

1st Information letter for partners (July2013)

Cut City 2014 European Workshop

Description

Cut City 2014 European Workshop (acronym CC14EW) is a Lifelong Learning Erasmus Intensive Programme (LLP-E-IP). The Architectural Department (DARQ) of the School of Communication, Architecture, Arts and Information Technologies (ECATI) by Lusófona University of Humanities and Technologies (ULHT) and, the Research Center LabART are committed with this program.

The contact person is the Head of the Architectural Department, Professor Arch. João Menezes de Sequeira and the Coordination Committee kernel is compound by Professor Arch. João Menezes de Sequeira and Professor Arch. Vasco Santos Pinheiro.

The IP will bring to Lisbon about 56 foreign students frequenting the first and second cycles of studies (BA and MA degrees) and about 14 professors teachers (7 per week) and 5 senior lecturers. But we recognize that the complexity of such urban problem (program topic) can be better attended by master students, so we think that the target group can be constituted by a ratio of 2/1 master students / bachelor students.

The ratio between hours and ECTS will be 80h/3ECTS.

The topic of the workshop will be discussed and analyzed by different points of view according to a true multidisciplinary approach. To ensure this approach the partner institutions are invited, according to their interest in studying specific related areas with the IP topic, such as: architectural and urban design, architectural technologies, landscape and sustainability. Other different and complementary approaches to the problem will also be guaranteed through the discussion with experts in different areas such as urban planning, sociology, economy, geography, etc. The experts on these different areas will be invited by the host institution as well as by the partner's institutions, under the indication of the teachers.

Rational and background:

In nowadays cities, the heavy traffic transportation routes (big urban roads networks - that include bridges, tunnels, culverts and retaining walls - and railways - including terminal facilities and level crossings) are a real and a very complex problem. The need to link parts of the city through specific routes, to avoid traffic congestions, the old railways networks that have been absorbed by the city growth allied with the zoning projects of the beginning of the XX century, culminated in a new typology of urban "roads and transportation" that is particularly difficult to articulate with the urban space. Because of their scale and because of their strong impact, these routes nothing have to do with the traditional streets that constitutes a fundamental public space, and are assumed as part of a necessary solution and as part of a problem one must live with. As well as these roads, the urban railways can also be included in these problematic of cutting urban space, like the case of line trains which runs along the banks of the Tagos/Tejo River preventing the city citizens from enjoying this rich part of city history.

As symbols of urban development, these routes were generated by mobility needs as well as by an abstract way of thinking the city, separating and creating different levels on the roads system/structure. These "roads", in the higher level of the cities mobility system, are sources of discomfort (insurmountable boundaries, air and noise pollution, visual impact, etc.) and are strongly criticized by the population that live in these urban areas. The viaducts and bridges that carry on these roads also generate (under them) residual places - non places as Marc Augé would say - empty and discontinuous.

Places where criminality and indigents take place. Places where the city ends in a void and starts over on the other side.

In a very recent past, several different cases have been studied and discussed by the city authorities and the inhabitants of the neighborhoods affected by these infrastructures. Usually, these discussions are inconclusive because, if on the one hand, the city Authorities assumes the need for its construction, on the other, the inhabitants always present motives to fight against it. In Lisbon, the Sta. Cruz neighborhood is a straight example of this kind of opposition, since a tremendous viaduct was planned to cross the all area and its inhabitants always developed efforts to find an alternative solution to avoid this situation, and in some way, succeeded.

As a preparatory work, the program staff organized last academic year a workshop (Architecture Week) involving every students and teachers at the department. For one week the students were organized in 10 different studios – 5 project design studios and 5 thematic studios (cinema, photography, sketching, digital systems, and sustainable building technologies.) The studios were run by 4 to 5 teachers each and during one week they developed ideas (projects) to solve 5 different situations in the city of Lisbon. On the first day, a panel of 3 eminent architects with experience in urban planning and urban design – Professor Arch. Gonalo Byrne, Arch. Manuel Aires Mateus and Professor Arch. Raul Hestnes Ferreira - presented 3 lectures on this main topic. On the last day, each group presented its work for 20 minutes and in the end, a panel of invited and external critics presented an individual reflection about the proposals. In this very interesting workshop each group presented a very specific and differentiated approach to the problem (analysis, interpretation, architectural intervention). At the same time it was very interesting and productive to have in each studio, a group of teachers with different scientific skills (architects, civil engineers, sociologists, historians, designers, artists). This workshop was useful to collect different information on specific cases and as a rehearsal for this proposed Intensive Program “Cut Cities 2014 European Workshop”.

Aims and Objectives:

The principal aim of the *Cut City 2014 European Workshop* is the exchange of architectural design education experiences and a critical and creative architectural reflection about possible solutions for the IP proposed theme. Teachers and Students from different Universities should address to this program with their experience and knowledge on the subject, to share and to discuss methodological approaches on the subject and also on project design strategies. The practical aim of the program is centered on a concrete problem and it would be of great value to look to it from different and complementary points of view (to think differently and to operate differently).

The pedagogical and scientific aims and objectives of the project are centered on the debate and rethinking of the role of these mobility types of infrastructures inside the city limits. Because they are considered as barriers among urban continuity and, at the same time, gaps that constitute discontinuities in urban shape, the project will be focused on debating models of cities (traditional or classic; generic city; shopping cities; etc.) and according to this discussion the invention and development of solutions that might help to minimize or to augment this problem..

In a more specific way, the project should provide solutions to the impact of these infrastructures in the city, to solve its relationship with the adjacent urban forms fulfilling or avoid these empty spaces and qualifying the hybrid spaces around them, to develop creative solutions to fight against the barrier effect and to propose solutions for the residual spaces that exists under them (bridges and viaducts). In a way, there will be this straight intension in connecting or to separate different parts of the city eliminating or qualifying these discontinuity effects produced by these gaps or “non places”.

Because this problem is a common difficulty of almost every develop city, the solutions and conclusions of this project should improve the students sensibility for the taking care of the negotiation between this large infrastructures and its urban context. The proposals should, therefore, act as possible models that can be exported and used in other similar situations, with the necessary adaptations, in other cities, in other countries. This will be of great value for local municipalities, as we pretend to share with them the all the program results.

We believe that the conclusion of our work on the IP will be of great interest for a problem that is still awaiting for an answer.

The subject of the IP and the themes that will be the center of the work that will be developed, are strongly connected with the teaching programs of Project Design as well as with Urban Design studios of the partner institutions. Because the theme of the IP is centered on a very dramatic situation/problem of every developed city we believe that the discussions and all the work done at the IP (Workshops, Seminars, Visits) will be very useful for students as they will be more attentive on the kind of problems that results from the necessity of articulate the major transport infrastructures with the urban form.

We also think that the project methodologies that will be used and experimented during the workshop will be an important benefit both for teachers and students.

The IP (workshop) will take place in the last two weeks of February 2014. This will allow one full academic semester for the students and teachers to discuss about the IP topic before coming to Lisbon to practice on a particular situation. The intention is to invite all the partner institutions to study on this very subject (during the academic year of 2013/2014) introducing the subject in their project and urban design curricula.

Expected learning outcomes:

The program, through its workshop, will provide the sharing of different pedagogical experiences. New project methodologies will be experiment by different teachers/tutors in each studio. The expected results will be compared and related with these different types of methods, both for teaching and design. We also expect that different experiences, from the different participating institutions, will permit a wide discussion and reflection on the subject. A synthesis/conclusion (about the problems, results and research methods) will be presented and discussed so it will be possible to define some major guidelines that can be used to organize a specific field of interest/research. The establishment of a Master Mundus, (or other under the new 2020 Horizon or even a Marie Currie Actions - ITN) focused on architectural urban space design, will involve part of the partner institutions and is a very important goal of this Intensive Program. Meanwhile, the receiving institution will be interested in establish protocols for teacher mobility to reinforce and organize a new Research Project Network.

It will be also considered as an important outcome, the learning of a dialogue capacity with different fields of research as well as, with different institutions that, in this very case, are determinant to the comprehension and resolution of these problems. Through the seminar that will be held during the workshop's first week the students will learn about different scientific approaches to the problem as we plan to have guest from many different fields of research. An important output will be the achievement of the student's competence to observe, analyze, characterize, a problem through many different perspectives that in a way, will always inform on the way of proposing solutions for this kind of complex problematics.

Methodology

Main pedagogical and didactical approaches and concepts:

The elective course module will hold 8 architectural design studio workshops. Every studio will be attended by 1 professor and 8 students. The professor/tutor will be an eminent professor from each partner institution and will be responsible of constituting an eventual sub-title and sub theme, the project and research methodology, the design pedagogy, the specific objectives and program of their studio team, day by day. The tutor/professor should also take part in an online discussion in the period previous to the workshop, to be informed about the subjects and the exact problem/challenge that will be addressed to students (this 1st Info Letter is the example). Based on his own knowledge and experience as well as, on the information gathered on the web site, he will be able to structure a concise type of project methodology to experiment in the workshop. Both the students and teachers will be invited to study the information presented in the web site (texts, pictures, bibliography), since the moment it became online (December 2013 or sooner), so they can use to prepare their seminars, classes and all the workshop activities.

We intend, that this workshop will be a place for sharing and developing teaching methodologies and experiences. We therefore, pretend that this practice can be the basis for a theoretical approach to the problem and also for the definition of new pedagogical teaching models.

The workshop will be held in a wireless environment with open access to all participants. There will be a office that provides the necessary conditions for paper plotters and printing and an office that allows physical hand modeling. Computer software will be provided both for modeling and for computer aided design. The host institution also has agreements with industry (EDP FabLab and DesignSystems/SmartBuildings), creating the conditions for access to an array of flexible computer controlled tools, that cover laser cutting, 3d printer, CNC router, vinyl cutter and desktop miller.

By the end of the program it is expected the presentation of the different architectural proposals, by the several studios. Students should present on A1 panels (min 3 panels), models executed by hand or by digital production technologies and on a PowerPoint slideshow with the resume of their work. Each presentation should focuses on the basis of the problem, based on the previous analysis of the site, or sites, and on the drawing proposals developed on studios workshops. Both, panels and PowerPoint presentations should be provided by a small text explaining the used methods and the find solutions. This presentation should occur on the final day of the program and should be public.

The synthesis of the whole work should then become online on the website of the program so that the work can become public.

It is also expected to publish a book with all the material produced during the workshops as well as a report of the different activities, mainly the cultural ones, developed during the IP. This book should have some research papers resulting from the IP by the teachers.

Location, Participants and Duration

Host Country – Portugal

Working Language – English

Location – Lisbon, Campus of the Lusófona University of Humanities and Technology

Nr of students – 72

Nr of teachers – 21

Start – **17th February until 28th February 2014**

Duration of the IP – 12 days

Start at 17-02-14

End at 28-02-14

Duration of stay – 14 days

Arrival 16 -02-14

Departure 01-03-14

Coordination

PhD. Arch. João Menezes de Sequeira – Head of the Architectural Department (contact person)

PhD. Arch. Vasco Santos Pinheiro