's kept up momentum, or if people have stayed involved. I don't know about that. I'm still in contact with him. He'd be the person to talk to about long-term.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

There were different levels and I always do this in my work so, there were kind of more formal structures where there were workshops that people could come and join different levels. So, but they were very few so, one was in a church, and it was a community coffee morning. So, it was ladies who set up this sort of arts and crafts morning and they had Local artists who came in and did things with them and so, this seemed like a really good opportunity to me. So, I just turned up and the week before and said, 'would you be interested in doing this workshop with me?' and then they were really interested so then we set a date, a month later but that was through Adrian because he was having contacts with them. Then, I was also in the gallery so, the idea was that I would be there, and people could come in and interact with me but actually that didn't work because half the problem and the reason for the residency was that nobody really went to the gallery. So, people weren't into it, people weren't interested in any further. So what I did was, I went into the community, I went to the library, I made an appointment with the person who ran the library and talked about the project and I went on a Saturday morning to set up and then people were passing and I just approached people and said, 'I'm doing this projects, can I ask you about your daily routine' and you sit down and have conversations and quite a lot of people did there.

So, basically it was like public spaces or semi-public spaces that where people were passing or hanging around. There was the library and then there was a Tesco and I set up a table expecting people to stop but nobody wanted to stop. So, then I basically just got a clipboards and approach people. Actually, most of the time, if you just all sit there nobody's going to come talk to you. So, you have to go and talk to people but what I also do, is set up a sort of environment which looks interesting. So, I had like

a drawing board, had a light box with these diagrams, templates and I was also making a diagram so that I looked kind of busy and then people would be interested in and come and talk to me. So, sometimes that worked but then other times, it didn't work. So, you just have to go in and step over the round table and say, 'I'm doing this project' also, there were people queuing at customer service, so they were waiting, you know, bored and I just approached them and talk to them in the queue. So, I kind of approached people. I try to think of the other spaces, so there was a market as well an Easter market and there, people were really up to talking but again I just walked around and spoke to people rather than expecting them to come to me. So, it's a bit like a market researcher but once they see what you're doing, and they're like 'oh yeah, I will think about that' and then they want to tell you about what they do. There was one guy who made toys for his grandchildren. So, really wanted to tell me about that.

Again, there was Adrian the local artist but there was also Ann who was run the arts and health group at the gallery. So, she was really key, and she drew a diagram of a creativity process that she set for her. It was really useful to see it and what she thought looked kind of messy was actually a really valuable process. Ann was kind of a facilitator of this group that I worked with and there was Lin who made the pies, she was just amazing and John who did and led the walk. There I also met a local vicar who was connected to the coffee morning. I spoke to him, and he told me about, it's just quite random, but a magic act he did. He was an amateur magician and then I asked him if he would come and to the final events just because we were having this final event showing what we've done over the course of the residency and giving out the books. I really wanted it to be quite special so, I invited him to do his magic act. So, he opened the show, I think for me, I guess those people who have these skills, and the project became an opportunity for them to perhaps shared their knowledge and skills somewhere else or you know, there were things that were existing already, but the event was a way to put together.

I'm trying to think who else was important, in terms of the project there was also Abu, a refugee. He was staying in the area with his family, and he did all the documentation for the project, video, photography and so, he was also really important and as a kind of an aside, there was an evaluator, Julie and she was involved in evaluating the project for the Arts Council. There were various people who were sort of helping to organise that, those were the people. I stayed with a woman who was an artist, I can't remember her name, but she was also quite important, she was a recognised artist in the community. I think the fact that all these people were involved was a network of people who were there, because actually I wasn't there the whole time. You know, I was only there for one week of those three months. So, one week of first month, one week of the second month, one week of the third month, so we just communicated and organized things in between. I would say that for those sorts of projects you can't really do it in less than three months. The first stage was just meeting people, then we set up events from the second stage and then more events for the third stage, you know, and those things take time, you have to go and meet people first, introduce yourself and then maybe four weeks later you can plan something for the project.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

I guess it was constant communication with the different people involved and in different ways. So, both on the ground and also, by email, but actually what really works is just being there because in between the time, although we were like organising things part of organising is being there, talking to people, being in the space. That's the main thing that works because that's where the connections happen because most of my work sort of evolves through these kinds of serendipitous connections. So, I met Lin in the supermarket who then came to the gallery, we have a conversation about her

family, then she came back to a gallery and made pies for these events, you know, so those connections don't happen through organised meetings, they happen by chance because the fact that her daughter loved drawing, she had this very particular daily routine because her daughter had learning difficulty, she has complex needs. So, it fitted really well with the idea of the project and that wouldn't have happened, if I hadn't been there so it's just being there and then being opened to make connections that will grow on face-to-face meetings.

The challenge is really being open to those connections because I think I was scared when I arrived, but I was thinking 'what we're going to do', I felt I've got no right to be in this place and you know, my background, I don't have a privileged background but at the same time I have quite a comfortable life and so why was I or what I'm going to bring to the project was a real challenge and how are people going to see me? And I need to have a specific idea otherwise I'm just going to fail and I think it was really being open, of course, once you start talking to people, that's it, you know. These things sort of snowball and that's always the biggest challenge is just to say, 'I'm just going to go and I'm just going to see what happens' and then, take from there.

I know the artist Jean Van, I know her work so that was one precedent. In my PhD I refer to them and Apollonia's sister is another artist who I know. I suppose my work isn't similar to their work, but I'm not trying to say, I'm not trying to make people's lives better and I think that's also one quite critical in those types of projects that perhaps they're seeing somehow improving people's lives, where it's actually trying to just interact with people but actually, at the same time, I think it didn't improve people's life but like I'm saying, just change the conversation. There's another project, which is called Day-to-day Data, which I really enjoy, which is about collecting these mundane everyday activities and it's sort of aligned with that in a critical way, that was by Ellie Harrison but also my main precedent is an artist knowledge her name is Kalye who's feminist artist from the 70s and 80s. I mean, she's still going now but she basically had children and found herself kind of cast out of the art world and she did a single demand maintenance art Manifesto and it was basically saying, 'I'm going to make every day maintenance into art' and so, it was really challenging the kind of foundations of the art system and the idea of creativity. I'm saying, well actually this every day in doing the laundry, you know, watching TV and all these things that perhaps is seen as unproductive and other things perhaps, you know, making a cake or I don't know. Deciding whether to go, stay in or go out which is another one, you know, it's like, do I stay until I go? I even now actually, you know, this time, am I going to venture out or not? And I think those kinds of every day seem as mundane and perhaps not creative activities, but there is value in those activities so, she really is my main precedent.

When I think about Kalye's work, I works on many levels and really thinking, what arts practices is? and then revaluing people's lives. So, she worked with people who were workers. I can't remember the exact project but she basically said 'for one hour and what you're doing will be cast as arts' and so, she made great series of photographs around that project but I think it's like saying 'well for me it's this sort of critique of this idea of creativity' and also within architecture, it's really thinking about, the idea of Architecture is this sort of object as this kind of finished thing that the architect makes and then, actually the life of the building carries on much longer than when people move in and you know, the daily maintenance activities of all of that, keeping the space clean or all of those things are things, which kind of keep that image of that particular building or keeping that space going. So, really it challenges that idea of this sort of image of Architecture, you know, this kind of fixed building, this sort of processual building. So, I suppose that's comes from a feminist viewpoint as well but also revalue the idea of creativity. Who's creative and who's the artist and sort of really challenging that, to challenge that hierarchy. So that's for me, that's the sort of feminist position, which I adopted but I suppose, what really interested in my thesis, I talk about this, I just situated knowledge and that actually people, you know, we only have had this little partial knowledge of space or the idea and that it's always building and it's building with other people and you're making those connections with others and it's growing with other people. So that's really informs my approach and sort of being open

to say, well, my particular view of this space, there will be a particular view that I have like, when I walked into the South Bank, had a particular view, all that, but that was really challenged by the people that I've met and those knowledges that they brought so, I think that really critiquing those hierarchies in architecture and our practice.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

I guess in that sense they weren't and that's quite I talked about this in my PhD, that actually in terms of the relationship to kind of other participatory projects so, like Jean Van Heuswyk, people aren't involved in the decision-making. They don't work with me in terms of like, we don't sit down, and I don't ask them what they would like or what they would like to do or, you know, in that sort of sense but on the other hand, the conversations I have with people lead the projects. So, it's a different way of coming at it so, I would say they're very many participants. I talked about them as more like informants in the fact that without them, the project wouldn't happen. Their knowledge and their input influence the way it develops, I'm making work that responds directly to what people tell me in the encounters that I have, but I'm not asking them specifically. What they want or you know, it's not a consultative project in that sense. I'm just being led by what they tell me and so on the kind of ladder of participation, it will be kind of a few runs down from the top if you see what I mean, but at the same time I suppose I'm still the artist and I'm still working with people and I'm still an outsider because I don't believe that I'll ever, I can never become one of, you know, a community so, I'm very aware of this differences but those differences for me is what makes the project. What develops a project because differences to me and people that I work with, also between the different people that I've worked with their different opinions to each other and other things which bring to light different kind of issues within that area that I'm working with them.

So, for me, I don't try and level out those differences or pretend they don't exist or try to somehow make myself equal to others, you know. I'll never be equal, but the same time I realise, I'm aware and I'm conscious of those differences and I'm not trying to not to exacerbate them I suppose in an unethical way. I'm trying to work from an ethical position where I'm open about those differences and I'm also aware that those differences being an outsider coming into place means that sometimes people are more open to talk to you about different things because if you're there all the time, you know. So that's my position. I guess my work is always connected with public spaces or ideas related to public space. So, whether in the public gallery or you know, Tesco's isn't necessarily public but it's a kind of private public space or actually in the kind of public space like in an area of housing so, I'm always interested in how these daily routines in this particular project, interact with the spaces of people's lives so is trying and bring it back to that thinking about the spaces around us, how they affect our lives and how we affect those. So, this kind of idea with ideas of performativity that I'm exploring in my PhD. Really thinking about how our actions within a place produce this, produce it as much as the architecture around it.

In another project, I look at the kind of material. I worked with a market in Slovenia, there is a particular kind of architecture, it was very sort of modernist kind of space, very white, concrete, very hard geometric lines and it replaced to kind of self-made market, and I worked with the traders there and I discovered that they were very unhappy. I worked with them to explore their daily routines. Also, how they changed the space to make it fit, according to their needs but how that space actually still very much determined in how they use that into their daily routine. So, it's a kind of this mixture of social and social actions, the changes they make in the space and how they interact with the materiality of the market. So, for me, the art practice is a way to kind of start to open up discussions around the architecture, the materiality of space, but also the way that architecture gets represented

through sort of digressive operation. Like the way that Architects spoke about it and also the way it was represented in the local tourist guides, the way it won lots of prizes, you know. It was like this very award-winning building and yet, at the same time the people there were very unhappy with it and say that our practice for me became a way to sort of open up those questions around the architecture in a different way.



# APPENDIX D

## Artist House 45

Interviewee: Jonathan Orlek

Orlek is an architectural researcher and practitioner interested in art, architecture, and ethnographic research. His research mainly focuses on artist-led organisations and collective forms of housing.<sup>500</sup> His PhD explored Artist House 45, an initiative led by East Street Arts, an organisation that supports artists in taking control and inciting change through art to improve community life.<sup>501</sup> Currently, he is a lecturer in architecture at Sheffield Hallam University.

Date: 15/05/2021

Artist House 45 is a house located in an area called Beeston in Leeds and it's a back-to-back terrace. For the past kind of five years an artist led organisation called East Street Arts have been managing and kind of programming it and inviting artist to live in the house and engage in the area, it's kind of local residence but also kind of weaving that kind of experiencing residency into an artistic practice in some way. So, there's been a series of quite long-term residencies within the house. I suppose another thing to say, that it was a house owned by the Leeds City Council, it was vacant for many years and East Street Arts kind of struck an agreement, one of the reasons why it can become rented out to social housing is because the house needed repairs and renovation. So, East Street Arts agreed to do those repairs in exchange for having the house for five years on a peppercorn rent, for them to use and the test this model of artist led housing. I suppose the other thing to say it's a kind of pilot project so, it has an experimental quality to it. I've been doing a PhD project that kind of following this house and engaging in a number of different ways, from a number of different kinds of ethnographic positions but also kind of moving closer, collaborating with artists and actually moving into the house myself.

### **What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

So, East Street Arts I suppose, they have provided space for artists for a long time, and they provided kind of studio space and project space, and I think one thing that the organisation noticed was that housing is really important issue and concern for artists. Artists often struggled to kind of move out of student style accommodation which had a kind of knock-on effect on their practice, and it also mean they couldn't put long-term roots down in a particular city and I suppose from their perspective they were keen to recognise that housing was a really important part of an artistic kind of ecology, or it had a knock-on effect on kind of things like studio provision. So, they saw live work and this kind of provision housing by an artist led organisation as a way of supporting their community of artists.

I spoke in a more kind of personal capacity, I was familiar with things like kind of community Land Trust and community led housing, and I was interested in looking at what roles these types of artist led organisations could contribute within the housing sector and I was noticing their approach to things like participatory reprocessed and collective organising or nested enterprises around the

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<sup>500</sup> Sheffield Hallam University, *Staff profile* (2023) <<https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-profiles/jonathan-orlek#firstSection>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

<sup>501</sup> East Street Arts, *What Do We Do?* (2023) <<https://eaststreetarts.org.uk/>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

commons was kind of different to what I have seen within the sector. So, I was interested in how the role of an artist led organisations fitted within alternative practices of housing. I suppose what motivate them is what I was talking about earlier, around provision of housing and its impact on artists. I think that the kind of kick starts the project was a series of funding that Leeds City Council made available for a type of empty homes funding and this this type of funding brought together a whole group of people interested in housing and the reuse of vacant housing.

Although they were successful in this particular funding, that connected them to the council and made the council aware of East Street Arts as an organisation, as an arts organisation interested in housing. I think that kick started the project, I also think the motivation was about moving beyond the kind of art world and actually as an arts organisation engaging in urban issues and the urban environment in which they are located in Leeds and also beyond. I think what links to that is an idea that artist led organisations should contribute to providing housing not only for artists but engaging as a city stakeholder in a much broader capacity. So, I think there is this kind of attention perhaps, as I said, to housing but also the opportunity for artist led organisations like East Street Arts to provide housing not just for artists so, I suppose that's interesting.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

No, it was always going to be 5 years, and I think they are currently negotiating with the council about whether it gets extended or not, but from the start it was a five-year agreement. I think that as a kind of pilot project that was going to be five years, but East Street Arts were interested in how they might develop a longer-term partnership for example with developers by engaging, kind of bringing either collaboration with developers or actually setting themselves up as a registered social housing provider which should be quite interesting. Also, a lot of these things haven't yet been explored thoroughly and actually one of the roles that I was quite excited about to emerge out of the PhD was that, in my capacity as director of Studio Polpo they receive funding for a feasibility work and as part of that, there will be an exploration that I'm hoping to do. It's being kind of stalled by the pandemic but I'm hoping to look at these types of longer-term models for arts led housing. I think, that's kind of be exciting and important is starting to give credit to these hybrid models work that maybe use things like community land trusts which kind of take land out of private speculation and use that as starting foundation for artists processes and practices that have been piloted during Artist House 45.

I think in the short-term artist led practices bring a kind of an energy to an area, but I think there's interesting things happen when knowledge from one residency starts to get carried across into other residencies and so, rather than having this kind of short term like one off kind of residencies they start to connect one residency with the other. I think that's where I see the role of an organisation like East Street Arts becoming really important as an organisation that looks after the social relationships and organisational relationship developed and built up through these residencies and I think ultimately the kind of the long-term responsibility and long-term practice of advice that housing is something that's really important role of the organisation. Also, in terms of practice I think is really important to says that in my research, I found that one thing that's really unique and interesting about artist led organisations is that they saw the running and management of an organisation as an artistic practice, and I think this framing effects the kind of quotidian life of the organisation but it also has potentially bringing the implications for what it means running an artist led house in the long-term.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

I suppose on a pragmatic level I've been commissioned by East Street Arts to write publications about artist led housing so, I think that I'm keen to do is shift away kind of completed a single author thesis

but one thing that I'm keen to do now, is to develop that into a multi offered kind of piece about arts and housing. I think there's opportunities to get a real, rich multi perspective kind of articulation of the project so, that's one thing I'm doing at the moment. I think there are lots of arts organisations that are now looking at housing and I think one of the guest long-term implications on the project is that on the longer-term. I think we will see more artists led organisations managing and programming and building housing.

The community emerges around the different artistic practices that happened in the house, so each artist will bring a different gather, a different kind of community or different community of practice or however you want to frame it. That's how East Street Arts have a big community of artists, collaborators, and organisations. So, I mean that coming back there isn't a kind of coherent community that every art comes in and engage with. I think what's important is that community emerges around different practices of artists, but also some artist living in the house might explicitly articulate their practices that have a community or social associated practice, but others wouldn't, so other artists might come in and undertake a more of, an introspective practice or engage communities in a more kind of bleak form. An example of that might be, an artist called James and Marry came in and did paintings of the everyday life of the area, including things like shop fronts and surrounding areas. I think that they did even though they weren't kind of directly engaging in the community, what they were doing was presenting the area in a slightly different way, so they were positioning the local area or presented in a way that wasn't visible in the local press and things like that. A lot of the artists have engaged in the local newspaper and supported self-organised practices in local social clubs. So, I mean the type of practices is really varies enormously depending on who's living in the house.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

The people living around the house engaged in the project so, it's a mixture of artists and local residents, neighbours, people that run community focused projects, like kind of running social local clubs, people running a local newspaper. There is someone who was from a council initiative called Asset Based community development who was involved in project at certain point. I mean, a real mixture of people who the artist engaged with and supported campaign with, kind of local groups that emerged around particularly local issue like green spaces kind of action group, groups like that. I think when the project first started, there was a stakeholder group, oh no sorry, there was a steering group and so this was a group of artists, and artists in the local area who was running a similar project called Basement Arts project. I can't members actually who, but people wrap it like representing the diversity of interest in the area and the was an initial interview process were involved early decision-making around project when it was first kind of initiated by East Street Arts.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

I don't think it wasn't a cohesive group identity. I think each artist put together a different dynamic. I think, East Street Arts weren't working towards a kind of coherent understanding of the commons, they were bringing together artists to engaging in with different partners, different organisations. There wasn't a long-term coherent trajectory towards self-organisation, although self-organised practices were really important at different moments and important to different artists within the house but now, I don't think there's any cohesive community. Precedents were the Blue House in and Amsterdam by Jeanne Van Heeswijk. I think influenced East Street Arts to set up projects that had multiple residences, all engaging in the local community.

I guess my role is quite interesting because I was doing research, but I was feeding this research back into the project. I was kind of researching a live project as it was unfolding and as I was gaining knowledge about the project as I was able to start feeding this back into East Street Arts in different ways. So, one of the ways that East Street Arts manages, organises and programming the project is through these programme team meetings. One thing I thought, and it was quite interesting is that I was able to start to kind of feed research and knowledge from the project into the organisation and through programming team meetings and I was able to identify issues like... or create interventions within the project, like the creation of handover pack that allows knowledge to be transferred from one residency to another.

So, these are the type of, maybe the more concrete actions that I was taking within the organisation, and they contributed to this kind of embedded approach to research, where I was researching but also feeding research back and influencing the project as it was unfolding. So, and example of this is the handover pack, another example is an organisation event around artist led housing, that I was able to kind of co-constructed the questions for the day, the questions that were important within East Street Arts. I also suppose my ability to undertake residencies and exhibitions. I took a residency within Artist House 45 and an exhibition within another space that East Street Arts managed. I was basically feeding research back into the organisation.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

Different artist came with different practices and some of those were participatory more like explicitly socially engage than others, as I was kind of mentioning earlier, with practices that that changed the kind of view or the perception of the area and presents the area in a different way, but they might not have been explicitly participatory. One of the conclusions from my research, is that practices as artist led housing don't align neatly to participatory models like Sherry Arnstein ladder, actually a lot of this practices might be around the creation, the use of chasing encounters or the creation of objects which hold multiple meanings, and a lot of the artistic practices don't align neatly to models of participatory practices within community led planning or architecture and I think that was quite interesting. I supposed there were particular moments when artists really supported practices of self-organisation, so, and artists called Sophie and Carry came and their practice included working closely with a local working men's social club and I think what was interesting. They identified a self-organised membership organisation, but it was quite different to the ones that often get kind of romanticised within artist.

East Street Arts have two creative directors called John and Karen and the practice in many ways falls on them, in terms of the overall decision-making. I think there's lots of nuances in terms of hierarchies within the organisation, but it's not collectively negotiated organisation, in the sense like no hierarchies. There's definitely two creative, two artistic directors and they ultimately have the final decision and it's led by their interest, but I mean East Street Arts, also has a broader trustee as a charity, that's also another the layer of decision-making and the kind of add into it. In terms of my experience, what I found is that East Street Arts was very receptive to me, introducing the ideas, bringing your ideas to them, feeding my research back into the organisation, so certainly they listen to research and the reflective experience of artists. I think the organisation is really effective at continually reflecting and developing a critical reflective practice and it was within that context, within that openness for this type of work that I was able to inform the project.

# APPENDIX E

## Tei Community Centre

Interviewee: Cristi Borcan

Borcan is an architect, urban practitioner, and founder of Studio Basar an architectural studio based in Bucharest. Studio Basar initiate projects that take action to reappropriate public spaces in the city through temporary and permanent interventions that integrate research, participation, co-production, co-design, and live education into its action.<sup>502</sup>

Date: 28/04/2021

### **What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

Civic group in Bucharest are quite a new thing in the civic life of the city. They started to appear let say like in 2009, 2010, so it's quite a recent phenomenon and it was a phenomenon that started, we can call it now urban movement in a way. So, it started like a reaction to the, let say, this engagement of the public authorities regarding the public space in the city. I mean, the public space all around the world it's under constant pressure and through privatisation and commercialization, centralization, I don't know, of different occupations and this phenomenon are much more present in the post socialist environment because after the 1989 revolution the state, in the communist time it was a very powerful state, it was actually an autocratic state and it controlled everything but after the revolution, you know, in the sense the state was very absent and everything started to be privatise and commercialised also the public space.

So, the civic groups started like a reaction to this absence of state in the public sphere let's say, and as a reaction to this present phenomenon and the individualization of life these groups of people, a group of neighbours started to protest against this privatisations and commercialisation so, they started to protest against that and then, after several years some of these groups started also to be not just reactive but also proactive, to propose things to the authorities. First of course they started as a protest movement, they organised protests in the streets, petitions, and things like that. After a while I think they became crucial actors in in the city life because now the local authorities, local governments are very, you know, very careful of what they do with the different kind of project.

They ask these groups different things, so in a way they became actors in the public life. It's not a widespread phenomenon I mean, if you imagine, in Bucharest there are like 25 or 40 of this active group so, it's not that much but for the life of the city this it is a very interesting phenomenon, and it's also very interesting for this other activist groups like NGOs or I don't know, anthropologist, architects this kind of professional activists, most of these groups, the members of these groups are not activists there are like young moms, pensioners, elderly people. So, they are just neighbours from an area that started to quarrel around an urban issue. So, the story of this civic groups, another thing, an important thing that I should mention is that they were helped to organised by an NGO called Resource Centre for Public Participation so, with the help of this NGO they started to grow, and this is this also

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<sup>502</sup> Studio Basar, *Profile* (2023) <[http://www.studiobasar.ro/?page\\_id=3&lang=en](http://www.studiobasar.ro/?page_id=3&lang=en)> [accessed 6 July 2023].

important because is part of their history. So, one of these groups is Lacultei, is called, it's a civic group of neighbours from a typical, let's say, neighbourhood in Bucharest.

It's a socialist built neighbourhood, it's quite close to the city centre so it's not very far and in the middle of this neighbourhood there is a very beautiful park, Circus Park it's called. Circus because in one of the corners of the park, just to lay the public circus. So, they started to gather around this issue of this beautiful park that started to be neglected by the authorities, and one of the important events that happened in the beginning of this group, let's say in 2011, 2012 the event was in a very big park like 11,000 square metres so, a huge part of this park was given to the to the circus. It was a very strange situation because the menagerie, I think is called also in English, the menagerie is the part from the circus where the animals are kept. In the meantime, in Romania is not allowed to have circuses with animals so it's a good thing, but back in 2012, the circus had lots of animals and part of the building reprocessed it's called the process, it means it was given back to the former owners, something like that.

Anyway, a part of the park was given to the circus, and they put their animals in this area so, the people were, of course, not glad about it, not happy about it, because again 11,000 square metres of the park was given to the circus. So, the group of course started to petition to the City Hall, they started to organise protests and things like that. This was a very important step for this group, for the history of the group. So, they were focused mainly around the issue of this park, the Circus Park, but of course they also had different actions regarding the state of the buildings in the neighbourhood, the state of other public spaces and I also want to mention that many of these groups, I think the majority of these groups are focused on spatial issues, issues concerning space, public space and to go back to the second part of the question, what were the issues of this project right? So, in 2015, we organised, I mean as an architectural studio, Studio Basar, me and Alex, we had a project to do something, a different kind of project and we had a small budget to do something with this group. Together with them, we build an infrastructure, they didn't have a place to gather together, and they always met in a cafe or someone's apartment.

In the middle of the park was a kind of meeting place and together with them, we built a small-scale temporary infrastructure with, you know, like a table and a bench around it. The group use this infrastructure to gather for a year and then, the structure is still there, in the middle of the park but after a year there was this opportunity to apply to a private fund to build this community centre and the community centre was actually, not invented by us architects, you know, like one idea that came from a simple discussion between us. No, it was before that the group organise in the community, in the larger community they organised this meeting in the format of a cafe meeting or something like that and one of the topics that emerged out of this these discussions along the community was that they needed a space, the space was very important for them. To have a space of their own, as I told you the meetings were held in cafes or apartments, so it was a need for this group. Then came this opportunity to apply to this fund, we applied to this fund and the money was not very much, it wasn't a very big sum of money.

We made a partnership, let's say with the administrators of the park, it's a public authority and it's interesting that the centre, which is actually, you saw on the website, in the pictures. It's actually a shipping container so, is very small as an urban equipment is very small, like 14 square metres or something but it's important that is the first community centre, that was built by a civic group in Bucharest so, in this sense it was you know like pioneer project. Another important aspect is that it was placed in the area of the park that I told you, that was supposed to be given to the circus and an area of the part that people fought for it, so it's also very metaphorical thing for the group. We applied

for this fund, we got the grant and then we just build the shipping container, not build the shipping container, but just placed it in this area of the park.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

This interview I think, is in a very interesting situation regarding timing. So, we thought of this project, of course it's a shipping container it has no foundation. It's just placed on top of an asphalt alley because you are not allowed to build in public parks. You need to have special permission, anyway, it's not allowed, or it is very difficult. So, it was meant to be a temporary project. I mean of course when you do this kind of project you struggle to get a funds, to have some activities there everything is going well and everybody thinks ok, this will be here for the next 10, 20 years and of course, this is what everyone want to happen with this place, but we knew for the start that it was going to be temporary. We had the permission for this construction, let's say construction even though it isn't a construction is just this container. We had the permission for 3 years and then two months ago we were in the middle of renewing the permit. I mean because of the Covid situation everything stopped from March 2020 and you know, with these restrictions we are not allowed to organise events, even if they are in public parks, so everything stopped and we got 2 weeks ago, it was a paper placed on the container from the police, that said we should evict the park, that we should clear the container. They said in 72 hours or something, because it was not used, and it was full of graffiti and there was a bench attached to it that fell so it wasn't in a good shape.

Again, for one year nothing happened there, and we are now in the process of moving it. It's a good question if it is a temporary or not temporary project, but I think it's temporary because also these communities are in a way temporary. I mean, of course people are staying in these apartments for like 10-20 years but their involvement in civic actions, I think it happen like in a curve, they're involved for 2-3 years and then, what I want to say that it's very hard to be civic engaged for a long time. It's very hard and this civic group now and also because of the Covid situation, I think they kind of slow down a little bit and they didn't use the Centre for 1 year and we decided together with them, that maybe it's better for now to just give it to some other entity or NGO group, so the project will end in a couple of weeks.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

There are two possible answers for this question so, of course as I told you before we invested a lot of energy, money, and resources. Different kind of resource for the project and of course it's very hard to let go. So, we thought of this project, in the first phase of the project we thought maybe we will be, me and Alex as architects/activists let's say we will be involved, for like 1-2 to maybe 3 years and then, the community will take over, they will take ownership and they will do different things but, I told you before that, I started to realise that there are times in the life of this group or community, they just need some time to think about things and not to be so active and this time is now happening with this group. So, the future of the project, the container will go to a different location for a group of artists that are now starting a project, and we, me and Alex will be somehow involved with this project.

The other part of the answer is what happened with this group, because they had this space and now, they don't have any space. I think it was very important for them that they had this space, I think it changed a lot the dynamics within the group. They became much more visible and they for the

authorities of course, they had a space but also for the community because the container, the centre was in the middle of the park. Of course, not everybody has Facebook because a lot of these groups, also I want to say this, a lot of these groups use social media and in Romania, Facebook is very popular, so they use this is online tool and I think one of the factors it was very important for the organisation of this group is also Facebook.

In 2009- 2010 it was quite new so, it was important for this group. To get back to the to the subject, so yes, this group became very visible for the community and actually for some other people who just didn't know of this group before, but they saw the centre and they came to them, and they became part of the group. So, it was very important for the dynamic of the group, and I think this will have reverberation for the next years of the dynamic of the group. So, even if the centre, the container will not be there influenced a lot to this group and some other groups in Bucharest and this is important, it was a temporary project for 3-4 years but a lot of other groups in Bucharest were inspired by this project and they want to start to do, to also have their own space. With some of these groups, I'm in contact and I'm also part of one of these civic groups in my neighbourhood, so 2 or maybe 3 of these groups I'm in a very close contact and maybe 1 year or so, we want to have a space for us but again, we learnt a lot from the project, what to do and not to do.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

With this group, I'm not a member of this group but I know them that quite well, so I told you the group started as a reaction to the state that this public park was in. It wasn't in a bad shape. So, I think the first members were women in their 50s and that were using the park on a daily basis. What was important for the dynamic of this group is that they have even teenager members in the group, people with different jobs, different let's say level of education, so it was very mixed, and this was one of the successes of this groups, because there were groups in Bucharest that they started to be very closed, and they didn't evolve. Maybe is not part of the question, but what is also important with this group is that the most active members of this group are women. It is very important because, I'm not specialist in feminist studies and I don't want to say something wrong, but I think many of these women have a different relationship with the city. It's more about care, care about the city, how they organise things, for women Let's say is natural to be part of this collectives, it's very interesting, so the most active members for this group Lacultei are women.

There isn't any boss, director, there is not a leader. I mean with this group there is an informal leader, a person that led was maybe the person that started the group, or it was part of the initial members and usually is a woman and her name is Sylvia, and I think she's a person that is a non-conflictual, that's very important and she had time. I think she works in a part time job or she's a pensioner or anyway, she has more time than others and she's nonconflictual. The main method of communication was Facebook and is still Facebook for sure. I mean they have a Facebook page, Facebook groups, messaging, this kind of tools. That's how they communicate between them and that's how they communicate also to the larger community and to authorities, because when they post something, they tag the mayor, the City Hall usually is very visible, but they also communicate with other neighbours by physical interaction, of course not in the pandemic but before the pandemic.

If they wanted to organise an event for instance or a protest first, they post something on Facebook but then they also used this offline, I mean offline, the real life. They organise with flyers, and they talk to people in the park because this is a neighbourhood park, so people that are using the park, most of them are from the area, so they know each other. Besides Facebook they use real life communication and another thing they regularly organised community meetings. Before the



pandemic they organised public café, community cafes and there were around 30 to 50 or even 60 people at these meetings so, that was quite important for them to have these meetings because in these meetings they have this format, they organised like 5 tables with different subjects, and they changed the tables, and they try to learn from the community what are their needs.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

I mentioned in the beginning that these groups were helped by a professional NGO, Resource Centre for Public Participation and I think they were a key actors in development of this civic movement because you know, we as architects, we don't have the skills of organising people or we don't have the skill of talking to people. We tend to believe that we know everything from our discipline and that everything. We learnt a lot from this from this NGO and how they organise different events or interactions, so I think one of the main key issues here is that you have to talk to people. Ok, Facebook is very good tool because you can reach a lot of people and it's very dangerous and of course a lot of people say a lot of things on Facebook that is not truth and there are also fake accounts and things like that. But I think, one of the key issues for this group or for other groups in Bucharest was that they started to talk to people on the street, in the park actually. I think this is very important to just talk to people, and for us architects were important that we don't come up with answers and solutions. I told you that, we are used to do that, we know how to do that but for us it was a challenging to listen to people and this is very hard to do, of course, to listen to and have the right questions is it really important. In a way with this project and other projects we kind of, I'm talking now from the position of an architect, we kind of changed our way of practice because we started to not give answers and solutions, but in the beginning to just listen to people and then together with them to have a solution. The idea came up from a very contextual situation. So, we were not allowed to build in the park of course, we were only allowed to place an object, they said from the city council so, we could place something like a temporary material that can be taken out very quickly and we were allowed to place it onto the asphalt alley not on the green space of course. So, we thought of doing maybe some wooden structure but then with wood is very complicated because you have to protected it from the sun, from the rain and everything, so the container was the most logical thing to do and of course we had this architectural aesthetic and references from other projects. So, we were very inspired by the practice of Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcu because they also use these containers, but there are also some other practices in Europe that used containers. Containers, it's very easy to transport and it's very easy to take it out from the place, it has a very strong structure this is important in the Romanian context because in Bucharest, we have earthquakes. It's an earthquake city, so everything you do has to be very well structured, so the container, of course is a container shipping container and it has a very strong structure.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

This is a crucial question, I kind of gave some parts of this answer before. With this project and also with other projects, we kind of change our way of doing architecture and the style that we started to get involved, a lot of this kind of participation processes and we started not to give just answers but first to listen. So, participation is very important in the built environment. Participation was all along the process from the start, from the beginning to the end of the project. The idea of a community centre wasn't ours; it was a need that this group identified in the larger community so, it was a

participatory process because they organised this café meetings and events, and they asked people what they need in their neighbourhood.

The community centre was one of the things people need it in the neighbourhood, so this was the beginning. Then where to do it, this was also a participatory step. We gathered together, we as architects, some members of the NGO Centre for Public Resources and some community members, altogether and also with the administration of the park, together we decided where to put it. So again, this was a participatory step, after we identified the need, we identified the place and together we applied for the funds. This is also interesting because usually as an architect, or as a NGO you applied for funds but for this project we applied together, so there was a jury and we were together with the members of the group presenting the project to the jury. So again, participatory step and then the design of container for the centre and again it was a participatory process. We organised, I think two meetings where we decided what materials we can use, where the openings of this container should be, how many openings, how large, things like that and then and then we transform this, you know, the ideas into a technical project. So the design was also participatory and then after the inauguration of the centre most of the activities that were organised there had a bigger or smaller participation part for instance if we organised there, let's say an exhibition, it was organised with some members of the community, if the community wanted to organise a protest around the centre or around that area, we as architects helped them for the technical part and for the urbanistic part let's say. So, everything was done in participation and much more interesting in collaboration.

Before this project we worked with them for this small infrastructure. It was a small infrastructure that we built in the in the park together with them, so in a way we knew each other and this is very important in a community project because otherwise you're just a technocrat let's say, that you stay in another part of the town or in another country and of course people it has to be trust between you, as an architect and the community you want to work with. So, we had a history together with this group, so it was not a project that started from a blank slate. It was important that they knew us, we knew them, it was a like a relationship.

# APPENDIX F

## City School 1

Interviewee: **Alex Axinte**

Axinte is an architect, urban practitioner, and founder of Studio Basar an architectural studio based in Bucharest. Studio Basar initiate projects that take action to reappropriate public spaces in the city through temporary and permanent interventions that integrate research, participation, co-production, co-design, and live education into its action.<sup>503</sup> Currently he is a doctoral research candidate in architecture at the University of Sheffield.

Date: 16/07/2021

Well, it was more like, you know progressing and doing all this kind of let's say workshops in the public space, so since even I think the 2011, no, more than, ten years ago we started to be invited to do some... at the beginning it was called art in public space, you know, to do some sort of installations there were a lot of galleries who are going outside of the gallery space. I'm sure this phenomenon started in the west, even in the 70s or 80s but in Romania it came quite late but around 2000 or 2010. It was like a awakening especially from the arts field, that public space is important, so there were artist invited, performers, all this kind of professionals and they were also approaching some of the architects. In that sense we started like this, so we kind of encounter public space through the gallery space and of course we were trying to go towards more like a combination between an installation but some sort of public furniture, some kind of combination of that. It was not what an artist does, but it was more like a critique with sculptures. There were like benches, like structures, all this kind of structure that we were trying to comment, improve, add to the public space because we were coming from the architecture background and then this evolved.

There were like a student festival, and we were invited, and usually the invitation was like 'if you can come and do something with the public space' it was not very clear. Some of them had a team, some of them were more loose and slowly. This kind of interventions were from wood or from an easy to assemble material and I think after the second or the third one, we started to be more involved in the production because before we were making some drawings, brainstorming and making models and then somebody would produce them and then it became more attractive because of the places where we were working, you know it was very informal because we didn't really have the authorization to do it and every time was kind of bit foggy, on how to make things in the public space, and then of course, we had some sort of team around this project so, we were two people me and my colleague Cristi but later we had a lot of young architects or students who were doing volunteering work or short time collaborations with us and then this shifted bit towards more like a teamwork and hands on kind of work. So, we started to work ourselves on that project and to have solutions to start building it, to buy tools. We were asking for longer periods of time to do the work before the inauguration of the festival. Usually this happened on site so and this became a bit of what later was called kind of 'public space workshop'. So, when we were invited and after couple of years of doing this kind of stuff we're saying 'yes, we want to do a workshop with few students or design in the city' and we will have one week or ten days or two weeks of very intensive work.

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<sup>503</sup> Studio Basar, *Profile* (2023) <[http://www.studiobasar.ro/?page\\_id=3&lang=en](http://www.studiobasar.ro/?page_id=3&lang=en)> [accessed 6 July 2023].

We were on the site and we had no idea what to do, we discussed the problem and depending on, what the festival was like or what type the public space was we had a budget and then we would build something, and it gets a bit out of the artistic type of intervention towards a more pedagogical and place making type, you know, it was full of place-making projects in Romania around 2015 more or less. So, this became repetitive and then we kind of developed a method. We knew very well what to do, we had a timeline and the only thing that was modifying was the type of problem let's say, and we were travelling around the country outside of Romania and this was a very interesting part, because we were travelling to very different contexts like Germany or Switzerland to Bulgaria or Moldova in the former Soviet Union and the differences were very big, but the method was the same so, we were trying to create a method. Another thing was that we tried to work with..., to not to get completely lost, to work with typologies, for example we had a project in Georgia and it's on the other side of the black sea close to Iran and all this kind of places was an amazing place to work. There was an underground passage that you could choose and then said 'ok let's take the underground passage as a typology' and the same in Berlin they have underground passages, so let's try to work with typologies as a method and then the context was like a food recipe, for example like to change the type sugar that you add but you know it's sugar, so this evolved for several years and then it kind of reached a saturation point where we were repeating and repeating this kind of stuff and we had also, our personal life going on and we were travelling a lot and this became a bit hard to do. So, we wanted to say, 'why don't we do it on our street?' because this was a very blank spot in Bucharest, so we were doing all this kind of stuff but not in Bucharest. So, we kind of switched, also the studio was switching instead of waiting for an invitation kind of approach to creating opportunities.

We started with a with formal NGO, we started to apply for funds, so before we were just invitee. We created complex project, but it was based on invitations but then after a while we said 'ok, let's ground ourselves in our own city', let's settle down a bit and create opportunities and not to wait for somebody to invite us and that's how City School Project appeared. So, we applied for a CSR fund which is a Corporate Social Responsibility type of funds which I'm aware that in the UK is more developed and also they carry some risks because you know, companies can impose things, but this one was a very safe we thought, because it was run by Community Foundation who organised the competition with a jury and then everything was filtered for this Community Foundation so, the sponsor, all the company had no claims or just to say something about what we do there or put their banners and all this kind of stuff, it was very well run by this Community Foundation. So, we apply for this CSR fund and we kind of developed a programme based on these 10 years of experience in doing workshops, so we said 'what if we organised six months of public space making workshops with students and then only a two-week project' so it was more complex in the sense that this also came from previous experience.

We realise that in a very short time you have not really too much time to engage with the communities, you know, we used the space as typology as I said, underground passages, public parks or public fountain but there were also typologies of users, we didn't really have time to engage with real users or specific users because it was too short or sometimes, like in Moldova we had every summer two weeks workshop so we kind of started to have some sort of relationship there and then we realised how valuable this was, this kind of relation because the work and the structures we were producing were adopted differently by the community so we said 'hey let's make a longer type' you know, based on previous experience but focus more on partners than in the space itself. So, we applied for this fund, and we had a main partner which was the public library. So, these were the two main ingredients of the project, the previous place making workshops and the library which we encountered by chance in a previous project and that we had an intervention, a short time intervention but then we realised they carry tremendous potential because they were network in the context of the privatisation of public space and so on. Public libraries are something that survived, they were an

asset, they have spaces, they are all around the city especially in collective housing neighbourhoods where no other or not too many other public spaces are left but they have a problem with all these kind of things you know, they're under finance austerity measures and we, on the other hand had methods, experience and network of people and a lot of skills but we didn't have a space to ground ourselves so it was like a meeting of two needs.

This was the first steps, we applied for this fund and we got the grant and we selected students without being partners with any school so, one of the tutors and the authors of the first draft for the first application was teaching in the school and he invited some of his students, so we had a group of students which were invited to work in a library, not very far away from the school in a different neighbourhood. We got the keys from a library which was closed down and it was used as a storage space, but the manager said 'hey if you want to work here, you can have the keys' and do research on libraries and collective housing and how libraries in collecting housing work together. So, this was the plan and then we also had tutors from the sociology department working with us and we started to not just making a design or proposing some sort of design but also making interviews and focus groups meetings. We also realised we don't always have to run after people to make research, but to open the library as an alternative space to organise some events and ask people to join these events and then make research.

We got approval to open the library but not as a library, because it was not officially open so, we did an exhibition with projections, workshop for kids all these kind of things and in the mean time we were trying to do the research about how the neighbourhood's library should be, this kind of stuff and then slowly this raised a lot of interest among inhabitants because they missed the library which was closed but also within the library management, which kind of saw an opportunity so they said 'hey we're going to make some administrative step and we will reopen it' and we made some sort of changes in the budget and tried to capture some other resources to construct some of the designs that students proposed based on participation and research so, this was a plan to reopen the library we said 'this is our classroom and we work in it' but then, you know out of the money of the exhibition, out of different kind of resources, with volunteers working all this kind of stuff, we tried to build some furniture inside the library and also design bookshelves, you know to put all the books so, after one semester the library was reopened officially and this was the edition one.

**What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

I think this kind of reflected the general context, we are speaking about the public library which is a typology but it's very different from France to UK, to forward Soviet Union, to South America, you know, in Romania public libraries are survival of a socialist infrastructure. The socialist state built a lot of schools, a lot of this kind of education facilities and the libraries were together with that, you know, to elevate and empower civically the population. This kind of movement of free access to knowledge and all this kind of stuff. On the other hand, everything was controlled, you know, there was a lot of censorship. You couldn't read certain books and it was also mean of alignment, empowerment, you know, in the values of socialist but it was also a mean of control and censorship and so on.

Then after 1989 somehow miraculously some of these spaces survived, they were considered communist you know, they lost about 30% of their spaces after 1990 but somehow, they were under the big radars. They depend on the City Hall and not on the government so, they have some small spaces, the best places were taking off, you know, to build restaurants and stores, but the small ones could survive. So, they managed to survive and after 30 years in the context of completely dismantling the public infrastructure to radically privatise. There are certain groups of population like elderly people, people from peripheral neighbourhoods they have no place to go, to have free access to

knowledge, to have free classes or something, because in the libraries is not only where you borrow books. So, they became valued again because of the lack of other alternatives. In the meantime, they are refreshing themselves with new books, there were some visionary managers, but they didn't really have big resources to do, to build resources or to do some extraordinary stuff. So, this was one of the issues. The lack of alternative spaces in the neighbourhood made the inhabitants return again to libraries and to kind of re discover them.

In general, public space or physical public spaces is under threat, it's enclosed, it's fragmented, it's privatises so, there is no spaces left for meeting, socialising, for kids to play, all that kind of stuff. When we started, we asked propositional questions about making space, about open space, and public furniture to reopen the library but also to extend it outside. So, this was very attractive to the inhabitants and to the library users to have some sort of physical infrastructure back in public use. Also another issue was there were some certain categories which are completely ignored by public policies like elderly, their sons and daughters migrated, their nephews did not come back and they're just most standing around this blocks of flats, some of them doing gardening, if they have a garden, some just sitting on benches and this is most of the things that is happening so, when suddenly somebody came in with a project like that and try to not only do research but to improve the spatial situation they are very willing to participate.

On the other hand, there was this kind of collective... so the libraries were at the ground floor over collective housing apartments so, they are in the middle of the collective housing neighbourhood and this was one of the advantage because you they are in the heart of the community but also this is one of the weakest point because we had to negotiate the space, the access to all this kind of stuff collectively and this brought not only collaboration and solidarity but also conflict. So, for example in the end the library got closed after several years and after we finished the project because they couldn't agree on some stuff. So, the library didn't have a toilet, at the beginning it was without toilet and under the new regulations they should have a toilet functioning so, they asked to the flat's residents to connect their water source and they didn't want to because they said they were a public institution and they need to pay for the whole repairment of the of the pipes in the block and they said 'yeah, we're public institution but we are very poor, we don't have money to do nothing' so it was like 'no, you are from the City Hall' so it was this kind of conflict that we didn't manage to solve after all, you know the library replaced the windows, made it everything really nice but they couldn't really solve the pipes issue which is in a very metaphorical conflict between institutional kind of approach and residents and their organisation, who always see the state as a threat or as an opportunity to something take from the state. They were saying like 'it's not your money so you have to agree to replace all the pipes.'

So, the collective housing situation was a very good advantage for the project, to be in the middle of the community, to reach real issues on the ground, to have partners there, to have this kind of real input but on the other hand, it also brought conflict and this also has to be put in perspective, people are coming from, you know, during socialist in Romania, it was claimed as socialist but it was a dictatorship especially in the 80s so, all the socialist associated values were abused, top down abuse by the propaganda and by the everyday life so, when you speak about solidarity, collective, commons, all these words we can't really use or also practice. Everybody wants to be for himself or herself to be protected from the potential abuse of the totalitarian state that remained in the in the collective memory. This was also helped by a very strong anti-communist political narrative which is the hegemonically political discourse after 1990 in Romania so, everything which is mainstream politics should be anti-communist even now, after 30 years and this was helping a very, you know, radical neo liberal policies and approaches.

In this equation libraries are kind of not really from this new world of entrepreneurship, everybody for himself, it's still an infrastructure which is paid from our money, it's a relic, but some people, real users like for example parents who have no other possibilities to take their kids to a paid course or something like that or even, let's say, people who access internet to look for a job, this kind of persons really appreciated it. So, another key issue was this kind of conflicts of proximity and another one was this inherited distrust on collective values and volunteer work. In Romania before 1990s there was an activity called compulsory volunteer work, that you should go out from your flat and take care of the green spaces near your flat so, when you were engaging compulsory volunteer work you hate everything. This was very difficult for us to manage because you enter in this kind of politics dialectics and so on. I mean we didn't know, at the beginning was just to speak about a specific situation that was inked with the space. So, we said 'forget politics state, volunteer, whatever. We need to make a bench here, what do you think? do we need to make a bench, or do we need to make a table' is this. You know, very basic stuff and link it with spaces or transforming spaces, like the library interior or the spaces around the library and this is what we did in the second edition. In the second year we had a new grant this time without making a competition so, we were just invited and transformed the exterior of the library and another space nearby, outside the library. So, again through a participative process and this time the university was formally involved so, this was a change.

Our motivation came, as I told you from a line of trying to deal with public space in a context where public spaces were disappearing. The Romanian context, which was privatise either from corporate interests or from individual interests so, public space was going extinct but not only public spaces, also public domain but public spaces a space for meeting, for social interaction, even for pedagogical approach, this kind of things. So, this came from this line of working with public space and at the same time reflecting, criticising, emphasising and we were becoming more and more interested in producing events on public spaces or tools for others to engage.

The second motivation I think was, of course participation that goes hand in hand with making public space. The main way of doing this kind of interventions was top down either the municipality or architects deciding what and how to do it without users being involved so, we try to discover because we didn't know how this would work, you know, participation can't be teach, to do it you have to understand what's your context, of course there is some sort of guidelines that can help you but you have to do it with and train yourself and also participants. Romania are very different from the UK, people aren't used to participate, they don't know how, or they just don't want to, so we had also this kind of reaction people saying 'why do you ask us? You are the architect, do your job' 'yeah, but you are going to use then, maybe I'm doing it wrong' So, it's kind of a very long and slow process of learning how to do things from both sides and to be accustomed to ask questions or to be asked questions. It's a long process but participation in public space go hand in hand.

The other motivation was education, as I said doing those workshops with students but without being in school, without having to mark them. We discovered it was a very fruitful experience and not only for students but also for us, as practitioners because we were kind of discovering things together, you know, going on the workshop like we have no idea what to do and then 'ok, we are ten people, we have these resources, we have this amount of time, we have this situation, you know, space plus users what should we do?' then this became an effervescent kind of situation and it was not an artificial situation like in the school we had to build it, we have to spend money, we had problems in many of these installations and we had to deal with it. It was like a big adventure, you know, sometimes was quite naïve, like architects and students playing in the public space doing this kind of stuff but there were also moments of revelation, you know, there were situations that you could understand in years of experiences and in a very condensed way. It was a very implicit way of learning, we didn't have lectures at the end of the day, we were just working and resolving situations, doing basic stuff and then we realised when we discussed about it, we understood that everybody had something to say

and learn from it and especially when you have a context like, I don't know a former Soviet Union we had a very small situation to deal with and we were doing our stuff there and we kind of recorded everything that was going on, you know being on site for 12 hours, we understood the site, the users were there reading books stuff like that so, it was a very embedded understanding of what was going on and then of course our solution was more well implemented in that context.

Our motivation was to take the students out of the school as we didn't have the experience to do this in our own education, I did the school in Bucharest and then I was teaching for another three years and I was a bit frustrated by this kind of exercises, artificial kind of abstract places, abstract people, abstract situation and then also the discussions in the field were abstract, everything was abstract and I think in parallel we had this workshops where everything was more grounded, the feedback was not from the teachers but from the users, the problems were real, you know, just to mention, we're going to make a bench but people had different problems so, what do you do in this situation? what is the ethical approach to deal with? and then this became much more fruitful, authentic and useful for everyone involved so, we said 'we need to create more situation of learning like this in the Romanian context.' In our case, it was very difficult to speak about Live Projects, this kind of thing it was considered an approach for summer schools but not in real architecture education. So, in the second year through another tutor that joined us, a tutor that was involved in the workshops which was also teaching in the school and after seeing the results of the first edition we persuaded some departments in the school to recognise the students as their practice, you know like one credit, not like Live Projects that they have more credits but they were 'ok you do your practice stuff, together with these partners in the library. Ok it's fine' because it wasn't a school programme, we're kind of independent from the school and we got the money from the CSR fund and then we have partners in the community and in the library and so on. We created a project with all these partners filling in, but it wasn't run by one official partner.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

In the beginning no, in the first edition we said, 'ok we'll do some sort of real-life research project.' We went there, we worked on the ground, but we also used the space as a classroom and so on, then we realised the fantastic potential of the space and the students. During my MA studies I did some interviews with some participants and that was what triggered them and track them after a few weeks, the idea they could do very interesting work in their street. This space was very familiar to all of us, I mean we live there, we were born there, it's not something you go in the countryside or village and do research or anthropological studies or even place-making this was here. Staying longer you kind of reach deeper layers of meaning that have potential for transformation so, we understood that if you have like few months, let's say one semester it's a much better project, the product or the intervention obtained is much more meaningful than two weeks or one month project. I would say at least three months if not one semester or half of the semester.

The other point was, there were students from different schools. So, the teams, of course they were smaller team but the majority was architecture students but there were sociology students, from the sociological department of a different school and also landscape design students there were just a few, but still they were there, and they came with different kind of knowledge and approaches and with different methods of course. The tutors were from different schools but the students when they started to not do their research they were going in teams on their own, we were not, you know, guiding them on the field or something like that. So, there were two sociologists and three architects working in a team and they were like 'and now what we are going to do?' and then they were 'we are going to ask people questions, you're the sociologist you have to do it' and then 'no, no, we all have to do it' so they can of learnt from each other without too much mediation, but to be honest I think we kind of, I



mean this is one of the lessons, interdisciplinarity it doesn't just happen 'ok we put one architect, one sociologist and one landscaper in the room and then, they go out with a completely customized methods.' We had to make it happen and make it work because our project was with a financing, with a calendar, with a budget and we had to produce some sort of structure at the end of the day.

It wasn't open, like we do research and if we do something is fine and if we don't, we don't do it and it's also fine. No, we had this pressure of having to report to deliver and so on so, by the end of the day we had to build something. So, architecture students took the pencil and start to draw and then all these other categories were in second place, you know, the kind of knowledge and approach to the project so, they kind of became leaders of the project after a while. I think this comes from the way the project was financed because in Sheffield for instance, when you have one of the main partners like university, you don't have to deliver anything, you have to go there and see what the need is there and then design an output for the community's need and then at end it's just a performance. I mean, it shouldn't be too much pressure on the final product, of course there should be some sort of installation, you know, from one point is an advantage and from another point it's a disadvantage because, you know, it part of the school's programme, it has marks, it has a structures, it takes knowledge out from the ground and puts it back in the school so, it has a different approach if you what I mean.

Basically, we rolled application, our practice Studio Basar was the initiator, we kind of designed the structure of the project, you know, what were the phases, who were the tutors, what tutors were doing, how the participants will get in, what the product is going to be, what is the relation with the partner. So, we kind of designed the whole thing and this was also in all the editions or phases. The only difference maybe became when, after the first edition we invited some of the participants to become tutors and all the lessons learnt we discussed and we kind of took forward into the next design. So, it was an interactive project. We didn't just run it as Studio Basar, in the second edition was more the group of designers was enlarged, not just us two but also all the other tutors and for the third edition there were a bit of research done, with participants, with partners I did some interviews which you never have time and resources to do it in this kind of project but I did it, because it was a research I was developing for my MA and this was also incorporated for the third edition. To answer the question, we were the initiators, runners in all this accountant work, reporting on stuff, it was on us, and I was the coordinator of both phases.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

This is a sad story, because I used to speak on future term about this, but I think after a while, maybe it's done. We hadn't planned a third edition so, in the first edition we did the inside of the library, in second edition we did the outside and in the third addition we planned to do the garden. We had like a pilot workshop during one of the previous editions and we realised we were asking about benches, but people were speaking about gardens, and we said like 'this is important for them' so, we should plan a bigger project, let's say a one semester event just for the garden. We had all the authorisation and everything, but we didn't have the money to do it. We failed five times to get the application, I don't know why, I think because we had a very small numbers of beneficiaries, you know, it was those kinds of applications who were looking for big number of people involved and more people who will be impacted by the project and doing a small garden was not a big thing. Then it was all these failures and on top of that other stuff happened. I left for the PhD; my practice is in a kind of exit mode. So, there wasn't someone to take back the lead and also maybe because there were too many leaders in

the project and the others didn't feel empowered enough to say, 'we are going to do the next City School Edition' it was more like, you know, ownership over them or a physical ownership of something.

So, it was Studio Basar project or more Alex's project because I was a coordinator, and it didn't have a future next edition. We realize that 'but then you applied for funds or CSR every edition and so on' maybe this should become more, how could I say... institutionally supported, so one or two or three educational institutions should agree on that and perhaps take this as part of their school programme. It's more like, it has to have a life of its own, but it didn't happen because... I don't know, the institutional education in Romania wasn't interested in at all. Some people consider that this isn't what students should be doing, they should do, you know, formal projects, and this is not preparing them for the working market and also why should they be trained as an architect like that, maybe it's a waste of time.

For now, this is how I see and in future either one institution or people from different institutions joining forces and make this as part of the school programme. Maybe it could be hosted by one institution, but they shouldn't apply for funds, you know, they are paid by their salaries in the school, and they should find partners on the ground to make this methodology work. A bit more what Carolyn is doing with Live Projects and Live Works. I mean we were a bit contextualised version of Live Projects, we learnt and read a lot before coming to Sheffield but I started to understand what they're doing after coming to Sheffield, so after this project I discovered that our difference is this long-term, it's one semester and it's interdisciplinary. They had 24, 15 people and cases involved, and we focused only in one project. So, this is one possible future that somebody from the university could create.

In this case the community wasn't organised, so there are projects, other projects that we worked with a partner that wasn't the library or neighbours but a civic group, which is an organized group so, they have some interest, they have goals, they have resources, they have, you know, some sort of practice or organisation already and they can be empowered to your project and then they can continue with it. It happened but not in this project, for example in civic workshops there were some civic groups participating in this workshop, some of them took place in the TEI Community Centre and then one of these civic groups continued and became a really strong civic group because they had an interest in that. Also, maybe another thing is that when you are too focused on space, you know place-making and spatial intervention and then the only way that the community is crystallising is to manage and take care of the space and this happened in the library, in the outdoor spaces but this is not an explicit way of being together, you know, people aren't meeting there and say, 'we are now the carers on this space.' There are some things that happened that kind of put the interviews in evidence, you know, people who are usually there didn't collaborate or didn't have any interaction with their neighbours and the library or the administration because they had a problem, for example a bench which became old they have to paint it or some people use it and destroys so, you have to guard it and they started to have some sort of collaboration, I don't know, like side by side work on a common issue but it was, again, it was not explicit because there weren't a civic group. Civic groups have an infrastructure, civic group exists, it's explicit, they take care of it and become explicit because it's one of the tasks they do as a group.

The type of project and the structure in how it was organised. I mean we started with the library and we were so much in love with libraries but you can take City School and put on a different subject and have a different output and I think it's because of the type of project, you would need to have financing and you have to produce an object and so, the community was secondary and the main focus was the educational project but I admit it became more important as the project evolved and that happened in the second edition. So first, was students and library and then we realised that to get to the library with we need to pass by the library users and the users or the people living around it and then for example, in the second edition we did an intervention which had no connection with the library, one

group of the students mapped that area and started to speak with those people and they said they need this and they kind of collaborated and they built that for them. In the third edition, I think the library just became a secondary partner because we were doing the garden so, the library was not fully involved but it was very good to have the library on board because they are this educational culture partner and they have a network which is amazing and also they started with us since the beginning as a silent partner just like, you know, 'I give you the key and that's it' and then they started to intentionally get involved in the events and they quickly became our active partner in the project.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

Well, just to diagram City School was like a safe space for groups or actors institutionally, individually, public that didn't collaborate before and haven't had any kind of interaction, some of them should have, you know, like administration and inhabitants, I don't know like schools and the university. So, we created this space where everybody was kind of putting on a collaborative kind of work but at the beginning, we were filtering all these contacts, everything was going through us, to Studio Basar. It wasn't direct communication, and this happened at the end of the project when people have to manage the spatial infrastructure. So, at the beginning they were still calling us to give them a hand and then after a while they organised themselves, you know, the inhabitants or the library or the library and people with the administration to do their stuff but it was very basic stuff, you know, like care over the space and this happened because the spatial infrastructure triggered collaboration. We donated to the city, but it was used by these people so, that in a very short time evolved as well from the beginning to the end. Another aspect was that some of the participating students became more active involved in the organisation and the management or the steering group in the project for the second edition. So, you know, that kind of evolved from just being one of the participant group into tutors for example so, there was one person who managed those aspects of the project in the second edition.

They became more skilled... what was the question? I said this before, so through very mundane things like 'what should we do with the fence?, we should take the fence out or not' and they were, you know, calling each other for example, the people from the flat with the people from the library like, 'what this structure is' and people said like 'all these was built by the students it's very nice you should be there.' So, it was through objects, through this new spatial transformation that was triggering different way of communication and different type of relations or let's say a network of all type of relations, you know, from this more collective path of socialism especially if it's around blocks of flats. People have the memory of this collective way of life although they hated somehow but they know that sometimes you can't do everything by yourself, you will need help from your neighbours for example, to take care of the space around the library and so on. It was a tacit awakening of some sort of memory of collective lives in some cases.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

Problems, if you have problems it's working. This was in Bucharest, in Romania so, people are feeling threaten everywhere, you know, the city is a nightmare. I don't know if you know about the traffic, to have your own piece of city, of tranquilly, of your mental health you have to fight for it, this is how is Bucharest and sometimes I mean, you lose a lot of stuff people started to realised that they've lost enough so, when there is a initial problem, a threat, an external threat people tends to, you know, 'these people want to take the garden out from us' and then you say 'hey I'm a designer' and, you

know, express into a material. You're useful so, people are behind of some sort of solution and they also have needs. Another group that has a very clear need were parents which they are discovering that the private location is not for them, they haven't enough money so, they need opportunities for their kids or they're a bit desperate so, they use every opportunity to participate because you aren't only doing spatial design, we're doing workshops, exhibition, projections and so, they are very keen to join some of these events just to offer enough opportunity their kids or like the elderly people who have no place to go and nobody ask them anything, they're kind of marginalised and suddenly somebody comes and ask about the bench in front of the flat but of course, this is not the only issue there. It's also, you know, they can tell the stories when they moved there for the first time so, they became part of a project also for the inauguration so, they kind of become important and valued again.

I think not only in this project but also in other projects. It's linked also with class issues especially in Bucharest so, it's more the civic groups, let's say explicit groups because there are groups that are working in a very low level almost implicit. They don't even acknowledge that they work as a group but this groups which are explicit, the civic groups and so on they are mostly middle class, because they have time, they have resources, they have skills, you know, they can communicate, they can even write projects some of these civic groups are people who worked in companies, they can apply, for example, as I was saying about the parents, in Romania if you give birth, for two years the state pays you 85% of your last salary so, there are people who have suddenly a lot of time and no place to go with their kids they noticed 'where the public spaces gone?' 'There isn't public space anymore, we should do something' you know, it's something like that but I'm not saying that all the groups are like this. It's present in every of this formalised groups, the tendency to represent only themselves and audit their problems, their middle-class problems so, you know, they don't have yet this kind of conscience, which maybe comes after a while in society. If they are in a more privileged position, you have time, skills, power positions, most of them were teachers and if I can provide through my civic work activities, I can provide also for others who have no time, resources, and voice, you know, sometimes they have two jobs, they work and live in the outskirts of the city and have no time to work as a civic group. So, if you see them, they only want bike lanes, nice public spaces, you know they never put themselves in the shoes of others, you know, of marginalised groups or people with different needs or disable people and so on. So, it's great that we have civic groups from 10 years, there is this kind of awakening of the civic movement in Bucharest, but sometimes I can see a pattern of middle class reproducing itself, you know, with middle class problems, they have middle class solutions and it's a new way of enforcing and enclosing them as a group. So, 'if you want to speak for your neighbourhood, you have to speak for your neighbourhoods' not just from your point of view.

So, I'm not sure if I answered the question but, it's a very confrontational situation but not like in other countries which people are very, let's say civic active and have a very broad vision of society, on migrants, on women rights and these people are very narrow. They take civic duty as 'I want my part to be nice because I want to take my kid out and play' and because of that I'm creating a civic group, you know, something like that and I think it to comes from a position of 'we have to grow up civically,' you know, the civic group which is known as TEI Community Centre that you spoke with Cristi, I remember them being like that a bit narrow at the beginning, only their point of view and so on and then they started to be exposed to different partners, for example a library, librarians are very welcoming, they welcome anybody inside, in this case the head of the library who was teaching poor kids to read and those kinds of things because they're public institution and they still have these values of democracy and equality of access to books embedded in their practice. So, they are a bit more civically engaged than some of the civic groups and coming back to that, so after many years of having all this contact with different specialist, with different institutions and different context and situation they were kind of exposed to the world. I saw changing their discourse and their approach to, not only their seeing from their eyes and I think it takes practice, although you can make a lecture about that, and say 'if you are a civic group try to not speak about your middle-class problems', but it takes years

and years of work on the ground to understand that. Even students, architecture students. In the interviews I did with them they were like 'after months of working in the project, I realised that is not about doing objects but is also about people' and I said 'I told you from the beginning' So, 'what you told me I have to see it for myself' and then they realised it was more about relationship than if the object was super cool or just average cool.

I don't remember, let's say an aha moment, was when we were invited by this artworks so it was more artistically driven at the beginning, public space installation but I don't remember somebody specific but then, I remember that from this early very kind of naive beginnings, we met Labore so, they came to Bucharest, we didn't know what they were doing and they came with a car, they had some sort of inflatable structures and we were amazed by that and then we met them and we kind of follow them ever since in different projects and we became... not friends but let's say professionals pal, of course what they do is amazing is a complete different approach and they use different tools. So, around Labore all this kind of type of practices exist. Also, Market Stalls/Edit! from Belgrade, I don't know, I was in the Stockholm at a lecture once and there were only this kind of practice invited, you know. Also, Construct Lab which is led by Alex Romer who was from Edit! So, a lot of these practices were doing placemaking stuff, of course each of them with their own particularity either from the context or from the team members, you know, you have this kind of utopian. Then Crazy Berlin, Public Works from London with this more community approach but also combined with artworks, everyone have their own DNA but we share some sort of similarity.

From another aspect there were some readings and in this you know, meeting Doina and Constantine was one of these moments, but we couldn't do what they do or at least attempt to do what they do from the beginning so, it was interesting that we met Doina and Constantin. In 2010 we published a book about evictions and the editor of the book said like 'this is your style is so nice but we need some sort of other text, which, you know contextualise your case study' let's say and in the second part of the book we had a section about potentials... we presented a situation where people were evicted from the streets and they built some sort of structure and this has some historical roots and then we thought, what is the potential of that? then we had our installations, but also the editor Alina Shelburne invited some authors to contextualise a bit and one of these authors was Doina and then she sent us a book and then, after a while we get the possibility to meet her, to go to Paris for one month residency and we said 'we should meet her because one of the authors of the book was Yona Friedman, he was still alive and he was amazing, he sent us some thought of his work in a text and then we said, 'we should visit him' and then we went to visit Yona Friedman in his flat and we had an interview which, it's online but then in the same trip we thought 'In Paris there is also Doina, let's meet her' and then we her and Constantine in Passage 56, you know, and they invited us to help them to dig and to make some sort of work there, and then at the end of the day we presented some of our stuff and it was this kind of tacit learning that I told you before. After a while we were like 'okay forget about Yona Friedman,' what these guys were doing was amazing because they were neighbours there, doing gardens and they have some sort of food and then there was a projection, there was a discussion, and these people weren't academics.

The structure was kind of low key way of dealing with some sort of peculiarities in the legislation, what was something that we were also doing, it was like an inspiration in the sense like 'look, if you keep on doing it this is what you may achieve one day' it was not just funny stuff that you do for a couple of years and then you go back to you know serious stuff like 'okay, if you take this track you can end up doing this kind of project' it was more about a very much more deeper meaning with long-term partners. So, it was on one side, you know, fascination on Labore and those kinds of practices which had a lot of resources and a lot more romantic way of doing architecture. Now being on the field, having all this kind of adventurous way of dealing with people, which we were also engaged with but then we had this very serious approach and also, we were very embedded in theory which was another

layer, and it was like 'oh these concepts are working' is not just that some people are writing text and some people are making installations, these guys are doing both.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

The project was designed based on the nature of the solutions and of course identifying the needs and the problems. It was like 'we have these resources, we are designers, we are conducting a research about how this place is used. How do you see it transformed?' and this could go different ways, but as I said, in the beginning it has some sort of limitation, it had to be a spatial intervention, we couldn't make a newspaper and things like that. So, it was a bit framed but also, we knew that people lacked spatial intervention so, we couldn't say 'we don't need this, I need something else' and the other part of the neighbourhood is like 'no, we use the library we need to do something about it, this is what we came here to do' so it was narrowed. It's was bit of what AAA is doing, they have a project in their head, they go, they initiate, they get the partners, get the money, get everything and then they open it up to users and the users are kind of taking over but they have some values, of course we also have some values that we pronounce, it has to be open, it has to be public, also this kind of ecological aspects, you know, so we have some stuff that we follow.

It was a consultation, there were also some people, some partners, or the library that were involved beyond the consultation, for example organising some of the events around the phase of the project but it was more in a consultation level. You have to understand that people or participants, even students have zero experience in participation so, maybe you need to go back few steps to reach further or maybe start working with a group that is already crystallised, this was always our problem. We were working with groups which weren't crystallised, a lot of our activities were designed with the aim of trying to crystallise a bit the group in order to have partners and then we spent a lot of time, let's say from the project point of view, to do this but this was needed, and we weren't trained for that or prepared for that and then we were working with a community organiser, a person who was doing this part of the job. It was amazing because we could really focus more on our part, you know, what we know how to do it and the project was working smoother, but we also experienced this situation, when the group was already crystallised, explicitly organised, they knew what they wanted, they knew who they were, you know, they discuss when there was a disagreement. They kind of act like 'ok, this is us, we fight for this and then we collaborate with these guys to achieve one of our goals' and that was much more interesting because the impact was bigger and what we were doing was far more meaningful.

I'm not saying that other projects where the community isn't so formed are weaker, but the impact is not so visible and it's not traceable. Let's say 'how was before, how is now' is very difficult to trace was what was your contribution, when there is no community formed, and I would say... I mean one sociologist who worked with us said 'you shouldn't do any intervention before having a partner' so, we should do some community organising works for... I don't know, how many months and then, when these people are formed, you could jump to the second stage. In foreign context when we're just landed there. It was to provoke through spatial intervention, to make the process of community organisation faster so, I mean we did some projects which weren't really the expression of the community, you know, it was more a bit of combination of observation and intuition then we make an intervention but the response to that intervention came after, you know, with people reaction.

I think you could also... because spatial intervention is also something that can ground yourself in the next phases. So, we went once in a place that was ethnically divided, so it was one group that speak a

particular language and another group with a different language and we were part of one of the groups and unfortunately we weren't so careful, I don't know, the place didn't have a name so, we tried to come up with a name and we did a project and then we proposed a name for that place and it was in one specific language and the people said 'no, it should be this' I mean the reaction was immediately otherwise so, you should spend, a considerable amount of time and what methods to use instead of 'what if we put a name' you can't say that and we wanted to provoke a reaction spatially talking. It was interesting, I mean it can be risky, you know, if you do in the wrong way but I think the power of space and objects which are like tools, they have the power to make visible what is not visible at the beginning. It's one of the powerful tools that we worked with. You also know that they're not timeless I mean, they can go away after a couple of years and it's not a big problem. So, when people are asking us like 'but your work isn't permanent' it's like 'yes, we are not permanent' we are not making benches out of stone to be there for 1000 years, we are creating public spaces situations and this change over time. We change, so why not space should be changing. Coming from an architecture background as you know, it's a bit... sometimes, I also feel like 'oh they've dismantled it' but there was a civic group who dismantle it so, this is one of the things that happen in a project because there are some sort of group behind it.

# APPENDIX G

## Rural Housing

Interviewee: Diana Bustos

Bustos is a practitioner in the field of agricultural and rural development planning with an emphasis on agricultural and environmental sciences. During her practice, she worked with disadvantaged rural communities such as el Banco, la Tinaja, la Patilla, La Carbonera, and Cadereyta in Querétaro, Mexico. She worked in rural development for nearly 20 years in partnership with government and educational institutions in delivering projects for rural communities. Currently, she is retired from her services.

Date: 27/01/2021

Muy bien, bueno ese proyecto es un proyecto que se llamó construcción de una vivienda rural sustentable, fue un proyecto interdisciplinario e interinstitucional convocado por el Consejo de Ciencia y Tecnología del estado de Querétaro. A mi concretamente me toco la construcción de un huerto de traspatio, no biointensivo, pero sí de poca superficie, corrales de manejo de cabras, conejos y gallinas y también había un área pequeña de producción de yerbas medicinales. Acá se utiliza mucho la arbolaria o diferentes yerbas para resolver algunos problemas de salud desde gripa hasta... dice la gente que diabetes y cáncer.... con algunas plantas, entonces en eso consistió. Fue en la comunidad de La Carbonera, municipio de Querétaro, del estado de Querétaro en México. Ese proyecto se operó durante 2 años, hace tal vez como 12, 15 años creo que fue entre el 2012 y termino en el 2013 más o menos fue el año en el que estuvimos trabajando en este proyecto.

### **What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

Este Proyecto surge o responde a la demanda directa de las autoridades del CONATEC, entonces nosotros diseñamos la construcción, bueno obviamente el área de arquitectura que le toco precisamente a la escuela en donde estudiaba Olivia, al Instituto Tecnológico de Querétaro les toco diseñar la vivienda a un grupo de maestras. Hicieron primero un diagnóstico de cómo construirla, cuáles eran las necesidades de la comunidad y después en una actividad participativa presentamos el proyecto a la comunidad y hubo una familia que apporto la superficie, que estaba dispuesta a aportar la superficie de terreno necesaria. El trabajo... y precisamente esta familia ya tenía tiempo trabajando con la Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro que era una de las colaboradoras también en este proyecto entonces, digamos que ya tenían un poco más de educación ambiental y ellos estuvieron dispuestos a arriesgarse con nosotros, a comprometer superficie de terreno y mano de obra y lo que implicaba tener la casa administrándola, por que implicaba recibir visitas para educar en todo este concepto de una vivienda sustentable a quién lo requiriera. Estudiantes de todos los niveles, ciudadanos comunes, a quien requiriera conocer esta experiencia.

Mira, en las estadísticas oficiales de México, el estado de Querétaro, de los 18 municipios del estado de Querétaro, que es como se divide el estado de Querétaro. El municipio, como es donde está la ciudad capital está marcada como población pobre o marginada o con poca o muy poca marginación. Entonces las instituciones federales no destinan recursos económicos a este municipio sin embargo, a estas alturas ya casi conurbadas hay poblaciones muy pobres y en donde... bueno tal vez, ya no tan



marginadas porque pues casi que ya son comunidades dormitorio, la gente regresa a dormir pero viene a trabajar a la ciudad, entonces tienen problemas de drenaje, no cuentan con drenaje, tienen problemas de servicio de agua porque allá están los pozos pero no hay suficiente o no están bien distribuidos el servicio de agua potable, de transporte, de escuelas que... cuando hicimos este proyecto solamente había tele secundaria entonces hasta tele secundaria que acá es pre escolar, son 3 años, primaria 6 años y secundaria 3 años. Entonces ellos acabando la secundaria si querían continuar estudiando tendrían que moverse en transporte público de más o menos 2 horas de tiempo a la ciudad de Querétaro y... este... acá el transporte es muy ineficiente y caro entonces era casi imposible que ellos tuvieran acceso a estudios medios y superiores, más bien quien tenía recursos suficientes es quien lo podía lograr o quien se venía a vivir a la ciudad.

Entonces se destinaron estos recursos que fueron poquitos, en realidad fue como 1 millón de pesos de los cuales cada institución pudo ejercer como 100 mil pesos y hazle como puedas, diseña algo que se ajuste a esta cantidad y es lo que vamos a operar y este... también se eligió esta comunidad porque como te digo había trabajo previo con la Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro entonces la educación ambiental ya no iba ser tanto problema como en otras comunidades que hemos intervenido en donde realmente implantar otra idea de cómo hacer a lo que ellos están acostumbrados es difícil, tengo experiencia en el semi árido de Querétaro con la construcción simplemente de cisterna de fibrocemento, a ellos les costó mucho trabajo entender la lógica del funcionamiento del fibrocemento.

No sé si tu sepas como es o si quieres posteriormente explico. Mira, en el semi desierto la gente simplemente... es una zona que se conoce como semi desierto del estado de Querétaro, las condiciones climáticas son de semi árido y árido entonces no había agua ni siquiera para beber, no había agua potable más que la que llevaban las pipas entonces... pipas son camiones que transportan agua y las vaciaban en depósitos, pero como es un terreno de muchos cerros no toda la gente podía cargar, los ancianos, los niños no pueden cargar una cubeta de 20 litros. Entonces unas de las alternativas que... bueno... ellos expresaron la necesidad de necesitamos agua y nosotros buscando alternativas dijimos bueno, está la posibilidad de construir cisternas de ferrocemento que es empalmar una... este... una malla electro soldada, es decir con la que se hacen los pisos, una malla gallinera y otra malla gallinera, tejerlas, hacer un tejido de tal modo que tú lo levantas más o menos en forma de huevo de 20 mil litros y luego lo... acá se dice repellas o pones una mezcla de cemento con arena de río de tal modo que llega a tener como 5 cm de grueso pero que te puede resistir el peso de 20 mil litros de agua, que satisface las necesidades de una familia de allá, y el agua se colecta de las lluvias principalmente, de los techos pero si hay otra manera de colectar y almacenar agua como que la lleven pipas o de repente había una red, pues bueno lo que importa es que las personas tengan agua para su ganado, para uso doméstico, para el traspatio, entonces esas fueron unas de las enotecnias, le llamamos acá que iniciamos en el semi árido de Querétaro y que repetimos acá en la Carbonera.

En La Carbonera en cuanto les hablamos de la opción todo el mundo dijo, perfecto eso es lo que necesitamos lo construimos y este a diferencia de La Patilla en donde la gente por ejemplo... porque ellos... este, los que salen de la comunidad a trabajar trabajan de albañiles entonces digamos que conocen de albañilería y le querían poner a las cisternas de ferrocemento por ejemplo, mosaicos entonces teníamos que explicarles, no, esta estructura aguanta lo que pesan 20 mil litros de agua si nosotros le ponemos mosaicos es más peso y ya no aguanta, o querían hacer las cosas con ladrillo y le teníamos que decir, no mira, por ejemplo con ladrillo no sirve porque nos elevan los costos entonces ya no cumple con la función de contener agua, que contener agua que es lo que tú necesitas. Ese trabajo fue mucha labor que ya estaba hecha en La Carbonera, digamos, por eso decidimos nosotros como grupo interdisciplinario que La Carbonera, aparte de que era la comunidad más cercana de la ciudad de Querétaro, de que era con muy alta marginación, de que no había inversión del gobierno federal y de que la gente estaba dispuesta a participar, pues esos fueron los criterios que nos llevaron a construir ahí.

La gente cuando... de las comunidades rurales acá desgraciadamente está muy acostumbrada recibir apoyos del gobierno, entonces cuando tú les vas a dar algo no se oponen, ellos como que casi hay una convocatoria y dicen 'que nos vas a regalar y ahí estamos' cuando... nosotros empezamos diciendo 'no, no vamos a regalar vamos a trabajar con ustedes' y si tenemos respuesta y si les interesa resolver algunos problemas que detectemos entre ustedes y nosotros podemos hacerlo, podemos seguir adelante, si no les interesa buscamos otra comunidad. Entonces más o menos fuimos avanzando en este proceso participativo y al final siempre te quedas pensando que hicieron falta muchas cosas, que a lo mejor elegimos muy pronto, pues que esa familia... otros miembros de la comunidad nos dijeron 'pues es que lo que pasa es que ellos siempre se quedan con todos los apoyos' y yo les decía 'lo que pasa es que ellos aportan lo que nosotros queremos, están dispuestos a participar, a poner su terreno, atienden a todas las reuniones, atienden las citas, las invitaciones, la capacitación' pues ya al final, en la evaluación final uno se sigue cuestionando que tan buena elección fue esa comunidad, sin embargo al paso de este tiempo que son como... pon tú, 10 años ellos siguen con ese proyecto. Ellos siguen atendiendo visitas y fueron creciendo el proyecto, donde se fueron sumando otros proyectos más de producir ya algunos extractos de lavanda por ejemplo, estuvieron dispuestos a sembrar una superficie de lavanda para... con una compañía española vender extracto de lavanda entonces ellos ya encontraron como vivir de estos proyectos haciéndolo negocio entonces si son un foco de desarrollo para la comunidad de alguna u otra manera son un ejemplo y en las condiciones que actualmente estamos en México al pasar el tiempo tú dices 'bueno, cuando menos ellos y en parte otras pocas familias de la comunidad pueden sobrevivir de estos proyectos'.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

Bueno, si se pensó como un proyecto a largo plazo, pero yo me encontré con que no consideramos muchas cosas por ejemplo ellos donde se construyó la casa no había energía eléctrica entonces... un centro de investigaciones también de acá CICATA se llama, pero no me acuerdo de que quiere decir exactamente, Centro de Investigaciones Superiores del Instituto Tecnológico, también pusieron paneles solares y todo el servicio de luz. El requerimiento de luz de la casa que al final la casa fue pequeña, bueno... tenía una habitación un baño ecológico, una estancia que era también cocina con un fogón ahorrador de leña, pero también tenía pues, un refrigerador una cocina, una estufa de gas que la gente quería tener ahí para poder vivir, es totalmente entendible.

Tenía una área donde se podían hacer cursos que era como una terracita y eso era todo lo que estaba alumbrado y resulta que los paneles eléctricos almacenaban la energía en baterías entonces, al paso del tiempo las baterías acababan su vida útil y nosotros como proyecto ya no podíamos reponérselas entonces la gente decía 'es que yo necesito, este... necesito las baterías' y creo que hay que avanzar más en esas investigaciones porque tendría que haber algo que fuera permanente para que ellos nos tuvieran que desembolsar, no se... lo que cuestan las baterías que no son algo tan barato en México no sé, tal vez 3 mil pesos en promedio una batería, que para ellos les implica dos semanas de trabajo más o menos entonces este... eso nos faltó tener visión. También en las actividades de traspatio en las que yo propuse, aunque las superficies eran pequeñas, aunque las cabezas de ganado eran muy pocas y se supone que ellos debían reproducirlas y de compartir con los demás de la comunidad, el ganado, pero de repente te das cuenta hace falta muchísimo trabajo, dedicarle mucho tiempo.

En esta casa iban a vivir una anciana y su hija que no se casó, o sea una joven, pero esa joven trabajaba en la ciudad de México en las casas, de trabajadora doméstica. Entonces llego un momento en que ella tenía que dejar de trabajar para atender el traspatio y para atender los corrales y el ganado y pues también dices tu 'ay dios mío como puedo hacer yo que ella genere lo que gana en la ciudad aquí' entonces creo que hay muchas cosas que solamente la experiencia te va enseñando lo que debes

considerar, porque al principio digamos, la intención es muy buena pero aunque éramos un grupo de análisis grande, yo creo que gente con... que teníamos bastante experiencia siempre vas a ir encontrando cosas que dices 'ah debí pensar en esto', 'debí de preverlo' siempre hace falta la experiencia.

La gente te digo, pues... acá es casi imposible a menos que te saques la lotería que te regalen una casa, entonces de todos modos ellos estaban agradecidos con eso y con esta visión de que era una manera que les permitiría hacer negocio, pues han continuado como han podido o sea venden una borrega para comprar una batería o si tienen ventas medicinales, de algunos productos medicinales o cosméticos que ellos mismos aprendieron hacer en la labor continua con ellos, este... pueden cubrir las necesidades y así... Y el apoyo de la familia migrante también es importante para que la joven se quedara en la casa ya no saliera a la ciudad y también cuidar a la mama entonces como que coincidieron las cosas y ahí va jalando. Los recursos nos alcanzaban solamente para construir una sola vivienda, es una comunidad pequeña de aproximadamente 50 familias con gran riesgo de conurbarse con la ciudad de Querétaro que ya está creciendo muchísimo la ciudad y hay fraccionamientos de muchas casas muy pequeñas sin... con muchos cuestionamientos, de no tener ni siquiera las condiciones de dignidad que creemos que deben de tener los habitantes que, sin embargo, se venden.

También por el otro lado, en esta comunidad en donde se dedicaban básicamente a la agricultura de temporal y a la ganadería y al trabajar en la ciudad dejan esta unidad de producción y salen a trabajar en la ciudad de Querétaro a Estados Unidos principalmente hay muchas mujeres, ancianos y niños entonces encuentras a un lado de una chocita de adobe encuentras un caserón este... del dinero que mandan los migrantes que se van a Estados Unidos y de que alguna manera reproducir y reactivar la economía en la comunidad, con el dinero que mandan le encargan a su familia que les construya su casa mandan casi siempre una fotografía de alguna casa que les gusto de Estados Unidos entonces tu encuentras unos estilos californianos y unas casototas que tú dices 'bueno y esto de donde sale' pero entran y no tiene baños, no tienen muebles, no tienen... o sea como mandan las fotografías de afuera, este...pues se construye de afuera como ellos quieren pero de adentro digamos que no tienen ni una lógica de habitación, no se... tal vez 3 recamaras, 2 baños, una sala, espacios separados, no es como estar este... interpretando como viven los norte americanos y querer tener ellos una casa así sin poder lograr porque no entran a las casas, solamente las ven desde afuera.

Eso es lo que veías, justo atrás de la vivienda sustentable había una casa de este tipo que te digo que un joven norte americano que tuvo una historia exitosa mando hacer un caserón, más o menos bien diseñado tanto de adentro... de afuera era una casa que cumplía con la misión de llamar la atención para verse exitoso delante de la comunidad y tenía una alberca, el pidió una alberca que tenía 4 metros de profundidad entonces... pero era alberca entonces la mujer que vivía acá, que era una mujer joven con 3 hijos chicos se la pasaba aterrorizada porque sus hijos no sabían nadar y se podían ahogar en la famosa alberca y este... y ella quería... el marido le decía 'no, esa es nuestra alberca y vamos a tratarla como alberca' y ella decía 'para eso no sirve porque no sabemos nadar y no nos podemos meter porque nos ahogamos.' Vamos a utilizar esa agua para regar y producir' entonces encuentras estos absurdos en la realidad rural. Atrás, haz de cuenta que esta la casa, la alberca, el jardinzote que acá en México en los jardines mexicanos siempre hay frutales, hay medicinales y hay arboles nativos para leña pero ahí no, los que vienen de Estados Unidos tumban todo eso y meten pasto, solamente quieren pasto entonces este... es otro choque cultural para la gente de verdad entonces aun lado de esta casota vivía la hermana del muchacho en una casita de plástico o no sé de qué material sería, que le había dado un programa del gobierno del estado como apoyo a la vivienda pero eran pre construidas como de plástico, no sé qué material era pero una casita mínima y entonces a ella le toco estar a un lado de esta mansión y así como que uno decía 'de que se trata esto está muy mal, esto no es desarrollo, ni remotamente' o sea no le atina el gobierno, no le atinamos las instituciones, la gente está topándose con estas culturas. Bueno, así es la experiencia allá.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

Mira, yo estude una licenciatura en planificación para el desarrollo agropecuario y una maestría en ciencia del desarrollo rural obviamente este cuestionamiento que tú me haces yo me lo estuve haciendo durante 20 años entonces yo te puedo decir a la conclusión que llegue y de eso te voy a hablar, que, a lo mejor, que bueno a lo mejor tiene este sello que es mi enfoque, basado en mi experiencia. Creo que la cuestión debe de empezar en como tú te plantas en una comunidad y yo creo que uno debe de llegar hacer un diagnóstico participativo, pero realmente participativo en el que tu puedas detectar las necesidades, las aspiraciones, los recursos de la comunidad para después poner algo que se pueda hacer de acuerdo con las condiciones de las personas.

Es muy importante la inversión, el dinero con el que tu puedas llegar, pero no debes de llegar con la inversión por delante porque como te digo, acá si vas a regalar este... en México hay un dicho que dice 'dadas las captadas' verdad entonces todo te aceptan entonces no debes de empezar así. Yo creo que debes de empezar a decirles a las personas que tu intentas darles solución a su problemática para lo cual primero tenemos que conocer la problemática, después tenemos que identificar tecnologías apropiadas, que es lo que vas a proponer que se pueda hacer con los recursos que hay en la comunidad, que le puedan dar mantenimiento con los conocimientos que tienen las personas con los recursos económicos o los recursos de los que puedan disponer y que además este dándoles solución justa a lo que ellos necesitan, porque de lo contrario tu introduces mucha energía a una comunidad y en cuanto te vayas van a dejar esa inversión entonces los proyectos obviamente deben de ser de largo plazo lo cual en México no existe. El proyecto que es el que más me gusta, porque me costó muchísimo trabajo, pero el que creo yo, que tuvo mayor impacto con los habitantes de la comunidad es en el semi árido de Querétaro en la región que le decimos semi desierto de Querétaro, eran 3 comunidades básicamente, el Banco, la Tinaja y la Patilla y yo empecé con ese diagnóstico participativo en donde la gente te expresa sus problemas.

O sea, tú tienes que identificar en este proceso participativo cuáles son sus problemas y después averiguar cómo lo resuelves verdad y... eso fue lo que hicimos y entonces la gente lo primero nos dijo 'mire a nosotros se nos está muriendo las cabras' acá son más o menos 6 meses de sequías, sin lluvias en esta zona y seis meses de lluvia en donde caen 400 milímetros al año, en donde solamente ven pasar el agua porque, así como caen se van por los arroyos llevándose todo lo que se encuentra. Cuando nosotros llegamos no tenían en que almacenar agua, había unas ollas de agua que son como pequeñas presas abandonadas. Cuando el estado introdujo un tubo que recorría 4 horas de camino para llevarles agua potable, ellos pensaron que iban a tener permanentemente agua potable y olvidaron su infraestructura que les daba servicio entonces abandonaron estas ollas de agua y el servicio de agua potable cuando no tenía problemas en la bomba, tenía problemas en que se había caído un poste. El caso es que servicio de agua potable casi nunca tenían y las llaves no estaban en todas las casas, las llaves estaban una en la iglesia, otra por allá entonces no se consideraba que había agua potable.

Cuando la gente dijo 'necesitamos que nuestro ganado no se muera, nosotros vivimos de eso' nosotros empezamos a buscar.... si no tienen suelo es una zona donde se produce mármol para que te des una idea del paisaje, no hay arbustos de más de un metro de alto en los montes ni en los cerros entonces mis alumnos... tenía una alumna de veterinaria y un colaborador veterinario de la Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro empezamos a buscar cómo podemos hacer que el ganado no se muera. Entonces empezamos a proponer producir forrajes verdes hidropónica que no es más que germinado de trigo en charolas, hicimos muchísimas pruebas, diseñamos incluso una especie de invernaderos con cubiertas de plástico... aproximadamente 80 cabezas de ganado que tenía cada familia en promedio y nos encontramos con que si el invernaderito estaba en casa de doña Leonora nadie entraba a casa de

sino estaba Leonora entonces... fue sacar las charolas y que cada quien produjera en su casa el forraje que necesitaba.

Para sacar el proyecto vinculamos a una tesis de licenciatura, hicimos un experimento de cierto número de cabezas... así diseñamos el experimento después de un año trabajando y lidiando y construyendo un corral con malla ciclónica como con la idea de manejos en el centro y separarlas cabras preñadas, las crías, los machos, etc., después de un año de esto para la tesis, imagínate nada más, además una alumna ahí atravesada veíamos que los datos de peso de imagen del ganado, de peso no, de imagen no había ninguna diferencia de imagen del ganado. No se ponían más bonitos, ni les brillaban más el pelo, y de producción de leche no teníamos ningún dato entonces francamente mi estudiante y yo estábamos aterrorizadas porque llevábamos un año invirtiéndole tiempo y dinero a ese proyecto. Entonces empezamos la evaluación participativa y le preguntábamos a don Odilón, dueño de ese ganado y de ese traspatio en donde hicimos el experimento le decíamos 'que le parece la producción de forraje hidropónico' y nosotras así asustadas porque termino siendo germinar trigo nada mas ya sin sales minerales, sin... todos los datos que en un principio habíamos tenido que tomar para implementar ese ejercicio.

Entonces él nos decía 'resultase que es maravilloso', 'Ay don Odilón díganos por favor porque, porque nosotros no vemos que el ganado pese más, no vemos que le ganado se vea mejor' y nos decía don Odilón 'mire es maravilloso que yo la poca tierra que tengo, donde puedo cultivar voy a sembrar maíz, en las charolas puedo sembrar de manera escalonada el forraje que me permite que el cincuenta por ciento del ganado que se me moría no se muera y brinque la sequía' entonces ya brincando la sequía yo ya tengo más capital, porque tengo más ganado para vender', este... eran cabras rusticas ni si quiera de una raza que tu digas nubia o algo así, no, son las rusticas que aguantan esa condición y que les permite a las personas tener una manera de sobrevivir. Pues, entonces lo que salió la tesis fue esta evaluación participativa porque fue lo que realmente significo esta tecnología que nosotros diseñamos para la cual nos fuimos a un curso con campesinos indígenas a Morelia, para la cual probamos en muchísimas charolas con una infraestructura que, si era cara, probamos que trabajara toda la comunidad ahí. O sea, invertimos muchísimo y al final lo que resulto seis charolas para cada familia produciendo su forraje y lo que ellos querían, que era brincar la sequía con su ganado, lo lograron y ya.

Entonces como te digo, el resultado es el que hace quedarte con la experiencia y retomar estos conceptos este... de tecnologías apropiadas que nos llevaron a decir esto es lo que sirve. También mucho la consciencia de que... yo siempre les insistía mucho 'miren, los problemas que vamos a atender son de ustedes porque yo trabajo aquí con ustedes, soy facilitadora, pero yo me voy a mi casa y yo si tengo agua, yo si tengo drenaje y a mí me pagan por trabajar con ustedes y lo que me pagan me permite comprar mi comida. No les voy a decir que soy productora porque no, pero yo puedo comer' 'los problemas son de ustedes y ustedes tienen que involucrarse en la solución, si lo solucionan ustedes van a estar bien y si no lo solucionan no van a estar bien' entonces como que vas siendo clara, pero lo tiene uno que tener claro, no puede ser tampoco ni prepotente, ni grosero pero si lo debemos de tener claro porque o si no al rato tu andas ahí pastoreando las cabras o haciendo cosas que no te corresponde no, tú eres facilitador.

Te decía, el largo plazo es de vital importancia, para yo trabajar de largo plazo tuve que recurrir al financiamiento porque a mí me pagan mi sueldo en el Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales, Agrícolas y Pecuarias pero no me dan recursos para investigar, bueno entonces tenía un vehículo que se los agradezco bastante verdad pero para hacer todo lo demás, yo tenía que meter mis proyectos a competencias, competir recursos y dure diez años en donde Semarnat me dio 80 mil peso, la secretaria del medio ambiente, el gobierno del estado me dio 80 mil, el Concyteq me dio 60 mil, entonces diez años yo pude trabajar con esos recursos. Cambio el gobierno y dijeron, 'no' esas comunidades no las

deben de atender las instituciones esas son comunidades de deben de ser atendidas por las que apoyan a las comunidades muy pobres entonces yo deje de tener acceso a recursos y te juro que con lágrimas en los ojos y con el corazón roto de no poder continuar tuve que dejar de trabajar allá, a 2 horas de distancia de Querétaro de mi casa, una carretera con mucho riesgos, subía a la montaña, bajaba y ni siquiera recursos tienes para hacer ese trabajo pues no puedes continuar. Acá se preocupan mucho los gobiernos porque... el gobierno del estado es por seis años, el nacional es por seis años, el del estado es por seis años y municipal por tres años donde yo trabajaba era un municipio diferente a Querétaro, es Cadereyta y pasaba como otros seis municipios para llegar a Cadereyta. En Cadereyta los gobiernos son de tres años. Entonces, el gobierno municipal quiere invertir en lo que se note, en lo que se vea y lo que necesitas para trabajar con gente muy pobre no se va a notar tanto, no es de presumirse como para ganar votos por ahí más o menos esta la idea.

Fíjate que, para yo poder entrar en estas comunidades en todos los casos, pero principalmente en el semi árido me vincule con los técnicos que trabajan en la región por alguna razón. Acá en Cadereyta había un técnico que tenía ya una triple S una sociedad de solidaridad social es una figura de organización que lo llevo a hacer una caja de microcrédito a trabajar con la gente muy pobre para que, también, aprovechando los recursos como la colecta de orégano, de damiana, de poleo, seleccionaran y envasaran y la vendieran. Yo por ejemplo hice seis cisternas de ferrocemento de 20 mil litros y pude capacitar a las tres comunidades, a toda la población porque como es mucho trabajo de amarrar los alambres, de cargarlos, es mucho trabajo y tenía que participar toda la comunidad entonces todos participaron y aprendieron hacer las cisternas. Este técnico Arturo, mi queridísimo Arturo Estrada, cuando yo ya no pude continuar trabajando él consiguió... yo le di los generadores de estas cisternas. Mi marido es ingeniero en lo civil y me ayudo a hacerlos, no te creas que yo pude sola. Entonces yo le di los generadores y él consiguió recursos en el estado para hacer otras 20 entonces cuando tú te vinculas con los técnicos, que de alguna manera están permanentemente en las comunidades y las tecnologías son apropiadas, es la manera en cómo esto va detonar y va permanecer a largo plazo, con reconocimiento para otras personas, recursos de otras instituciones, pero lo importante que ya dejaste el conocimiento en la comunidad, ya dejaste la semillita entonces cuando menos la gente ya sabe que necesita y como se puede resolver de una manera que va durar, que va servir y bueno ese es como impactamos en el largo plazo.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

Bueno, a mí me llevo un maestro de la universidad, Héctor Andrade a esta comunidad y me presento a Arturo Estrada el técnico, el técnico que tenía ya ahí cuando yo llegue ya tenía quince años trabajando ahí. El me presento a las comunidades, me dijo en que comunidades... yo le dije 'mira yo quiero trabajar con las comunidades más marginadas, más pobres' y ándale tú, ahí me llevo donde la señora quería, entonces el me presento a la gente. Me atendieron los líderes comunitarios en principio y solamente me recibían ellos. Ellos hablan Otomí, cuando no querían hablar conmigo o no se querían enterar de lo que... o no querían que yo me enterara de lo que estaban diciendo hablaban en Otomí tranquilamente, no me... me ignoraban pues, pero yo insistí, insistí entonces tenía la edad, la energía, la ilusión suficiente para hacerlo y la gente me fue reconociendo y me fue aceptando a tal grado que a veces yo batallaba para irme, yo tenía que salir de allá con luz para llegar oscureciendo acá a mi casa. Y alguna vez una señora que nunca me había.... Pues me daba su información así como 'si tengo 50 años, tengo cuatro hijos...' pero realmente como había sido su vida, pues un día que fui a verla, a pedirle... has de cuenta 'necesito su firma porque vamos a meter este proyecto' justo ese día la señora tenía ganas de platicar entonces yo iba con una estudiante y eso sucedió a las seis de la tarde entonces nos sentamos ahí afuera de su casa en unas piedras, y ella me comenzó a contar de como su marido la golpeaba, era alcohólico, como ella había tenido una vida tan sufrida por eso ahora era desconfiada.

O sea, después de dos horas me dijo 'por eso a mí no me gusta hablar con gente extraña como tú'. Entonces yo salí a las diez de la noche de allá, pero no pude interrumpir porque al fin la señora quiso hablar conmigo de verdad y yo podía entender su contexto y como el de ella, el de muchas mujeres entonces a mí me resultaba fácil porque yo era mujer que iba a trabajar con mujeres. Cuando iba un hombre, para que lo aceptaran pasaba mucho más tiempo, porque las mujeres toda la semana están solas entonces los maridos les prohíben hablar con hombres y ellas no... tocas a su casa y ni siquiera salen. Entonces este... es insistir, insistir no dejar mostrar siempre que tú vas a trabajar, mostrar siempre que tienes intención de ayudar y que... pero que a cambio necesitas que ellos participen en los talleres, que ellos se capaciten, que ellos te den información verdadera.

En otra comunidad que trabajé con alumnos también, con veterinaria siempre me tuve que apoyar en alumnos, en otros investigadores, en otras instituciones. Hicimos una encuesta para otra tesis de cuanto ganado tenían y ellos nos decían 'no, fíjese pues que tengo diez cabezas de ganado', 'no, pues tengo cuatro o ocho de bovinos' esos bovinos los manejan sueltos en los cerros entonces. Así como para triangular la información aprendimos en el semi árido a hacer campañas de vacunación, a mitad de precio o de vacunación y desparasitación, muchos más baratas de las que lleva el gobierno o que llevan los particulares, entonces la gente tenía que bajar su ganado del cerro y encontramos que nos decían una cuarta parte del número de cabezas que tenían porque ellos ya sabían que en el cerro sueltos pues obviamente se comían los arbolitos que iban naciendo, se comían de todo y sabían que nosotros si sabíamos que había más cabezas de los que había íbamos a pedirles que redujeran el número de cabezas. Obviamente no era nuestra intención, pero ellos lo asumían así. Entonces siempre aprendimos a triangular la información, cuando no tienes largo plazo para hacer un diagnóstico hay que triangular. Entonces hacíamos las encuestas, hacíamos recorrido de campo, observación, entrevistábamos a informantes claves, es una triangulación y... pero la que realmente nos daba la información fidedigna vamos hacer la campaña o gratuita o con un 80% de descuento de desparasitación y vacunación del ganado y ahí es cuando nos dábamos cuenta que cantidad de ganado había porque la gente... acá es muy difícil que te den sus datos porque son desconfiados, o sea han sido tan engañados, tan abusados, tan no se... realmente son pobres porque como no tienen mucha educación, ni malicia han sido muy abusados o muy toqueteados simplemente por los programa de gobierno y entonces se vuelven desconfiados.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movements/networks and organisation)**

Bueno, es diferente en mi experiencia es muy diferente como te vinculas tu con los que trabajan en otras instituciones y que son también digamos profesionales o profesionistas más bien, vamos a decirles profesionistas porque no todos son profesionales que trabajan en el sector ese es una manera de relacionarte. Esa es bien difícil porque la mayor gente... la mayor cantidad de profesionistas que trabajan en el sector rural han perdido los ideales, los principios y solamente quieren ir a cumplir con su tarea la mínima que les permita cobrar, entonces les digo yo 'ya están maquilando' no están poniendo atención al desarrollo, la mayoría y te encuentras uno que otro que realmente está interesando en las personas, en su desarrollo, en que vivan mejor, a esos son a los que yo procuraba invertirlos, identificarlos, invertirles atención, formación, tiempo, colaboración, etc. Pero tienes que lidiar con todos los que son muy protagónicos y quieren que su institución sea la que se lleve las palmas y que los letreros. Por ejemplo, en la vivienda sustentable que este... de repente la Universidad Tecnológica llego y puso como si hubiera sido nada más un proyecto de ellos y las demás instituciones dijimos 'no, aquí tienen... en esta parte tiene que estar mi logotipo del Inifap, en esta tiene que estar la otra..., respeten, den créditos' aun que colaboraron el proyecto es multidisciplinario e interinstitucional. Entonces ahí hay que tener y dejar las cosas muy claras y se pueden quedar los acuerdos por escritos y se deben de quedar para a la hora de fincar responsabilidades. Porque también

hay veces que debes de fincar responsabilidades, de donde están los recursos destinados a esta actividad que si se cumplió o no. Debe de haber un responsable y un nombre ahí, pero también para dar el reconocimiento de quien hizo esa actividad que nos pueda explicar realmente los porqués, de donde surgió, como, etc., esa es en la relación con los profesionales.

En la relación con la comunidad, bueno... hay autoridades locales, hay un comisariado ejidal que es elegido, es la tenencia de tierra que tenemos en México. Pequeños propietarios que son los que compraron la tierra, a vecindados que son los que llegan a vivir, pero no tienen tierra. Casi los a vecindados son los hijos de los ejidatarios o de los pequeños propietarios que forman una nueva familia y les dan un terrenito para que hacer una casa, pero ya no tienen derechos ejidales para aprovechar las áreas comunales o no tienen tierra para cultivar. Entonces, del comisariado ejidal hay un comité, un presidente, secretario, tesorero, etc., y tú te diriges con el presidente y el tiene poder de convocatoria, para los que son a vecindados hay un delegado, el delegado comunal representa a toda la comunidad entonces casi siempre tú tienes que ir a informarle a el ,que vas a intervenir y que necesitas que convoquen entre los dos a una reunión, donde tú te presentas, les tienes que decir 'mira yo voy a estar viniendo, este es mi objetivo, yo quiero hacer esto con ustedes' y ahí se corre la voz y no llamas la atención. Últimamente en México se ha puesto la seguridad muy difícil para todo el mundo, entonces si no saben quién eres tú y que andas haciendo en la comunidad la gente, como te digo te ignora totalmente, no asiste a las reuniones, no te abre la puerta, no te habla, entonces es como si no hubiera nadie ahí.

Si logras que la gente acepte participar contigo pues después tu ya vas a hacer las convocatorias de reunión para lo que sea para que asistan los interesados a lo mejor vamos hacer una campaña de vacunación, para retomar ese ejemplo, 'todos los que sean ganaderos asistan por favor' porque vamos a dar información de cómo nos vamos a organizar, de que días vamos a venir, que hora le toca a cada quien, bueno ya los interesados asisten. Ya al principio, casi siempre te va mal porque van cinco gentes y tú haces la planeación con ellos ya que los demás vieron que si era de verdad te empiezan a buscar 'fíjese que yo también estaba interesado, pero no pude porque se murió mi abuelita o porque'... así te inventan cosas. Entonces tu tiene que volver a empezar ¿verdad? Bueno, hagámoslo pues otra vez y ya te van saliendo mejor las reuniones, así poco a poco vas ganando confianza. A veces ya tu citas y dicen 'ah sí, ya sabemos que ella si cumple' entonces tu tienes que ganarte la confianza para lo cual tienes que ser comprometida, metódica, a lo que te comprometes, el día que te comprometes, en el horario que te comprometes estar y ellos pueden casi siempre, los hombres pueden estar en sábado o domingo. Entonces, si demanda mucho sacrificio de tu tiempo de familia dedicarle a la comunidad, si se vuelve complicado, pero has estados haciendo relaciones de confianza y al rato ya te dejan hablar con su mujer, ya saben que no eres de mala intención, que no eres mala persona y así esto se gana en el largo plazo.

Este... las intervenciones deben de ser de largo plazo para que sean exitosas. Fíjate que a partir del primero de julio soy jubilada entonces ahorita estoy en ese proceso de estar analizando, de estar pensando que tanto hice bien, que tanto hice mal y luego digo, ya lo que hice y nunca lo hice para que me lo agradecieran o reconociera, ojalá...si deje muchos amigos en las comunidades, muchas personas con las que puedo volver, pero uno siempre se va a cuestionar, siempre se va a seguir preguntando. Bueno como te digo, los desafíos son la manera en que intervienes. Entonces tú tienes que ver cuáles son los recursos que tienes para intervenir, en cuanto a tiempo, en cuanto a recursos económicos y en cuanto tiempo tienes que lograr tus objetivos entonces, si tú vas sola debes de recurrir a las autoridades en primera instancia y debes de recurrir a los líderes, tanto locales como externos, al técnico que siempre va, alguien que te permita... que te de la confianza ante la gente. Tú debes de lograr que las personas tengan confianza en ti, desde cómo te paras en la comunidad o das confianza o das desconfianza ¿verdad? Desde que, si les vas a intentar robar al marido hasta que, si les vas a intentar quitar sus tierras, hasta que si... bueno, ¿la gente se imagina de todo no? Entonces lo primero que hay



que lograr es confianza, si tú no tienes ese largo plazo recurre a la confianza que han logrado otros para que te presenten y te abran la puerta y te sea más fácil y más corto el plazo en que logras confianza y en el que puedes cumplir tus objetivos o en el que tienes la confianza para cumplir tus objetivos los que sean, que ojalá siempre sean para dar servicio a las personas que lo necesitan.

Hay muchas personas en todos lados que tienen recursos suficientes para resolver sus problemas, como educación, como dinero, pero también hay muchas personas que, si no le hechas las mano ellos van a seguir enfermos, van a seguir ignorantes, van a seguir siendo pobres. Otro factor que es importantísimo es que llevas, o sea como te decía, este concepto de tecnologías apropiadas, este... debes de revisarlo porque ahí te dice como resolver los problemas y primero hay que agotar los recursos que ellos tienen de todo a todo y después llevar recursos de afuera. Después llevar tecnología de afuera para no impactar al medio ambiente, para que sea aceptado socialmente, y para que sea posible económicamente. Esas son las tecnologías apropiadas y eso puede elevar el índice de participación en las personas. Así pues, tener éxito digamos, así te aproximas al éxito dependiendo también de que consideres éxito.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

Fíjate que eso también es un tema bien interesante porque yo llegue a ubicar que la gente esperaba que... hay un líder técnico o un líder que casi siempre es el que menos te imaginas, el más calladito. Toda la gente está hablando, pero cuando el líder, después de tiempo lo identificas, cuando el líder acepta todos los demás aceptan. Entonces tienes que lograr primero que ese líder que necesitas asista a la reunión, a lo mejor tienes que hacer trabajo previo ¿no? Yo tenía uno en una comunidad muy identificado y antes de yo hacer una asamblea, así le llaman cuando citas a una comunidad, yo iba con el señor y le decía '¿puedo platicar con usted?', y entonces le decía primero a el 'es que mire, estamos haciendo este plan y queremos hacer un sendero' en donde las personas se puedan dar cuenta tanto los de la comunidad como los que invitamos, un sendero en donde se den cuenta de que problema de erosión de suelos hay, de que problemas hay en la agricultura, de que problemas de deforestación o de sobrepastoreo, sobrecarga animal.

Entonces obviamente no utilizaba todos estos términos, yo le explicaba al señor lo que yo iba hacer y lo que iba proponer porque había identificado que esos eran problemas reales y entonces el me decía 'pues mire vamos nos por partes, primero vamos a hacer esto y esto y si eso no sale pasamos al tercer plan' y eso era un poco para probarme a mí, para probar las tecnologías que proponía y para ver si la gente lo aceptaba y lo hacía. Entonces yo hacía esto con Don Inés, se llamaba el señor y le decía y rogaba, y le pedía, le llevo su refresco preferido si va a la reunión y el señor asistía y se sentaba allá, era un señor ya grande y se sentaba por allá en una sillita en la esquina del salón o donde fuera la asamblea, o al aire libre también entonces ya me dejaba que yo dijera todo lo que tenía que decir, obviamente yo atendía a sus recomendaciones puntualmente y la gente me hacía todos los cuestionamientos, todas las preguntas, había siempre los negativos, había siempre los muy positivos pero todos como que iban ganando tiempo, escuchando más, escuchando información y ya cuando don Inés decía 'como ven si le entramos, como ven si participamos con ella, vamos darle oportunidad, se ve buena gente' así decía el señor, 'se ve buena gente', 'se ve que pues... total si no nos sale pues no vamos a perder nada la que va perder va ser ella' 'perder su tiempo, perder sus recursos como lo ven?' y entonces ya la gente decía 'si' y podíamos arrancar un programa entonces yo ya llegaba con un plan de acción, 'bueno no se me vayan entonces vamos arrancar con esta primera actividad. ¿Como ven?, esta fecha o la otra...' y entonces... así es como yo aprendí a detonar la participación, estoy diciendo lo que sirve después de mucha experiencia.

Si quieres experiencia de fracasos tengo muchas, pero te digo las que sirven, por ejemplo, acá como el temporal es muy riesgosa, cuando no llueve a tiempo y no siembras a tiempo maíz, aquí a la gente lo que le interesa sembrar es lo que se come que es maíz y frijol. Te estoy hablando de comunidades pobres entonces cuando no siembran a tiempo les tocan las heladas y no van a cosechar más que rastrojos entonces ellos aspiran al rastrojo para alimentar al ganado, pero el rastrojo es un forraje de muy mala calidad. Yo trataba de convencerlos que sembraran avena, entonces les dije 'miren, que les parece que establezcamos 6 parcelas de avena, que es de un ciclo mucho más corto, que es un forraje de más calidad que se va a salvar de las heladas y cuando ustedes necesiten comprar maíz y frijol van a poder vender un ganado gordo para comprar maíz y frijol y así no pierden todo sembrando maíz y frijol. Algunas personas aceptaron y yo establecí, haz de cuenta 4 parcelas de avena y la avena en algunos terrenos dio maravillosamente, creció obviamente avena de variedades de temporales en esta condición, creció maravillosamente, pero la gente me la cosecho antes de que yo tomara datos ¿por qué? Pues porque le surgía el forraje, porque ellos decían que ellos cuando sembraban avena la cortaban pronto para que volviera a crecer y así tenían 2 o 3 cortes y entonces yo 'hay dios mío, ¿y mis datos?' No me dejaron rastrear, ya cuando yo llegaba ya tenían ahí extendidas secándose en sus patios y eso fue porque aún yo explicándoles lo que íbamos hacer como una actividad de transferencia de tecnología, no va, esta primero lo que ellos saben hacer tradicionalmente y quieren hacer entonces no me entienden o no me atienden o aquella y sus datos quien sabe para que servirán. Esos eran datos básicos para yo poder conseguir un apoyo y seguir trabajando con esta idea.

Si ya te paso el temporal y ya no vas a poder sembrar maíz y frijol intentándolo con avena que es mejor forraje. Otro ejemplo el de forraje verde, la gente me dijo vamos a venir a trabajar al invernadero todos los de la comunidad para producir en este invernadero que nos ofrecía mejor condición de producción. Le decimos invernadero, pero era solamente una protección de plástico de 4x4, pero estaba diseñada para que el agua escurriera, reutilizarla y para utilizar menos agua y para protegerla de los pájaros o sea pensamos en todo menos en que si la dueña del invernadero no estaba, la gente simplemente no se metía, entonces ese fue otro fracaso que me hizo aprender que aun que me prometan que van a trabajar juntos no cumplen. La participación depende de otras cosas, de que, si es mi comadre, de que, si es mi pariente, aunque sea mi pariente de que, si me llevo bien con ella, de que antecedentes que historia tengo con ella para llevarme bien o darle confianza o no darle confianza. Había hermanos que no mas podían trabajar juntos y había compadres que trabajaban maravillosamente juntos. Bueno, esas son las experiencias de fracaso que me hicieron aprender mucho.

# APPENDIX H

## Equity Park

Interviewee: José Lagunes Trejo

Lagunes Trejo is an architect and urban designer based in Mexico. His practice involves working in partnership with a private organisation Fundación Hogares in the delivery of community projects through activities and initiatives that support the UN (United Nations) development plan in finding strategies that strengthen community participation in marginalised communities and in the co-production of public spaces.<sup>504</sup> Currently, he is a tutor in architecture at the University Anáhuac Mexico Norte.

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La fundación trabaja, como bien lo mencionabas en la promoción de la participación comunitaria para fortalecer la cohesión social. Nosotros trabajamos en contextos urbanos principalmente de vivienda social y en estos contextos es donde nosotros servimos como facilitadores para detonar procesos en donde las personas identifican sus necesidades y sean ellas, quienes, a partir de esta identificación solucionen o diseñen las soluciones para estos problemas o potencialidades que encuentren. Entonces un poco lo que hacemos en estos contextos. La fundación tiene 3 líneas de acción, la primera son intervenciones físicas, que pueden ser y que tienen que ver con la recuperación de del espacio público, de espacios de diferentes escalas que pueden ser espacios subutilizados o espacios remanentes. En de barrios trabajamos en algunos vecindarios y también con la apropiación del espacio público como tal. Eso sería como la segunda línea, que son las intervenciones sociales que tiene que ver con un tema de la identificación de necesidades, de la elaboración de diagnósticos comunitarios en donde las personas participan, desde encuestas, mapeos, diferentes tipos de talleres, diferentes metodologías participativas y procesos en donde, puede ser como por ejemplo la intervención urbana de un mural.

Y después el ultimo eje es el impacto, ¿no? la Medición de impacto y evaluación. Nosotros desarrollamos un indicador propio que se llama índice de cohesión social vecinal. Y este índice mide los conflictos interpersonales, sentido de pertenencia, comportamiento participativo e identidad. Entonces son los 4 elementos que aportan para ver cómo están las condiciones de cohesión social y eso lo levantamos en dos momentos, primero antes de la intervención, cuando estamos haciendo el análisis del territorio, es decir de entender quiénes son las personas que habitan allí, como están las condiciones de infraestructura del tejido social y de ahí entra como tal todo el programa. Elaboramos como un plan de acción comunitaria, que no es más que un plan de barrio, en donde las personas que hacen esa lista, casi una lista de Santa Claus de lo que quieren para su comunidad y sobre eso se ejecutan los proyectos, luego se elabora un cronograma, etc.

A la par que vamos formando como estos grupos comunitarios alzamos manos de los líderes que hay ahí. Y después, ya sea la intervención, o recuperación de un espacio público como puede ser un parque, o un parque lineal o la creación de un centro comunitario dejamos que pasen 6 meses ya de que nosotros nos retiramos y de que ya se inauguró el centro y el parque o lo que sea. Es como dejar que se enfríen un poquito las cosas y luego levantamos nuevamente este indicador con la intención,

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<sup>504</sup> Fundación Hogares, *Hacemos Comunidad* (2023) <<https://fundacionhogares.org/>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

ya sabes que cuando hay algo nuevo y luego del proceso pues todo es felicidad y todo el mundo va decir, 'mis vecinos son mis super *brothers*,' el parque quedo espectacular pero ya después de 6 meses que es que viene el tema de mantenimiento y como ya no hay un seguimiento tan de cerca a estos grupos que se crearon y demás pueden llegar a surgir ciertos conflictos que es lo que queremos medir en el segundo momento. Entonces esto tiene una escala de 1 al 10, la idea y lo que nos ha dicho la experiencia es que si por ejemplo entramos en un 4.5 de cohesión social, en este segundo momento tiende a subir y puede terminar en un 5.2, 4.8 y es lo que medimos y cada uno de los elementos como se comportaron.

Entonces eso es como a grandes rasgos lo que hacemos en la fundación y del proyecto en si, como hay dos vertientes creo que este que acabamos de tener en octubre sintetiza muy bien todo lo que te acabo de platicar y es la participación en el proyecto del parque de la equidad en Cancún. Es un proyecto de un parque lineal de 16 km en 3 de las avenidas principales de Cancún y ahí lo que hicimos fue llevar a cabo una estrategia de diagnóstico y planeación participativa con la comunidad para recoger ese imaginario colectivo de lo que las personas quisieran en ese parque. Hicimos diferentes jornadas, nos enfrentamos al Covid obviamente, fue un proceso de... justo acabamos de entregar como los diferentes entregables, valga la redundancia, y veíamos en la etapa del cronograma justo como se iba recorriendo y recorriendo por el tema del Covid. Entonces ahí tuvimos que echar mano de diferentes medios de resiliencia, literal, para irnos adaptando y poder llevar a cabo las actividades. Se hizo ahí un híbrido entre participación digital y participación presencial.

**What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

Ahí fue, te digo como eran 16 km lo interesante es que había estas 3 avenidas, era como una C haz de cuenta, había diferentes sectores de población o sea a había un sector que era un asentamiento humano irregular luego había unas privadas que, estaban cerradas, fraccionamientos cerrados como de nivel medio, medio alto y luego había vivienda social en un sector de las avenidas y en la avenida principal, la avenida Chacmol, había viviendas multifamiliares de sector medio por así decirlo, de medio a medio bajo. Entonces lo que empezamos a ver... primero hicimos un levantamiento de usos de suelo y vimos que la ocupación era principalmente residencial, unifamiliar y multifamiliar, pero principalmente residencial, había muchos vacíos urbanos entonces eso para la elaboración del plan maestro nos servía, como validar cada uno de esos lotes para de esa manera poder incluso poner sobre la mesa con la comunidad que se imagina que pudiera suceder en esos vacíos urbanos.

Una de las principales necesidades que nos refirieron las personas fue el tema de la seguridad. Hay un tema como muy delicado ahora mismo con violencia contra la mujer en Cancún. Y en los ejercicios del mapeo colaborativo justo lo que hicimos fue trabajar con esos datos en mesas, ahí seccionamos las respuestas de mujeres con hombres, para tener esta perspectiva de género y se realizaron dos mapas. Entonces en un mapa tenemos, si quieres te lo enseño y luego te lo comparto, pero los principales puntos que salían era acoso, tenemos identificado en donde es que se da el acoso a las mujeres, asaltos, robos a tiendas de conveniencia tipo Oxsos y donde vende cervezas y esas cosas y temas de feminicidio. ¿No? Como muy delicado, o sea en los baldíos, en estos vacíos urbanos en donde han aparecido mujeres asesinadas, hay secuestros. O sea, como el tema de la seguridad era importante.

Otro de los temas es el abandono de los espacios públicos que nos referían que, hay muchos parques en la ciudad pero que no tienen mantenimiento, las luminarias no funcionan, no hay como un programa de activación entonces los espacios tienen el equipamiento, pero el equipamiento no tiene mantenimiento o no hay nada, pues no hay como una promoción de actividades en el espacio público

entonces no permite como la apropiación como tal de las personas. Lo que vimos también es que hay ciertos lugares donde si hay espacios públicos activos pero que no necesariamente tienen todo el equipamiento o la infraestructura que otros. Entonces eso era bien interesante porque por ejemplo había un baldío que las personas habían limpiado y donde juegan, practican tochito, que es como una especie de futbol americano con un balón normal. Te pones como una banderita entonces ahí como que te tiene que quitar y así. Hay esa práctica y también practican futbol, hay un chavo ahí que da clases de futbol y los días que estuvimos nosotros ahí, los sábados por la mañana, a parte de las practicas estas deportivas se pone un tianguis entonces era interesante como esa doble función que tenía este espacio que no tenía absolutamente ningún equipamiento más que el alumbrado público que en las noches, nos decían las personas que es oscuro. Pero las personas reconocían ese valor, como esa ubicación estratégica porque es donde... es un nodo en donde se juntan esa avenida Chacmol y otra avenida principal que es la avenida Cancún entonces justo en ese nodo es donde las personas han reconocido como ese punto clave para actividades tanto comercial como deportiva.

Y otras de las problemáticas, es que justo en esa zona, te platico, que la sección del camellón, la idea del parque lineal que va a suceder en el camellón y la sección es como de 40 a 60 metros entonces es muy generosa por eso ahí de repente ponen tianguis, puede suceder ahí una cancha por así decirlo, pero son vialidades rápidas porque son avenidas, entonces tenemos también identificados como puntos inseguros en donde ha habido atropellamientos, no hay una ciclovía marcada como tal que es una de las demandas de la gente. O sea que justo esas 3 avenidas tengan una ciclovía, porque mucha gente, sorprendentemente en Cancún se transportan en bicicleta, usan como principal medio de transporte. Entonces eran como de las principales cosas que nos dijeron: la inseguridad como hacia actividades criminal, el tema de seguridad vial, y el mantenimiento de espacios públicos.

Este proyecto nace de una alianza de Quintana Roo como tal, el gobierno de Quintana Roo tiene una agencia de proyectos estratégicos. Y es un proyecto que está respaldado por el gobierno del estado, es financiado por el gobierno del estado y ahí está la GEPRO para tener esta validación, esta consultoría la ONU y nosotros trabajamos en colaboración con UNHabitat que implementamos como esta estrategia participativa. Entonces se hace un lanzamiento de proyecto por parte de del gobierno invitando a todas las personas a que participen y nosotros ya en territorio, casi que puerta a puerta, llevamos una estrategia de comunicación, difusión tanto en redes sociales como en el territorio y también en medios, pues radio, televisión y demás. Entonces nosotros encontramos que cuando la primera vez que llegamos a Cancún para hacer como estos primeros recorridos para reconocer el sitio y tener estas primeras conversaciones con las personas, ya había como un poquito de eco de que el parque de la equidad iba a suceder. Entonces las personas estaban muy entusiasmadas con el hecho de poder participar con involucrarse, con saber cuándo va a pasar, cuando empieza, cuando van a construir, como todo ese tipo de cosas. Y la verdad que a pesar del Covid no esperábamos que hubiera tanta participación por la pandemia, la verdad que la actitud de las personas fue muy buena, estaban muy entusiasmados.

Creemos que fue un poco como un primer proceso como realmente abierto y participativo para todas las personas porque incluso nos llegaron a decir 'es que nunca nos preguntan' como ese tipo de comentarios nos hacían. Y había, fueron minorías, pero si había comentarios como de 'no van a hacer nada si es del gobierno, seguro no hacen nada' y esa desconfianza porque realmente nunca se abre estos procesos, siempre siendo un proyecto de gobierno se esperaba que pues, que nada más pongan carteles de se inaugura la obra y ya ¿no?, Y no se invita a que des tu opinión y lejos de que se invite a dar la opinión que vaya ser implementada en un plan maestro o en un proyecto arquitectónico entonces creo que eso fue lo que nosotros tratamos de tejer desde nuestra estrategia de comunicación con las personas, el cómo transmitir desde que es un plan maestro, para que sirva este

proceso, como las opiniones de todas y todos se van a ver vertidas en un proyecto arquitectónico y pues impulsarlos a que se unan a las actividades. En una de las actividades decían 'no, pues una pista de patinaje, no, pero es muy caro' nosotros pues, al contrario, o sea, pónganlo porque es como la carta de Santa Claus y más vale que todo quede pues expresado para que más opiniones tengamos sobre una fuente, o sobre una cancha deportiva, lo que sea pues, eso es insumo para que las personas encargadas de hacer el diseño y de ejecutarlo lo tomen en cuenta.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

Pues ahí, por ejemplo, es un proyecto que por su escala está dividido en etapas. Ahora mismo la primera etapa es... hubo un cambio ahí, primero iba ser una sola sección del parque que cubría 1.2 kilómetros y que iba a estar como toda intervenida en equipamiento, infraestructura, mobiliario, todo en ese 1.2 kilómetros, pero después en conversaciones entre los encargados del proyecto se dieron cuenta que de alguna manera 1.2 kilómetros no iba tener un impacto dentro de los 16 kilómetros, es muy grande la escala, es una escala metropolitana. Entonces para poner en contexto los beneficiarios son la tercera parte de la población de la ciudad entonces es un proyecto importante y de movilidad también, de conectividad. Entonces se determinó que, en lugar de intervenir este 1.2 km se iban a intervenir los 16 km en una primera etapa, con infraestructura de alumbrado, una ciclovía, y andadores y un tema de vegetación, de reforestación. Entonces esa es como la primera etapa y en las siguientes etapas se tiene considerado la integración de equipamiento derivado de este plan maestro que está surgiendo por el diagnóstico que realizamos en territorio se podrá determinar si va haber zonas deportivas, zonas culturales, alguna zona comercial, o sea cafés, zonas infantiles que también fueron de las cosas que nos dijeron las personas, que hacía falta como lugares para niñas y niños, lugares para mascotas, lugares para hacer ejercicios, talleres artísticos, culturales y demás. Entonces, eso va a ir sucediendo pues en el tiempo, en un plazo que está proyectado para los siguientes 5 u 8 años. Esta fue como la primera etapa, pero se quería integrar dentro de esta primera etapa, que no suele hacerse el tema participativo. O sea, ya de por sí esta estrategia de participación y planeación es la etapa 1 como tal, y es lo que va a determinar las siguientes etapas, pero en términos de temporalidad, ahora mismo ya está sucediendo, está en construcción esta primera etapa de los 16 km de ciclo pista y lo demás vendrá en el tiempo siguiente.

Y un poco lo que preguntabas sobre, por qué fue exitoso creo que es la suma de alianzas desde la parte de gobierno con una agencia internacional como consultora y experta en temas de organización civil. Desde la parte de la fundación la experiencia en temas de participación y fue un proyecto que yo diría que estuvo muy planeado a consecuencia de la pandemia nos obligó a echar unos pasitos para atrás e irnos mucho al detalle de como íbamos a comunicar las cosas, como nos íbamos a involucrar con las personas, hasta los instrumentos de participación, las herramientas como tal, como los teníamos que diseñar para generar un 'engagement' pero también para que hubiera todo este cuidado en cuanto a la seguridad en el tema de la pandemia y de que las actividades presenciales no fuera un impedimento para que las personas participaran sino al contrario, o sea que hubiera las condiciones para que ellas participaran.

Hablando de los formatos otros de los puntos que fue muy asertivo de nuestra parte fue de que identificamos los lugares, como estos nodos de encuentro que en Cancún fueron los tianguis y tuvimos pues este acercamiento con las personas que organizan los tianguis y nos dieron como un puestecito y ahí es donde montamos los módulos y eso nos permitió llegar a un mayor número de personas y a sectores de esta zona de influencia de los 16 km. Que a lo mejor si nos hubiéramos puesto en un parque específico o en un espacio público como tal no hubiéramos llegado, porque a lo mejor no todas las personas van como, por ejemplo, no se voy a decir, al domo de la 510 pues lo consideran que solo

van los chavos a hacer deporte o solo van los que patinan y entonces las señoras y los adultos mayores no van a los parques, pero si van a los tianguis. Y a parte las personas lo utilizan como recreación o sea van en familia a los tianguis y ahí desayunan o se comen los esquites, las marquesitas, las micheladas y ese tipo de cosas, lo usan como paseo y también los tianguis están muy bien organizados. O sea, tenían como unas medidas de seguridad y de contingencia muy bien establecidas, con el tema de gel antibacterial, la sana distancia de los locales y eso permitió también que pudiéramos desarrollar mejor las jornadas.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

Uno de los puntos que se trabajo fue dar visibilidad a los resultados de este diagnóstico, por ejemplo, parte de la estrategia de comunicación fue elaborar una página de Facebook una fanpage, y ahí íbamos publicando sobre todo para dar seguimiento y convocar a las actividades tanto de participación digital, como de participación presencial y nos dimos cuenta que era como más efectivo el tema de Facebook porque todo el mundo tiene Facebook y eso porque estuvimos barajando mucho como el tema de si era mejor hacer una página institucional porque le da más respaldo al proyecto que una página de Facebook. Sin embargo por el sector de la población en el que nos encontrábamos hay mucha gente que no tiene acceso a datos móviles y cuando tu recargas tu teléfono como es de chip no con un plan de datos como tal, sino que le vas recargando 100 pesos, 50 pesos o lo que sea te incluye Facebook y Whatsapp gratis, siempre están incluidas esas dos redes sociales, entonces nos dimos cuenta que todas las personas tenían acceso a Facebook e incluso, te digo, en los primeros acercamientos todos nos decían 'si ya vimos en Facebook que esto que lo otro' entonces fue así de decidimos que Facebook era un medio importante para comunicar.

Entonces al termino de estas jornadas de participación lo que hicimos fue ir subiendo fotos de como estábamos llevando a cabo el proceso para que las personas que participaban se sintieran seguras y reconocidas también dentro del proceso y luego de la sistematización fuimos publicando los resultados por ejemplo de las actividades, había una actividad en donde les preguntábamos que actividades te gustaría que hubiera en el parque de la equidad y que espacios te gustaría que tuviera entonces, en *post-it* las personas nos anotaban ideas sobre 'no, pues yo quiero que haya un espacio para mascotas, yo quiero que haya toboganes', cosas así y de actividades nos decían, talleres de lenguas indígenas, clases de baile, danza regional, que haya bailables, etc. Entonces esos elementos los íbamos pegando, era una lona de 2.30x2.30 de altura y entonces era como muy visiblemente atractivo y eso también ayudaba como que las personas se quedaban viendo y decían 'que está pasando aquí' también yo quiero jugar al *post-it* entonces ahí nos iban escribiendo y demás y eso después lo sistematizamos y fuimos diciendo 'no pues derivados de esta jornada, las personas nos dijeron que quieren espacios deportivos, que quieren, no sé, espacios acuáticos, que quieren un teatro, que quieren esto y lo otro' entonces eso también ayudo a que, pues no se quede solo como el proceso participativo para cumplir con un requisito del *checklist* sino que vaya generando un tema como de memoria colectiva y las personas se acuerdan que participaron en el proceso.

Incluso nosotros volvimos 3 o 4 semanas después de la última jornada participativa, hicimos una jornada extraordinaria en un espacio público de la ciudad, ya no fue en el centro de la ciudad, ya no en la zona de estos 16 km sino en un espacio a donde van las personas de toda la ciudad incluso turistas y demás, y ahí nos dijeron 'ah sí, yo estuve en la jornada del tianguis de la 100' como que las personas si ubicaban, ya nos reconocían como los que estábamos haciendo ese proceso. Entonces tuvimos como de 4 días de jornada, de jueves a domingo en la mañana y en la tarde y eso nos permitía como ir haciendo eco y estábamos por todas partes entonces la intención era como generar ese recuerdo en las personas, como dejar esa semillita sembrada de que las personas fueron parte de un

proceso, pero también que si después, digamos si en 2 años no está pasando nada en el parque de la equidad que esas personas sean las primeras que levanten la mano y digan 'oye qué onda con el parque, o sea yo estuve hace 2 años, me preguntaron, participe, dijimos esto porque no está pasando nada' o sea como también ciudadanos activos y demandantes de un proyecto que se prometió en su momento y del que se inició un gran proceso.

Entonces esa era una de las cuestiones y también hicimos talleres con actores claves de la zona, de la región se dividió como por sectores desde academia, sector público, sector privado y organizaciones de la sociedad civil o asociaciones locales. Entonces lo mismo, lo que se buscaba era recoger también su imaginario de que podía pasar con esta zona, pero también dejarles como esa tarea de darle la continuidad porque al final nosotros desafortunadamente nos vamos, solo implementamos en territorio, pero nuestra tarea también es dar visibilidad a eso que hicimos, a los resultados para que después las personas, los actores locales puedan darle esa continuidad porque también, por ejemplo en estos temas que te decía de la inseguridad, la violencia contra la mujer, nosotros como tal y el proyecto quizá no vaya a poder solucionar mucho esos temas porque son temas más estructurales, seguridad pública y demás pero los visibiliza en primer lugar y al mostrar estos datos, estos mapas en donde tenemos identificados perfecto los puntos en donde acosan, los puntos en donde asaltan, los puntos en donde han aparecido personas muertas, esto al pasárselo a las instituciones indicadas pues se podrán tomar cartas en el asunto. Entonces es como cada uno desde su trinchera puede aportar para que el impacto sea mayor y como desde un proyecto de recuperación de un espacio y de una intervención puede ser como una intervención socio espacial y se pueden también como detonar o catalizar otros temas y resolver problemáticas mayores.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

Fue una estrategia que nos valimos de difusión en redes sociales, pero también hicimos contacto puerta a puerta. Nosotros previos a las jornadas, haz de cuenta que nosotros llegamos como un lunes y la jornada era el jueves. Entonces de lunes a miércoles era convocar, o sea nos íbamos en el coche a diferentes partes de la ciudad de la zona está de influencia entre los 16 km y era como ir a invitar a las personas a participar. Casa a casa, dejando volantes, pegando carteles y era ubicar también en un primer momento estos lugares, estos nodos para que la participación fuera casi espontánea de alguna manera. Teníamos identificados que había estos tianguis y el campo de tochito, al ponernos ahí, sabíamos que la participación se iba dar casi involuntariamente y también tuvo que ver el hecho de que los formatos que utilizamos ayudaron porque lo que nosotros trabajamos en la fundación eran como estos talleres en donde tenemos diferentes actividades pero todas las personas participan como en todas las actividades, y van casi que, una actividad es la consecuencia de la otra son formatos que a lo mejor teníamos 25 personas, más como un *focus group* y era un taller de casi 3 horas. Entonces lo que hicimos acá por el tema de la pandemia, o sea eso no podía suceder y también porque teníamos una meta de participación importante, necesitábamos por lo menos 1000 personas que participaran entonces dijimos 'no puede suceder ahora,' porque un taller como tal en ese formato o por las condiciones, medidas de sanidad, de contingencia tendría que ser de aforo de 5 personas para mantener la sana distancia y lo teníamos que multiplicar por muchos.

Entonces lo que hicimos fue que las actividades eran individuales y todas las personas van participando en cada una de las actividades, pero si de pronto tenían prisa, por sus rutinas de la vida diaria a lo mejor solo participaban en los *post-it* y se iban, y estaba bien o sea ya teníamos esa participación. Entonces las actividades se sistematizaron de manera individual eso nos ayudó a que por ejemplo el tema del programa arquitectónico se pudiera hacer de manera, como muy específica y fue el que tuvo



mayor número de participantes porque era la actividad más lúdica, en donde había más interacción. Entonces por esa interacción y estas preguntas, que eran preguntas muy abiertas como '¿qué espacios te gustaría que hubiera?' se generaba un dialogo con las personas, casi un dialogo pedagógico, mutuo en donde no solo nosotros enseñábamos sino ellos nos enseñaban también de sus prácticas culturales, por ejemplo, nos llamaba mucho la atención del tema de los bailables de la danza regional. Nos decían las personas que era algo que se había perdido un poco y que antes sucedían en la ciudad, sobre todo personas adultas mayores y el tema de recuperar las lenguas indígenas, de regularización académica. Entonces eran como que en una conversación como de 2 minutos puedes tener todos esos anhelos de las personas y la verdad es que, en su mayoría, de lo que yo pude experimentar me habrán tocado 3 comentarios negativos de personas que no quisieron participar y nada más hicieron como literal 'no, que no se va a hacer nada', 'es que nunca hacen nada', 'se lo roban' ya sabes, ese tipo de cosas, pero fueron 3, 4 como mucho y lo demás fue una actitud muy positiva.

Había también un entusiasmo muy importante en los niños y niñas, teníamos una actividad en donde pedíamos a este grupo de edad que nos dibujaran como se imaginarían que sería su parque, entonces en lo que dibujaban también te iban platicando 'es que por mi casa hay unos columpios, pero no sirven' entonces ellos van reconociendo estos elementos del entorno urbano y lo que está bien y lo que está mal, sin a lo mejor decírtelo desde una perspectiva completamente negativa o completamente positiva pero eso lo que ellos experimentan en el día a día 'es que yo quisiera un parque porque por mi casa no hay' o 'está muy oscuro entonces mi mama no me deja ir.' Entonces son como estos formatos tan abiertos permitieron esta comunicación en el 1 a 1 con las personas. También nos encontramos que algunas personas no sabían leer ni escribir, entonces les daba como pena participar, y entonces no te lo decían, se quedaban con el *post-it*, y nosotros les decíamos '¿se lo escribo señora?' o '¿le ayudo?' y ya ahí decían 'si por favor' o 'me lo escribes tu? Es que yo tengo fea letra', algo así te decían, entonces ya tú lo escribías y empezaba como su dialogo. Que era más una conversación, no tanto de 'quiero una ciclo pista, quiero una alberca, y quiero una escuela' sino 'pues es que los niños no tienen donde jugar' o 'está muy peligroso porque en la noche no hay iluminación' entonces ya empiezas como a abstraer: alumbrado público, seguridad, juegos infantiles, etc. a partir de una conversación muy simple con las personas.

También, luego nos pasaba que no entendían como tal, el concepto de espacios y actividades entonces era ir como nosotros también cambiando ese lenguaje para comunicarlo de una mejor manera porque muchas veces hablamos de objetivos de desarrollo sostenible por ejemplo y es una agenda global que no esta bajada como a territorio y que si a las personas les hablas de equidad de género o del concepto de equidad, pues a lo mejor no lo saben, no por ignorancia sino porque no le llaman así. No le ponen como ese título. Nos pasó también, por ejemplo, super chistoso, nosotros para dividir las opiniones en cuanto a sexo, a los hombres les dábamos un *post-it* rosado y a las mujeres azul. Entonces eso les explotaba la cabeza, o sea era como 'no, yo no quiero el azul' así te lo juro, 'rosa es para mujeres, y el azul para nosotros' y yo así de 'no pasa nada, no va a pasar nada' es únicamente para diferenciar. Y no solo con los hombres, también con las mujeres que era muy interesante, o sea, las mujeres, algunas, no todas, querían agarrar el rosa 'y nosotros así, no el tuyo es el azul' entonces de esa manera como que 'rompemos' un poquito el estereotipo y generamos un dialogo de 'no pasa nada, como todos inclusivos y no pasa nada porque escribas con un plumón rosa' porque había también una actividad o sea a todos les dábamos un plumón que se quedaban durante toda la actividad para no estarse prestándose materiales por el tema del Covid y demás. Entonces, 'no pasa nada si escribes con el rosa o con el azul' y luego iba un señor con su esposa y su niño, un niño como de 8 años, creo, y el niño era el que quería cambiar el color, o sea que 'no, porque yo rosa' y el papa fue el que le dijo 'no pasa nada, puede ser rosa o azul' algo así, palabras más palabras menos, pero le dijo 'no pasa nada hijo, puedes escribir ahí'. Entonces con algo tan sencillo como un color, empiezas un dialogo entonces

creo que esto fue lo que estuvo muy interesante y en general poder recibir estos anhelos y estas historias del día a día de las personas.

En general lo comentamos mucho entre los que estuvimos en el equipo que la actitud fue muy propositiva, también en querer participar. La meta era 1000 personas y tuvimos casi, ¿cuántas? cerca de 2000 personas participantes y eso en cuanto a personas, pero en opiniones tuvimos más de 4000 opiniones por los diferentes formatos porque al final en cada uno de los formatos, o sea eran 5 actividades entonces si la persona participaba en 5 pues tenía esas 5 opiniones entonces por eso fue más de 4000 y cachito de opiniones y eso nos da un insumo muy rico como para trabajar y que se puede filtrar por grupos de edad, por sexo, por ocupación, por lugar de origen, lugar de residencia. Dentro de estos 16 km había diferentes colonias, diferentes regiones entonces todas esas bases de datos se podían filtrar de esa manera.

En cuanto a las personas involucradas, el equipo como tal nosotros teníamos unos colaboradores que hacían el trabajo de campo y en cuanto a disciplinas, pues éramos arquitectos, antropólogos, urbanistas, bueno en Mérida le llaman diseño del habitat, que es un poco como diseño urbano, diseño del habitat así como tal, se llama la licenciatura y éramos esos como el equipo y las personas participantes había, en cuanto a ocupación había adultos mayores, personas jubiladas, había personas que se dedicaban o trabajaban en el industria del turismo por la cercanía de la zona hotelera de Cancún o en industria de construcción, muchas personas dedicadas al hogar, amas de casa, eso era a grandes rasgos la población que participo y tuvimos un porcentaje como del 11% de personas que hablaban lengua indígena. Entonces también tuvimos en nuestra actividad como de caracterizar a las personas teníamos lugar de residencia dentro de la ciudad de Cancún, lugar de origen porque había muchas personas que generalmente sobre todo del sur, de Veracruz, Tabasco, Chiapas que emigran a Cancún por temas laborales, personas de Quintana Ro en su mayoría, y a lo mejor, yo creo que un 2% personas extranjeras. Y también preguntábamos este tema de si hablaban alguna lengua indígena y si tenían alguna discapacidad, de personas con discapacidad creo que fueron como 5% las que participaron. Entonces ahí pues, tratamos como de cubrir todos los grupos de población.

**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

Yo creo que parte como de esta intención de darle el poder a la comunidad, de que sean ellos quienes decidan. Por la experiencia de la fundación, de estos 10 años de estar trabajando con este tema de participación, de empoderamiento comunitario, no solo de formar un grupo sino realmente también identificar estos talentos que existen, los saberes locales y a partir de eso poder potenciar esos talentos y poder potenciar estas dinámicas tanto económicas, sociales, culturales, incluso políticas, hay liderazgos fuertes dentro de las diferentes comunidades que existen. Entonces darles las herramientas para que sean ellas quienes tomen acción. Y en el caso de este proyecto también había respaldo de UNHabitat también había esta intención de cumplir con los preceptos de la nueva agenda urbana, de los objetivos de los desarrollos sostenibles, el no dejar a nadie atrás, el tener un tema de equidad de género, de apuntar hacia comunidades y ciudades sostenibles que son otros de los objetivos. Y también estas alianzas para poder lograr todo esto, son alianzas locales, pero no solo institucionales sino también alianza con el vecino carpintero, herrero que tiene un reconocimiento como un referente comunitario y que con ese talento y ese saber de su oficio puede también impactar en el proyecto y se puede convertir a lo mejor en este proveedor que va a diseñar, no sé, voy a inventar que va a diseñar todas las bancas del parque y entonces estas también cerrando un círculo de economía local. Entonces de alguna manera es darle ese lugar a cada una de las personas, valorarla,

valorar la posición que tiene cada uno de estos actores, hacer este mapa de actores para... justo lo que decías hace rato, como para darle esa continuidad y generar como realmente un círculo en donde todos los actores van a portando diferentes partecitas a un todo, que en este caso pues es el parque de la equidad.

Uno de los principales retos fue la pandemia como tal, o sea porqué realmente ese formato, jornada participativa que te decía de las actividades individuales nació de la necesidad de organizar un grupo tan grande. O sea, no podíamos hacer un taller tradicional porque no nos iba a dar. No podíamos con la pandemia. México nos rige como el semáforo de contingencia, entonces Cancún andaba como en naranja cuando empezamos a planear. Cuando comenzamos a planear estaba en rojo todo México. De ahí Cancún por el tema del turismo y demás, fue como bajando naranja y amarillo. Para cuando nosotros implementamos las actividades ya estaba en amarillo y eso permitió que pudiéramos hacer actividades en el espacio público, actividades presenciales con un menos aforo. Entonces el cómo organizamos fue un poco también improvisado, hay que decirlo en la acción en campo. En cuanto a la planeación previas a las actividades fue de lo que te decía de hacer formatos individuales y una sana distancia de metro y medio entre formato y formato, para que el flujo de las personas fuera como lineal y no hubiera aglomeraciones.

Si que en los tianguis de repente ahí se nos aglomero un poquito la gente y entonces teníamos que estar cuidando, teníamos también protocolos de sanidad, de gel antibacteriano, caretas y demás y eso permitió que las condiciones fueran adecuadas para no arriesgar a nadie y un poco también era el control del acceso de los módulos. Había este control de si había, no sé, 5 personas en el módulo se hacía tantito que esperaran, generábamos ahí una dinámica de dialogo con las personas y también lo que ayudaba era el tema de la lona que teníamos afuera con los *post-it*, porque en lo que las actividades que eran más de 1 a 1 con las personas o con los facilitadores, las personas participaban en la lona y como la lona estaba afuera del módulo como tal, era un espacio abierto entonces podían estar ahí anotando su *post-it* sobre la mano o en la mesa, y eso hacía que la situación fluyera y que las personas no estuvieran tan aglomeradas, eso es como en primer lugar.

Otro fue que, para llegar casi a estas 2000 personas, seccionamos, como todo el polígono, este polígono de 16 km territorializamos de alguna manera hicimos radios de 400 metros para para empezar a ubicar estos nodos en radios caminables de 400 metros cerca de 4, 5 cuadras que puedes caminar, que puedes recorrer y que de esa manera pudiéramos cubrir la mayor parte del territorio con estas jornadas. Entonces, te digo fueron 12 puntos, más bien 12 interacciones de las jornadas, 12 talleres en 12 puntos diferentes. Entonces estos 12 puntos se distribuían a lo largo de todo el polígono, de esa manera pudimos seccionar e invitar a las personas de las diferentes regiones. Diferente por ejemplo si lo hubiéramos hecho nada más en 3 parques y si es abierto y todos están invitados, pero a lo mejor en esos 3 parques solo van a ir las personas que viven cerca de esos parques, en ese radio caminable de los 400 metros. Entonces de esa manera pudimos sortear el trabajar con un grupo tan grande de personas que estaban en el polígono y poder recoger como todas esas 4000 y cacho de opiniones con esa estrategia de territorializar, dividir en bloques todo el polígono de los 16 km.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

Creo que tiene que ver un poco con esta segmentación que hicimos de la participación digital y participación presencial, digamos era darle voz a la mayor cantidad de personas y de esa manera, pues siendo ellas las expertas en su territorio, en su vecindario, en las relaciones incluso sociales que se dan, pues pueden tomar decisiones que a ellos les funcionen porque al final mucho de lo que platicábamos, tanto con las personas como con los actores claves ya en un nivel como más institucional, era que al

final un *top down*, como diríamos en inglés no funciona y tiene como sus retos porque al final lo estamos haciendo en escritorio, no en el territorio como tal. Entonces eso limita mucho nuestra visión desde nuestra disciplina. Incluso si se forma un equipo multidisciplinario el no entender realmente como es el día a día, y estas rutinas y como se mueve la gente en su barrio y los retos de transporte público, de inseguridad, de infraestructura como tal, el no entenderlo porque no lo vivimos limita mucho nuestra capacidad de dar una solución. Entonces al darle esa voz a las personas, a las personas que habitan estos territorios cambia como nuestro chip, es como si nos pusiéramos los lentes de estas personas y ya al recoger y sistematizar estas 4000 mil opiniones ya nos cambia nuestra perspectiva. Entonces esto es un punto importante y de esa manera queríamos que las personas que no pudieran salir de sus casas por cualquiera de las situaciones tuvieran un mecanismo digital en el cual pudieran también aportar su voz de alguna manera. Entonces hicimos un formato que se llamaba 'lo que las manzanas cuentan' manzanas, porque en Cancún tienen como esta traza de supermanzanas y así lo conoce la gente. Entonces ahí preguntábamos que en 1 palabra nos describieran con la primera palabra que se les viniera en la mente con respecto a sus vecinos de su supermanzana, los parques de la ciudad, el tema de las áreas verdes, el concepto de equidad, que era un poco de lo que te decía, a veces nos decían '¿cómo que equidad, es igualdad no?' y así.

Lo que salía de este formulario era una nube de palabras, se sistematizaba y entonces podíamos ver a la hora de la sistematización, por ejemplo, que con respecto a vecinos la palabra que mas grande salía era confianza o solidaridad, entonces también nos da como ese termómetro más social, un tanto más subjetivo de cómo están las cosas en esos aspectos. También lo que queríamos con este tema de 'lo que las manzanas cuentan' de preguntas abiertas en el formato digital, era como recoger estas memorias que las personas tienen de su ciudad, de sus supermanzanas e ir construyendo como una narrativa a partir de un ejercicio que les tomaba 3 minutos contestar y que se iba ver vertido en este diagnóstico y en este plan maestro que al final nos gusta llamarlo participativo pues se le involucro a la población. El otro formato que fue digital fue una convocatoria para diseñar el parque como tal en donde participaron principalmente niños y jóvenes hasta los 15 años, ahí tuvimos una participación importante también, cerca de 280 y pico de dibujos en donde fuimos identificando que elementos son los que en el dibujo se ven plasmados. En temas de jerarquía había muchos temas relacionados con el acceso, de tener un acceso importante en el parque, de paletas de color, sobre todo predominaban los colores cálidos por encima de los fríos, un tema de contacto muy cercano con la naturaleza, con la fauna nativa, esos elementos también van sumando y a lo mejor los niños no participaron de la encuesta de nuestro indicador de cohesión social pero aportaron con el dibujo, o a lo mejor las personas no pudieron ir a la jornada pero contestaron la encuesta de lo que las manzanas cuentan y dejaron ahí su semillita en estas memorias de barrio.

Entonces fue un poco como diversificar esos formatos para que la toma de decisiones venga desde todos, bombardear digital y con participación física, o sea dividir. Literal como si agarras la ciudad de Cancún vista desde arriba y tiras como un chorro de agua y se diversifica entre las manzanas, entre la traza urbana así quisimos que fuera, así nos imaginábamos la participación que en cualquier rinconcito en medida de lo posible que nadie se quedara con las ganas de participar por eso es que hicimos esta jornada extraordinaria, en donde nos salimos del polígono y fuimos a este parque que está en el centro de la ciudad y que ahí va gente de que a lo mejor vive en una zona super residencial, de un ingreso o de un sector de un poder adquisitivo mayor, pero también se les pregunto a gente que a lo mejor vive en el centro que incluso nos dijo 'no, si ya los vi en Facebook' y ahí iban. Entonces quisimos como que dejar muy arraigado el proceso como tal que fue la participación. De esa manera como te decía, les queda a ellos como ese recuerdo y esa inquietud de reclamar el parque y de en un futuro decir 'yo voté de que, si se hiciera o yo di mi opinión y qué onda, ya es 2021 y como vamos, pusiste la primera piedra hacia 6 meses donde está la segunda' ya hay 4000 opiniones cerca de 2000 personas que participaron y que no se les va a olvidar que participaron, entonces es un poco eso.

Involucramos también a los diferentes sectores porque había una sección donde el uso de suelo es principalmente comercial y de oficinas. Entonces las personas que trabajan en esas oficinas, las personas que trabajan en esos comercios que también se va a ver beneficiados por el parque pues también son estas personas que pueden empujar en un futuro, que las cosas se hagan y se conviertan también en vigilantes de que se haga y se haga de una manera correcta. Al final, te digo, es un espacio gigante son avenidas que tienen 100% de visibilidad tanto de las personas vecinas como de las personas que trabajan ahí que tiene algún negocio o algún comercio y entonces es como darles ese poder a ellos, casi que dejarles la tarea de que van a ser los ojos, que van a estar vigilando todo ese proceso de la construcción y de llevarse a la realidad el parque.

# APPENDIX I

## Slovo Park

Interviewee: Jhono Bennett

Bennett is a practitioner and co-founder of 1to1 Agency of Engagement. His practice explores issues of inclusive design practice, spatial justice, critical positionality, and urban planning in South African cities.<sup>505</sup> Currently, he is a doctoral research candidate in architecture design at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Date: 06/05/2021

So, in terms of the actual organisation, I was co-founder in 2010 and it was a group of us as students. We wanted to respond to the kind of lack of architectural space, like work in the profession, at least to work as an architect in informal settlements, in South Africa and we didn't know how so, we created 1 to 1 as like a vehicle to try and figure out how to do that and how to pull a kind of careers out of it and how to address another systemic issues that are tied to what people can do and working while people living in informal settlements. It started off as a student project and then grew it into like a social enterprise... as like a bit of a social enterprise kind of organisation but we eventually decided to talk about how it was about addressing systemic spatial inequality and we wanted to focus on the role of spatial design within that question so, that was kind of the overall like what 1 to 1 sort of started. I've got a document that I can share with you that kind of talk a bit more about that, but my role was a co-founder, I was the director of ideas and then in 2019 handed over to my co-founder Jackie and she's in running 1 to 1 since then. She's been taking over, so, my role now is more like an advisor, sort of helping up from a distance. So, we kind of broke the party a little bit.

When we talk about 1 to 1, we talk about being a social enterprise as a business model. So, as a business model a social enterprise, its full profit is for impact so you're trying, make changes in society but also try to generate your own revenue stream, so that you can have more control over how you do it and what you do because a lot of classical sort of NGO social models they rely on donor funding or grants which they often go quite restrictive and they forces you into a certain type of work so, we very carefully call ourselves a social enterprise. We operate like an organisation so is much more about trying to have members, like community of practice that we tried to sort of generate so, we talk about a sort of business that we sort of function more as an organisation and then we tried to create like a platform.

So, how we talk about that is the sort of design led social impact organisation that's kind of how we try to do things versus what we are as a social enterprise. So, because we are social enterprise our kind of impact mission, like our social aim is just to address the systemic spatial inequality in our city and we kind of focus in supporting the different forces and we do this with forces quite strongly because of the different elements out of spatial inequalities, the government is one, the private sector is another one, and architects and professionals are another one, people on the ground, the social movements and these are all things that kind of add that sort of working towards in some way , to be part of this sort of mechanisms that are rather supporting spatial inequality or working against it, so we don't really have one focus group but what we end up doing.

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<sup>505</sup> Jhono Bennett, *Background* (2023) <<https://jhonobennett.co.za/>> [accessed 6 July 2023].

If you go down the section to what we do, you'll see 4 headings so, we kind of work a lot around supporting the grassroots scales so, what people call community and we talk a lot about turning and build social technical capacity in the built environment and we're trying to develop these processes, or these systems that are sort of around addressing spatially and select different mechanisms and tools, and then we find ourselves advocating for the spatial justice. So, these are our kind of full primary actions that we kind of tracked. These four projects that you see above in the case studies, these are kind of the parts of projects that best describe what we do. So the USD road map is a good one for the points about spatial processes, working with grassroots entities is Slovo park, building social capacity is a critical practice and advocating the spatial justice talks about civic campagne so, those four projects are the kind of best examples of four kind of alternative areas that we found ourselves working around.

**What were the key issues that the group/ community gathered around? What motivated them (the community, you as a practitioner)? What were the catalysts for this project- and why? (Civic engagement/public concerns)**

So the big issue was about spatial development and that's a tricky term because the South African government has in its law that it has to provide housing to South Africans who are within a certain income bracket that earn between 0 and 3500 Rand a month which, if you earn between 0 and 280 pounds a month you can qualified to get free housing and if you are in a particular demographic so, this is for black South African or disadvantaged South Africans so that's the requirement. Slovo Park had been fighting this spatial development since the beginning of the new government in the 1990s and they've been sort of systematically not given that right through a whole bunch of different forces, it was corruption, it was mishandling of technical process. There was a whole bunch of things and at some point, that even facing eviction. So, they formed a group called the Slovo Park Community Development Forum or the SPCDF and they've been sort of working with different legal groups and different parts of the local government trying get access to the right of development. We came in as students in 2010 as part of a group of people who were helping residents of struggle in the SPCDF and we ended up figuring out a way to help them through design, through building, to make into trying, to like to use our skills and spatial design knowledge to support those bigger processes.

We didn't replace that, we didn't come in and try like become aware we just tried to load up what design means towards that and so, the big issue was accessing the government supports towards spatial development and our support was about working through the aspects of design or spatial design. So, we provided technical support, assisted in the legal case, and we've created tools that help explain the local government processes better. They have to communicate between different stakeholders as a sort of a whole bunch of different support kind of thing. The community were responding to the need of access to housing, to infrastructure, to services, to kind of legal tenure. As students I think, we were responding to this missing way of supporting people and as an architect you they think the only thing we can do is make a building and the truth is that as a spatial designer there are other sort of skills around spatial processes that can support development outside of just a building, so a building can be one of many things that you can offer. We wanted to explore this role, I think we wanted to respond a bit too like a kind of sense of civic duty, a sense of social obligation, most of us were South African students so, we felt the responsibility towards these issues based on our country issue, our history. I guess it was a really interesting challenge.

**In terms of timescale, - Was the project conceived as long-term? What was the role of your practice in the short and long-term? And according to your own experience, what makes successful as a long-term project? (Temporality)**

When we started the project, we only had 8 weeks and that was the whole and, in the end, now it's been 10 years and we are still working in Slovo Park, so I guess the project was a year of formal

development so, probably conceived to be long-term, but it's become a 10-year project. I don't know if it's been successful. I think is a hard question to answer because what's the metric of success? Have we provided support? Yes, have we brought staff? yes, have they got their development? No. Like They've got some development they are quite different, small things but not this formal recognition in this informal development. So, I guess in some ways the project was successful in other ways it is yet to be successful, but I don't think that means it was because it took 10 years or has taken 10 years and I think that means that it's failure.

**How did you think about the continuity of this project- either yours (as practice/individual) and what about the community involvement into the future? How do you see that? (Continuity)**

So, when we started the project, we had 8 weeks and then we actually built one to one from this project. We actually ended up realising there's a need for this type of practice on this topic, spatial design work. We have to find ways of encouraging it and developing it. So, we created one to one as a way to make that practice work, I think that in a way became a response to the bigger need that is missing in spatial practice in South Africa and then we tried to do it. It is a hard question to answer. One to one is born because of that and that led us to make one to one or more practices like one to one. I think it was the need that kind of drive of the SPCDF and that need, that development and the cohesion of the grassroots leadership and the different parts of the grassroots organisations who worked really hard to make sure there was a long-term view on this development.

**Regarding group interaction, - How did the group evolve? Who were key people involved/ key demographics/ages? - How did the group work together / communicate/ interact effectively and develop a cohesive group identity? (Group Dynamic/interaction)**

There were four of us when we started, after a year and a half there was only me and then it kind of regrouped. I think the bigger question is about me, like why did I want to keep doing this work and I think I wanted... same response as earlier, these sense of civic duty, the sense of trying to grapple with my own position in my country, kind of made my work meaningful, trying to like answer the need for this missing gap of practice that kind of felt like gap. You know... this sort of idea, like interesting space to work on instead of just responding to a simple client query, to response something, that is the reason that I keep doing it and just really enjoyed the work and I enjoyed the challenge and I enjoyed the way we worked, so I guess my enjoyment but also lots of difficult personal moments but then I think why people keep and why Jackie is leading is a similar thing, and I think she really cares about the country. She really cares about her own position; she really cares about the people that we worked with in 2010. We do feel an obligation to support, and it would only happen after Slovo Park gets some sort of development so, I think that's a big driver, this sense of responsibility to the people that we started this project with 10 years ago and we need to keep going until at least they reach the kind of initial agreement that we set out to help with.

I think they will be cohesive, but I'll keep working together until Slovo Park is developed and once is developed then I imagine the development forum will sort of close and they will find other ways to stay cohesive around social issues or other ways that grassroots groups stick together.

So, the 1to1 group, I think having an office, having a structure, having meetings, the kind of normal ways that like a practice form. I think the Slovo Park development forum may.... I think as well through WhatsApp, through lots of meetings, lots of physical meetings, lots of discussions but then you know...start and working through the projects in the programmes. So, I think like digital communication is a big one and it always has to be combined with physical meeting, hanging out and spending time as a group.



**Interaction is a challenge, and when it comes to organising a community group and project is very demanding. - What works in terms of organising a community group and project? - What were the key precedents and inspiration for the community project? (Social movement/networks and organisation)**

Good question, I think being clear, transparency making sure that people know why they are meeting and what people are working towards, that's really important. Making sure everyone have access to the information that is important and I think also being consistent, always being available, always being able to be contacted, they can get hold of you at some point and that you will actually show up. I think these are really important things that people take for granted. I think it's been very important things for us and I'm trying to be understandable, trying to find ways to communicate through difference, where the differences are the language or cultural, demographic or like skills always trying to find ways to create shared understanding, shared languages.

I don't think we looked at any, in terms of architecture we get inspired by Alejandro Aravena in Chile but I think after 10 years later I think that project was a little bit of not nonsense, I have my critics about that but I think we were inspired by that type of design and that's how we designed Slovo Park, was around like an incremental fillable model, that was one inspiration but I think we get inspired by the way people do things, we were looking at sort of like social movements and grassroots movements. At the time there were interesting groups doing stuff between pedagogy and a group which is part of a global network so, we worked with them, and it help us a lot with the organisational stuff. I think this group were very inspirational to us in the last few years, like moving toward kind of like tech and around the work Jackie and I'm doing now. I think it's not so much about doing projects, is more about practice, structures, and ways of working that was maybe more inspirational to us than buildings.

**Participation allows community to make decisions in the production of space. - How did the participatory aspects of the project /programme evolve? - How were changes managed? - How were participants involved in decision-making processes? (Collective action / Community participation/decision-making)**

When we started the project, I think that was the draw as our professor was organising the studio that was going to look at participation, so we were very keen to use participation and we used participation for research, for the design process, for understanding. So, I think perhaps participation was a really good research tool and maybe you are going to missed it in the beginning but eventually would be very present and be part of the project as people and as architects so, in a way participation changed us because we were forced to work in a certain way. We didn't expect that and going forward I think we've been very critical about what participation means because obviously is very crucial to allow for participation but I think the way participation looks, how it works versus what it means for a project is often like very shallow you know, as long as people look like participating when the truth is unless participation is meaningful, it doesn't mean anything and then it just becomes something you put onto the report at the end of the project.

As long as you participated all of that project is perfect and that's not true and actually affects participation because sometimes you undo a project because that's actually asking people what they want and they might tell you that they don't want what the project lead you to make, so people talk about that because participation is sort like the silver bullet that can fix everything and it can fix something and can do very good things to a project but it doesn't guarantee success and it doesn't guarantee that a project will work and it doesn't guarantee other professionals involved. I think when you give people choice and agency then they can choose to not work with you and the thing about that, not just agency to decide but the agency to act, I think participation is also a liberty of expression.

So, in this project, I think everything that we made was with the development forum even the design was about doing it, about how it is going to be built and because we were able to communicate very well what we thought based on those discussions that would happen, people were able to feel very well, so things would happen. We would be like working and somebody would drive by and say 'hey I've got these big vertical poles that you could have it in your drawing if you want this' and jump bunch of stages in the project because people understood how bigger project was, so I think participation in the project was done through the local forums and then with the people of the neighbourhood because they understood what project was but they were done through public meetings. I think it was hard to measure because what people wanted was physical progress, how much spatial development and how much infrastructure they can get access and the truth is Slovo Park has some of that. So, now there's electricity in every house, and about others tangible things that happened but the truth is that the project is about the government to recognise that responsibility to people and do what they're supposed to do, which is to provide development on the terms of the people and not just come and you know, clean green fields aside and start fresh.

We supported the community through the kind of sociotechnical support over the years but when it was very close to be done something happens in terms of the politics and then it went back almost two stages once again. So it's hard to say what the kind of socio political progress is but I mean definitely in the physical side you know... there's 10 year for lots of people, this public recognition, there is electricity in every house and a lot of people there may be hope for infrastructure because there's electricity so it's a kind of mix of some good things and other things are not so good. I think political instability, so the shifting of local councillors, the shifting of the provincial housing department people, the shifting of policy and how the local government treat policy, the shifts of local leadership, the changes of the requirements before things happen and then also time you know, it's been 10 years of that original development forum group and more than half the people are dead now, they are not allowed anymore so that institutional member is gone and those shift then also changed things, changed the nature of work so that's sort of the big thing.