

## **SOCIAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN MEDITERRANEAN SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE**

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**Abstract.** *Star system architect concept was promoted by the media and the society during the last decades. Image culture helped to it, where the most “iconic” works and designs were continuously published. So many Universities saw how the number of students of Architecture was growing up and new Schools of Architecture arose. Recent economic crises in Europe and other countries helped to go back to an important question: what is the role of the architect within the society? It was an excellent opportunity to understand the Architectural education as the reflection of the society from a territorial and urban point of view. Community projects developed within the Architecture curricula helped to get a comprehensive high education levels, especially in the final years of the program.*

*Transformative pedagogies applied to urban planning and architectural design courses bring up the social role of the architect to the students. Practical exercises are proposed, where the final result is even positive for an eventual social extrapolation.*

*The paper presents us the community projects experiences related to urban design in two different Mediterranean schools of Architecture, one of them in Italy and the last two ones in Lebanon. In the first case the students were invited to reflect on improving the quality of life of the citizenship and the tourists visiting Liguria region in Italy. Proposals for joining efforts among the several municipalities and developing new territorial models are done. The second case study shows us two initiatives for the students, developing proposals for UNHABITAT program and municipalities in southern Lebanon and a proposal for regenerating river lines in Byblos, within the 100 resilient cities program powered by Rockefeller Foundation. Finally, the paper presents the new project is being developed currently by American University of Cyprus, about Arabahmet and Karamanzade sectors in Nicosia.*

**Key words:** *Architectural pedagogy, urban design studio, community projects, Mediterranean, American University of Cyprus, Genoa University*

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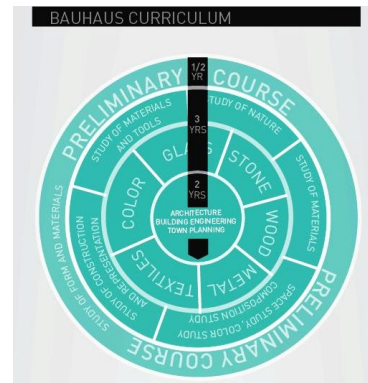
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Formal education in architecture was established at the turn of the seventeenth century when the French Beaux-arts system was created. The École des Beaux-arts, as an institution, was founded in response to the artistic initiatives of the time and the desire of the French government to educate talented students in drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture. École des Beaux-arts continued to be the only model for architectural education for more than two hundred years. Architectural pedagogies appeared meanwhile, some of them within new Institutions, as Bauhaus since 1919.



**Fig. 1** École Nationale des Beaux Arts Architecture  
From: <http://www.architecture-wiwiki.com/history-renaissance-to-beaux-arts/>



**Fig. 2** Bauhaus curriculum

Architectural pedagogy has been evolving according to the different visions of the Culture, the Society and the needs from both of them. The concept of teaching students to design an object was more related to old schools of Fine Arts. The main issue was the repetition of the model, emulating the most spread samples of star architects as the model to be followed. Conventional schools conceived the design teaching as a separation between knowledge and its application on specific design situations. Lack of understanding of such important concepts like politics and ethics would be out of the conventional paths. Architecture users (eventual end clients) were not present in this design process. The result reflected a secondary interest in improving competences for addressing clients' needs.

According to the literature, creativity in most of architectural design courses would be still conceived in terms of manipulating forms. The first parametric design approach even more reinforced this vision. An important number of Architectural programs run very far from the real word of practice. A common characteristic for almost all the design studio courses is the lack of a final concretization. Final submissions of the different exercises would be more focused on concept forms and schematic design. There is a deeper interest in schematic design than looking for a feasible solution and its social aspects. The latter are only secondary, when they exist.

It is habitual to hire Design studio instructors especially the part time ones due to their formal design skills and/or produced architecture. Their capabilities to introduce and balance research activities in the design process are not considered at the same level as

their formal skills. The result is that most of design instructors have no clear ideas to link research and design processes.

Finally, the most common characteristic of the design instructors is to consider teaching practice as an intuitive process based on the subjective and individual perspectives. For them the idea of teaching/learning process would be tied to the reproduction of the images and models that are presented. It seems that personal feelings cannot be integrally reproduced. More importance is given to the final result than to the process. The final result is that the students postpone making the design process as a personal process. Maturity for designing is not achieved in the most of cases at the end of the bachelor degree. Too many students finish their degrees without having the minimal basis for an own design methodology for facing future designs.

Teaching methodologies were changing towards a more progressive comprehensive concept where the contextualization of the architectural pieces got relative weight in the work. This contextualization must be understood in a large perspective. It implied to underline the physical context and the importance of the memory in the process, as a design resource item. But politics and ethics arose in the instructors' discourses trying to link the final result to a social context where the proposed architectural object would have a stronger contact with the final users of architectures.

Recent Pritzker Prize Alejandro Aravena is the best evidence there are new ways to understand Architectural design with a hard social point.



**Fig. 3** Alejandro Aravena: ELEMENTAL Quinta Monroy, Iquique, Chile.  
Photographer Cristobal Palma

At the same time a comparative reading of the process can be done between this contextualization and the redefinition of the landscape, as a science to be integrated into the Schools of Architecture. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape concept would be conceived as a picture, static one and out of our quotidian scenarios, as an object to be admired and enjoyed. When this concept evolved to an experience able to be inserted in the daily life scenarios as a part of a dynamic changing structure, landscape became a science in the schools and architectural objects were necessarily related to them.

Landscape as a social experience, as a task generated, developed and managed by social groups, opened the vision of the social role of the architect, in a parallel way to the urban concept as the result of a creative social design.

According to SALAMA<sup>1</sup> the teaching panorama of design studios has been changed from a position where things (architectural object) were the most important element to the position where eventually the relation among them became more important. Housing was perceived as the quantifiable attributes of dwellings and now it would be understood within the relationship among the design and production processes, the final product and people or users.

## 2. TEACHING, RESEARCHING AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN ARCHITECTURE

A certain NGO related to pedagogy issues posed a question to itself in its webpage:<sup>2</sup>

In what ways are teaching, learning and research linked for mutual benefit in higher education?

How do students benefit from the research character of universities?

Can the relationships between research, teaching and student learning be strengthened?

Most of the eventual answers are necessarily related to community projects concept.

Community projects appeared as a first solution to reduce distances between the classrooms and the professional life. They were a logical result of the several social interactions in Saxon cultures and were adopted by American Universities as a good platform where to test the pedagogic results of the different programs. In some cases, they were developed till achieving such independency from the curricular activities, as in Boston Architectural College.<sup>3</sup> Some Institutions have included the community projects as an elective course.<sup>4</sup> In this case they are defined as ““Hands-on” involvement in humanitarian and/ or service oriented projects in an on-site work environment. Work initiated by students requires prior approval of faculty”. Most of Saxon Universities understand the community projects as an internship course. The syllabus of the Internship Community project course defines clearly the issue: “This subject enables students to take up an internship with a community or non-profit organization in a project consultancy capacity relevant to their academic studies. Students are expected to undertake an equivalent of 150 hours of study while working on a real community project and attending workshops and classes at UTS”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SALAMA Ashraf (2015). “Perspectives on Architectural Education. Learning from recent discourse” Personal notes taken by the author from his lecture in SAUMME meeting. Istanbul 2015, October 22

<sup>2</sup> <http://tmexus.edu.au/> is the webpage of the collaborative work among Centre for the Study of Higher Education (University of Melbourne), Griffith Institute for Higher Education (Griffith University) and Queensland University of Technology

<sup>3</sup> Boston Architectural College (BAC) has developed a specific department for these activities, as the best way to coordinate the huge number of them. In a similar way The University of Michigan was part of Detroit Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC). This center was initially thought as a faculty-students team able to provide technical assistance to the community organizations and to support projects previously identified by community leaders

<sup>4</sup> ARCH 395 - Community Project in Architecture in Andrews University. USA

<sup>5</sup> From handbook of Architecture programs of University of Technology Sydney



**Fig. 4** Installation of Parkolation project Gateway initiative Spring 2014  
Boston Architectural College



**Fig. 5** Boston's Dorchester neighborhood food corp. project, 2012  
Boston Architectural College

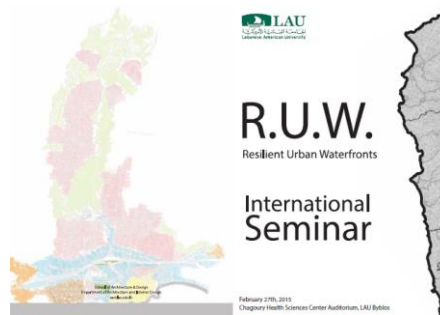
Other societies took these examples to be followed and adapted to their own needs. The scenario seems ideal for developing them. In fact, economic crises since 2007 has obliged the public Institutions to identify eventual solutions for developing their respective social compromises. They saw the possibilities for achieving these goals taking into consideration the opportunities of intensifying the agreements with HE Institutions, forgotten in the past brilliant ages.

Universities' missions refer constantly their respective compromises with the Society. Architectural studies, especially from an urban / territorial point of view, have the possibility to develop these social roles. This process has clear advantages for both parts.



**Fig. 6** Emergency shelter with plastic crates + ties for Syrian refugees, LAU 2014.  
Instructor Ricard Douzjian

Students learn their social roles as future professionals. They have the opportunity to face real problems and to test their communication skills when the social representatives contact them to transmit the real needs of the group and discuss the eventual results of this dialogue and design process. They learn about life.



**Fig. 7** Resilient Urban Waterfronts (RUW) International seminar.  
Community project LAU Feb. 2015

Social representatives develop their roles communicating the need of the social groups and get fresh ideas to face the eventual solution of the problems. They receive ideas for improving quality of life of the community. Finally, the University achieves the goals from a social perspective.



**Fig. 8** Exhibition during the RUW International Seminar.  
Byblos. LAU, Feb. 2015

David Nicol and Simon Pilling edited a work where several experiences in this field were referred.<sup>6</sup> CALLICOTT and SHEIL show in chapter 6 of this publication how group processes can be utilized to enable students to explore how their designs communicate with others. Chapter 12 by RÜEDI describes a community project in which students of Architecture and of Planning work together on a design project and learn about the different skills of each discipline in relation to design. And about the different ways that disciplines communicate with clients.

<sup>6</sup> From handbook of Architecture programs of University of Technology Sydney

### 2.1. Lights and shadows of this process

The positive consequences of the community projects processes cannot hide some eventual problems. The necessary adaptation of these processes necessitated important changes in some cases. In general terms, we must consider the positive evaluation of the whole process. It is obvious that the students learnt to deal with the realistic cases, putting in relation the several “extra-curricular” items and in some cases using this commitment as the best way to consider the transversal skills learnt from other courses to be applied to a specific case study. This is, maybe, the most important and successful achievement. In some cases the need of the students coincided with the real pedagogic process previewed by the instructor.

The respective clients, in this case the different representative members of the social groups; receive an amount of fresh ideas. Their management is essential for achieving the defined goals; final results as seen in such cases seen as a failure because of the different expectations. Some groups are seeing the process as the definitive solution for their needs, and they waited for the project to be directly applied in real life. In such cases, it was a consequence of the lack of real explanations from the University, the department or the instructors involved in the process.

In other cases, achieved results were not positively evaluated because of the lack of expectations compatible with an academic institution.<sup>7</sup> Results were quite different in cases when the representative member was properly advised by technicians. An intensive relation between both sides is essential for it.<sup>8</sup>

## 3. UNIGE CASE STUDY IN LIGURIAN REGION

### 3.1. The context

Ligurian region is the natural laboratory for the University of Genoa, in Italy. It is a littoral region bridging the whole Italian Peninsula and France through important infrastructures which are a national priority. Territorial relationships are hard difficulty by them. Most of cases these infrastructures cut across the natural connections of land and sea. University of Genoa is one of the oldest Institutions in the region and the collaboration with other social groups is a usual task. This fact helps to activate agreements, not always written and formalized in a proper way, but being equally effective.

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<sup>7</sup> The Skyhill Laqlouq competition promoted by a local investor, as a competition for LAU fresh graduates in March 2013, revealed in this case the failures in the pedagogic process according to the proposals received. The investor expected more. None of the proposals achieved a reasonable quality in despite of the nature of the prizes and the professional opportunity for the eventual winner. The jury did not award any of the nominees with the first prize, due to the low quality of the works

<sup>8</sup> The UN-Habitat program initiative developed as a closed competition for one of the sections of the 4th year at LAU in 2014 proved this positive experience



**Fig. 9** Liguria. Óstato della Republica di Genova, Antonio Magnini, 1626



**Fig. 10** Ligurian littoral settlements. The red frame shows the analyzed case studies

The department of Sciences for Architecture has a long experience about this kind of community projects. One of them was integrated into the course of Urbanistica II, developed in the last academic years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). The main goal was the Levant coastline analysis from the territorial point of view.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This course was coordinated by the author of this paper being Jacopo Avenoso and Chiara Olivastri as assistants



### 3.2. Characteristics

All the municipalities analyzed were littoral. Common characteristics could be:

1. The low levels of accessibility for arriving at the coastline from inland because of the troubles caused by the main infrastructures. These infrastructures are the highway “Autostrada del sole” and the railway between Rome and France.
2. Demography is characterized by its small dimension and even the low ratio locals/visitors, especially during the tourist seasons. Most of these villages are at least doubling their population in summer, in comparison to winter.
3. Poor interconnectedness of different villages. These relationships are especially focused on the Aurelia main road and the highway, not always available for reaching all these municipalities. Trains are the other alternative, clearly insufficient during summer.
4. A common settlements strategies are based on the torrents mouths and the littoral expansion. From a geomorphological point of view, territory is characterized by a sequence of transversal torrents to the coastline interrupting the parallel relations among villages. Beaches and cliffs compose the shore. Sharp inclinations rising towards the heights of the Ligurian Appennino mountain range bring about specific landscape architectures dominated by the terrace systems.
5. An excessive dependence on the seasonal activities, usually based on natural beach resources. Economy of this region is progressively more dependent on the touristic sector. Agriculture is secondary despite the importance of the wine production in Cinque Terre region. This dependence is considered a weakness because of the seasonal employment and the possibility of a major problem if this sector is down.

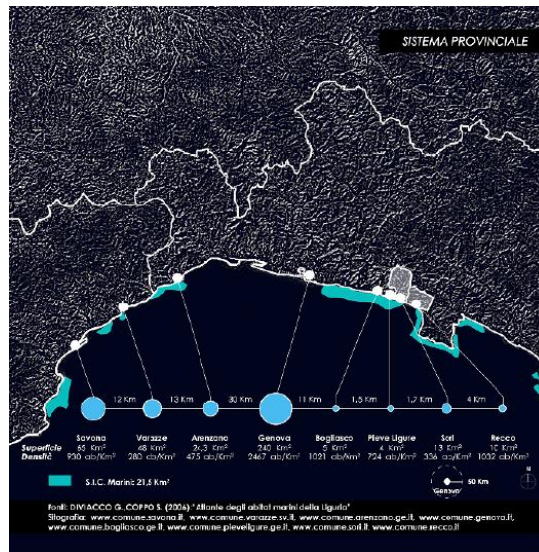
### 3.3. The actors

Students registered in this course are usually finishing the first cycle of Architectural studies (Laurea triennale) according to the Bologna process. Some of them are exchange students due to the mobility supported by Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus projects. In any case, this percentage is small. It is the second and last opportunity they have to acquire a more profound knowledge of the urban and territorial processes. Students coming from the different specialties are sharing this course, basically coming from Architecture and Landscape. In some cases, the work groups were composed by some locals of the village to be analyzed. It helped to get the information in a faster way.

The Municipalities of the several analyzed villages gave their contributions in different levels. It depended more on personal relationships and moods than institutional agreements.<sup>10</sup> Other secondary supports were received occasionally from other Institutions, namely the Regione Liguria Institution, dependence of each village on the specific characteristics was analyzed.

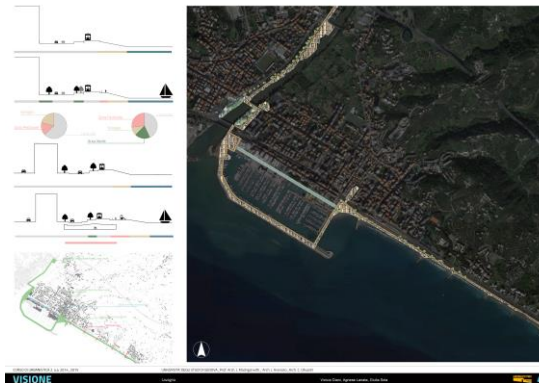
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<sup>10</sup> The municipalities included in these works were Sori, Recco, Camogli, Rapallo, Chiavari, Lavagna, Sestri among others



**Fig. 11** Administrative Ligurian structure., from “Modularmente Mediterraneo: nuovo branding territorial” thesysis.

Authors: C. Bacilieri, A. Negro, S. Rastelli, V. Valicelli.  
Supervisor: José Manuel Pagés Madrigal, December 2015



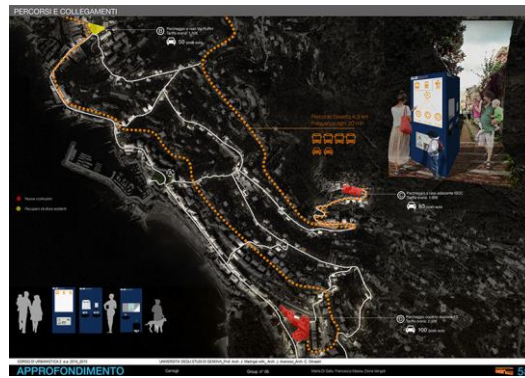
**Fig. 12** Lavagna. Conceptual proposal sheet. Vinicio Diani, Agnese Lanata, Giulia Sola. UNIGE-2014

### 3.4. The process

The proposed methodology included two phases in the work. The first one, focused on the analysis, was a group work. Groups of three students learnt to organize an own methodology and process to get the information and communicating in the best way. This step finished with the identification of the several problems to be resolved and a draft of a general master plan proposal for the village. Usually a main topic was chosen to help the students to interact with the different information layers. Accessibility and internal

mobility were two of the main topics. The second phase included an individual approach, coming from the general draft of the group proposal. It was an introduction to the urban scale design problem, out of the official goals of the syllabus course. It was considered this possibility, as the best way to introduce the student into design and specially to make clear the last goal of the future architect is always the design proposal after a rational process, but not only the analysis. It was, in the end, the best solutions were found out to answer the mechanistic pedagogies where the divided responsibilities among the several courses do not help the students to get the comprehensive vision of the design process.

The concept of a community project was developed in almost all the cases in only one way. The Institutions collaborated with the students to provide the necessary data they thought to develop the respective works. In only one case, the process was double. The municipality of Sori proposed a mutual collaboration. Meanwhile they provided the data for the students' work, designed the lettering of the public littoral area of the municipality. This fact was not announced by the Department as a formal collaboration but it happened.



**Fig. 13** Recco. Detailed proposals. Marta di Sale, Francesca Massa, Diana Vargi. UNIGE- 2014

Communication of the ideas and concepts is one of the goals of this course. Students were kindly invited to explore new ways to develop and communicate the results. Videos and interaction with locals were chosen as the best way to know the respective realities, out of the conventional statistic data.

It helped the students to think in a comprehensive way. Transformative pedagogy was applied. The students were requiring the information and tools to analyze according to the several rhythms and efforts during the semester. Minimal primary information was provided and some of the theory lessons were adapted according to the needs expressed by the students along the several steps and reviews.

The instructors helped to create a final layout, as a template, to be followed up by all the groups. It helped to homogenize the presentation levels. An important improvement in the quality of the final sheets was clear, when compared with the first submissions.

Video recording and inquiries to the citizenship were added as normal tool, looking for the users' perspective on public spaces.

### 3.5 The results

The expected results of the works would define a comparative study of the different statements of the Municipalities which were analyzed. Students were free to use the several resources and data, but the final result, presented in a total of five sheets, had to reflect the different topics of territorial morphology, demographic topics, internal accessibility and mobility relationships with the primary nodes, urban typologies, and anticipations of later urban development coming from the current urban rules to be applied.

Final results were presented in the exam sessions and the students submitted the group work in two formats, the printed sheets and the oral presentation. Individual sheets with the several visions of the proposal in a more detailed scale were submitted too, as the way to adjust the final individual evaluation. In general terms, the results revealed the achievement of the minimal goals: the comprehensive analysis of a complex territorial reality, but the lack of architectural and urban cultures avoided to achieve more brilliant results in the final proposals for the respective case studies.

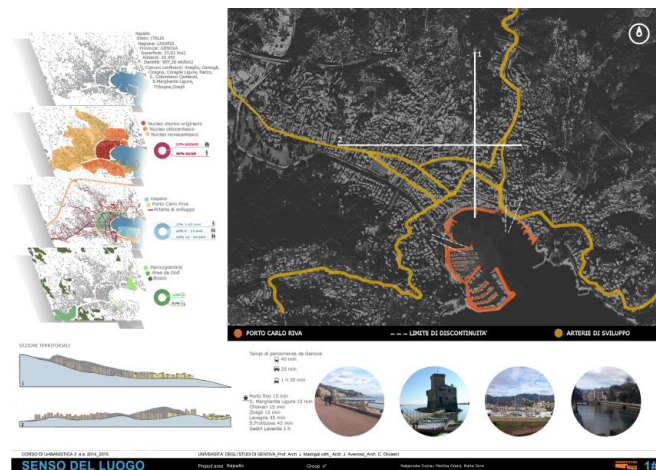
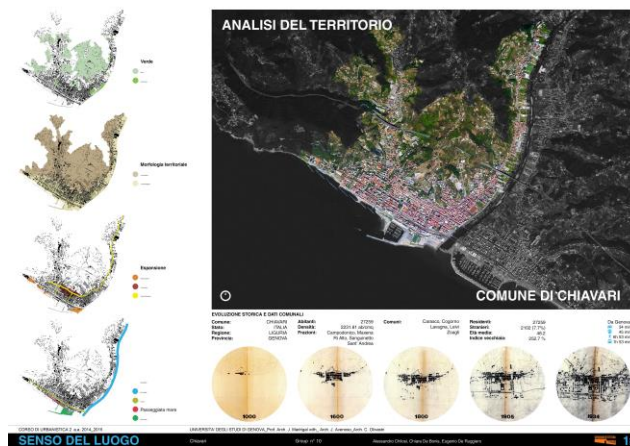


Fig. 14 Rapallo, First sheet. Malgorzata Trojnar, Martina Otazzi, Marta Torre UNIGE-2014



Fig. 15 Lettering provided to the Municipality of Sori, as a part of the community project, referred to littoral differentiated waste collection



**Fig. 16** Chiavari. Senso del luogo. Alessandro Chilossi, Chiara de Bonis, Eugenio di Ruggiero  
UNIGE-2014

#### 4. UNHABITAT EXPERIENCE IN LEBANON

##### 4.1. The context

Lebanon is a complex country that symbolizes in the best way the cultural and ethnical crossroad of the region. Its estimated population of 6,7 million of inhabitants reflects very well this crossroad. Four millions have Lebanese nationality, as locals, including in this number one million of Armenians. Lebanese citizens are spread all over the world in a Diaspora which can be bigger than the locals.<sup>11</sup>

Lebanese imbalance is even bigger if we take into consideration second and third generations of Lebanese citizens. The remaining 2,7 million are refugees of different origins. This number includes almost one million of Palestinian living in specific locations and the rest are the Syrians arrived from their country because of the current civil war.

The Syrian refugees are spread all over the country and their conditions are very different. Some of them are living in relatives' homes. Other ones have rented apartments according to their economic situations and an important group of them are living in provisional camps helped by UN and several NGOs.

Internal conflicts reveal a tremendous complexity resumed by the absence of a President of the Republic in the last 19 months.<sup>12</sup> The garbage conflict without a clear solution after seven months is the perfect reflection of this issue. Governmental budgets are automatically renewed because of a lack of agreement to discuss eventual alterations. It implies enormous difficulties in the normal development of the official activities.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Only in Brazil the number of Lebanese passports, living at residents in this country, is more than nine millions.

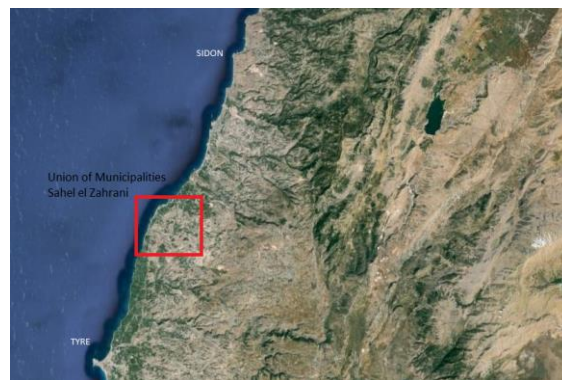
<sup>12</sup> Since May 2014

<sup>13</sup> The recycling areas for the garbage refused to be used after the deadline defined previously. In this case there were no alternatives searched from the Central government and the result was a chaotic situation that provoked a serious contestation from the civil movements and spontaneous locals along several weeks of strong and violent demonstrations, between July and December, 2015.

Only a few municipal resources can be managed for this reason. UN-Habitat program was created to try to help the several Institutions and societies involved in process similar to the Lebanese case study. In this case, the main goal of UN-Habitat is to provide adequate services to the communities and this is the reason to advise the municipalities and to coordinate the several steps to identify needs, define projects, design them and seek eventual partners and stakeholders for a better quality of life.

#### 4.2. The characteristics

A community project was defined in this context between UN-Habitat and the department of Architecture of the Lebanese American University. One section of the Design studio VIII course (4<sup>th</sup> year) worked in the different proposals for designing a communal equipment for the Multifunctional administrative building for the Union of Municipalities Sahel el Zahrani. The only one possibility to have land for developing it was within a roundabout of the high way to Beirut. The solution followed up the proposal previously developed by the Municipality of Byblos for locating its new building. In both cases eventual accessibility problems had to be resolved later on. It seems easier in this case study than the Byblos one.



**Fig. 17** Lebanon land use map 1998, **Fig. 18** Union of Municipalities Sahel el Zahrani. Location. From Google earth, adapted

At LAU, 20 students in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of Architecture, competed in designing a building complex, which will be implemented by the Sahel Al Zahrani Union of Municipalities (UoM) on a 18,300 sqm land located in Al Saksakiyeh municipality in South Lebanon. The complex includes the UoM building, civil defense, and general security buildings in addition to a public library and public space/garden.

#### 4.3. The actors

The agreement for developing this community project was done between UN-Habitat program and LAU.<sup>14</sup> The first Institution coordinated the relations between the final user

<sup>14</sup> The design studio course coordinated by Mrs. Rana Jubeily was selected for this commitment. UN-Habitat program was always represented by the architect Peter Khoury.

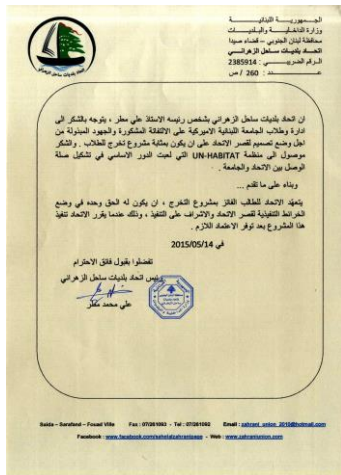
of the building and the University. Sahel Zahrani Union of Municipalities includes a total of seventeen municipalities of Saïda governorate, in the South of Lebanon.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4.4. The process

Involved Institutions, UN-Habitat program, the Union of Municipalities and LAU worked in a coordinated way.

The main requirements for developing the work were mainly defined by UN-Habitat and the Association. They worked actively to define the needs and the subsequent program with the LAU coordinator. Two site visits were programmed after the initial presentation of the goals and procedures to be followed up. At the same time, the representative members of the several Institutions met the students when it was necessary to explain the requirements in a detailed way. They were present always in the several reviews of the different phases. The final jury, with the main duty of choosing the winner of this competition was integrated by:

- The Chair of the Department of Architecture LAU,
- Two representative members of the Department of Architecture LAU
- Two representative members from UN Habitat program
- Two representative members from the Union of Sahel el Zahrani



**Fig. 19** Recognition letter of the prize for the winner of UN Habitat competition



**Fig. 20** Award UN Habitat competition ceremony Nour Jaber receives the winner's recognition as the first prize.

<sup>15</sup> The Municipalities integrated in this Union are: Loubieh, Ansarieh, Babilieh, Tifehta, Saksakieh, Sarfand, Adloun, Adousieh, Gassenieh, Khartoum, Kaakaieh Snawbar, Kawtharieh Syied, Marwanieh, Najerieh, Bisserieh, Arzay, Kharayeb and Zzarieh.

#### 4.5. The results

The jury and the UoM selected the three winners based on who addressed the urban context the best, the different building and space functions and typologies (private/public) – both conceptually and through the design - in addition to the practicality of implementing such a project in reality.

The results were, in general terms, as expected. The final session revealed a high level of skills in some students. The selected project will be developed by the student at the end of 2016, due to two facts: it is the right time for the student for being graduated and at the same time it is the time needed for looking for the right partner and finding the funds needed for it.

The results were so positive because of the mutual interaction among the actors and the students understood it was a very good opportunity for them as the best way to start a future professional career. A final exhibition of the results will be done at the end of 2015 and new projects will be proposed to open these activities to other courses at an international level. This question is currently being discussed.

### 5. 100 RESILIENT CITIES PROJECT FOR BYBLOS

#### 5.1 The context

The general Lebanese context was previously described. The local context in this case is related to a very active municipality with an important heritage spread around the territory and an important archaeological site. But at the same time this municipality is not anchored in the past. It is defining strategies able to compatible past and future and one of the projects was its application to 100 resilient cities project” pioneered by Rockefeller Foundation . This organization selected this candidature in 2013 and an important work is being developed under the coordination of an office exclusively dedicated to this issue.

The works try to define eventual projects for the development of the city and its population, where the resilience can be the main characteristic. It is to define a flexible structure able to be adapted to the permanent and changing requirements from the Society, due to several external reasons. Resilience would be understood in this case from a social point of view. Heritage would receive a special attention, but at the same time environmental topics would contribute to improvement of the quality of life in the municipality.

L.A.U. was considered one of the main stakeholders, since the collaboration between this HE Institution and the municipality was always permanent.

In this case, the course design Studio IX was selected to develop a community project.

#### 5.2. The characteristics

100 resilient cities project tried to identify along the first step the five main Focus areas relevant for Byblos to be tackled in the later phases:

- Maintaining the Peacefulness of the city and
- Preserving our Natural and cultural heritage
- Identifying our Environmental limits and preserving Byblos Eco system
- Ensuring linkages and accessibility within the city and Sustainable Urban growth
- Create an Economic Diversity relying on various sectors





**Fig. 21** Byblos- Location. From Google earth, adapted



**Fig. 22** Preliminary assessment report for Byblos. December 2014

LAU, through the Design IX section coordinated by the paper author, contributed as a stakeholder. Design studio IX was declared the most appropriate course directly linked to the urban scale. The course dealt with the concept about resilience applied to the territorial and urban scales. Theoretical lessons provided the basic information about the concept to be developed individually.

The application of this reflection, partially based on group works was proposed for the valley of the Ain wadi river *يادو لاني عره ن*, between LAU campus and its mouth after crossing the Armenian street at Byblos.

Several topics were proposed:

The water, either through its presence or absence, as the territorial articulation

The water as the memory of the place

The dry riverbed as potential public space

The dry riverbed as a link between both riversides

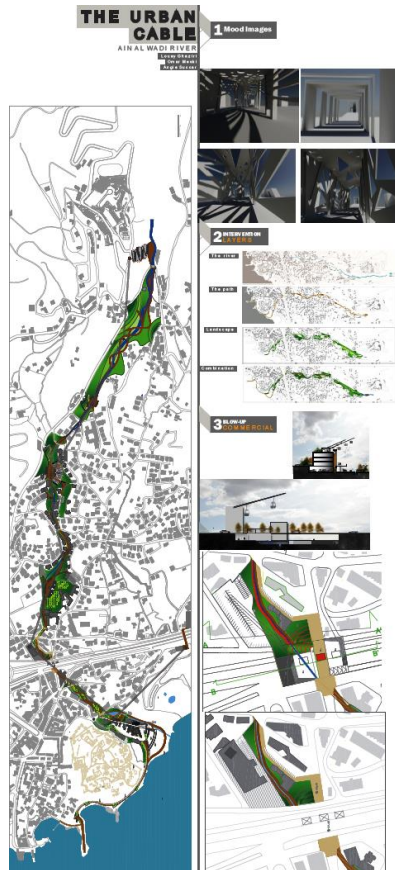
The main goal of the course was to define a master plan of the referred area where the resilience concepts would be visible. The proposal of this valley as a case study tried to recover important facts, as a model and/or methodology to be extrapolated, as the territorial vision of basic elements conforming territories, almost disappeared.

### 5.3. The actors

The actors directly involved in this community project were:

100 RC Byblos technical team, as the coordinator of all the works developed from Byblos, supported by the general advisor ARUP and the technical support from the 100RC managers in New York.<sup>16</sup>

The department of Architecture and Interior design, through its course design Studio IX developed in Byblos, section coordinated by José Manuel Pagés Madrigan.



**Fig. 23** Proposal for AL Wadi River, by Louay Ghaziri, Omar Meski and Angie Succar. LAU December 2014

### Matrix Analysis



**Fig. 24** Example of matrix landscape analysis in Al Wadi river, by Guy Saade and Sergio Katarjian. October 2014

<sup>16</sup> The regionalization of this organization started only last September 2015.



The groups were mainly focused on these items:

- A. Land use. One group reviewed and updated the information about the several land uses. It was a work developed in situ and their results were provided to the BTT (Byblos Technical Team) of 100RC.
- B. Landscape. The analysis from this perspective informed us about the several landscape units which were detected. Through this methodology the group was able to identify the supposed former landscape of the site, taking into consideration the limit of 150 years.
- C. Heritage. All the historical elements which were identified in the sector, even including the southern side of the municipality were surveyed. The results were provided to the Municipality and the surveys developed the several plans trying to get the information not only of the buildings but their respective surroundings.
- D. Sections. One of the most important weaknesses of students in all the schools of Architecture I have visited is always to think from the section, to work with the sections as a string tool to verify the different levels and their mutual interactions. Two groups were working on making transversal sections of the valley systematically. The result was a better comprehension of the problem, reducing the lack of misunderstandings when the conventional vision would be the plan. Nothing would be understood in a proper way in this project without the sections.
- E. Communication. The need to define strategies for a better communication of the ideas was observed. The students profile helped, since they were in the final year. They needed to reinforce these skills to start their professional career in a successful way. A web page and a video were the most important pieces.
- F. Groups prepared a first peer review with all the basic information to start designing in a second phase. A special attention to the problem of the public presentations was paid.

There were two more presentations with the responsible of the 100RC-BTT. In one case, December 2014, the vice president of the Institution Mrs. Bryna Lipper and Mr. Scott Rosenstein, Associate Director of the Institution attended the presentation. Their active participation was fundamental for improving the final results which were submitted on January 2015. The last phase of the work was individual, containing a detailed proposal of such an area of the previous master plan.

### 5.5. The results

The results were referred to a new vision of the valley, more specifically the water line. Seven proposals about the way of re-using and re-interpreting the water line were submitted. Problems of mobility, production of water, its recycling and the concept of this waterline as a public space, were brought up.

The results were exposed in two exhibitions. One of them was held in February 2015 in LAU Byblos during the RUW<sup>17</sup> seminar. The second one was in Rome in a parallel activity of the *Biennale dello spazio pubblico* in MAXXI Museum in Rome (May 26, 2015)

Final results were provided to the 100RC-BTT in Byblos.

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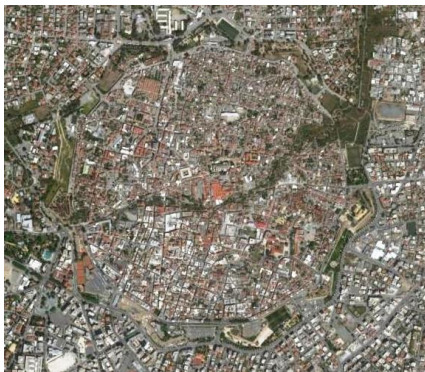
<sup>17</sup> Resilient Urban waterfronts (RUW) seminar, was held on February 26th 2015 at Lebanese American University in Byblos

## 6. ARCHITECTURES FOR ARABAHMET PROJECT

Defining a new curriculum of a School of Architecture is always an opportunity for the authors to bring up their respective visions of the educational process. If the HE Instruction is new, the opportunity is double and the challenge is maximized. The peculiar location of this new Faculty contributed even more to improve the social aspects.

Several arguments need to be considered in order to contemplate the forming of a special University and School of Architecture:

- North Cyprus is a special country only recognized by Turkey until now,
- Nicosia is a special city too, since it is one of the few divided cities in the world,
- Proposed location for the University is less than one hundred meters from the buffer zone,
- Finally, the special situation in which both countries are nowadays, working through discussion panels in the search for solutions to several disputes.



**Fig. 27** Nicosia Venetian walled city, from Google earth



**Fig. 28** Arabahmet sector. Location. From Google earth adapted

The community project is titled Architectures for Arabahmet. It is an initiative which tries to involve the different departments of the University, together with the Municipality and locals of Arabahmet sector. Other partners will participate from a pedagogic point of view (GAU and UniGe), as well the research Center of Divided Territories.

Several phases are previewed:

- I. Previous coordination
- II. Updating the graphical surveys
- III. Mapping of the sector
- IV. Analysis
- V. Proposals

The project is currently in the second phase

### 6.1. Conceptual topics

The proposal adopts a new identity based on these topics:

A collaborative work system,

Considering Liberal Arts as the common background for all the students and trying,

Bridging both social groups in the island,

Transversal knowledge,

Linking of the several educational levels into a common project.

“Architectures for Arabahmet ” takes the previous topics and develops a pedagogical project where the main characteristics are referred as follows:

a. Students are immersed in learning architecture through direct knowledge of the city, touching its architectures, feeling the city from a comprehensive perspective

b. Students take the urban sector where the University is located as a natural laboratory.

c. Architectural learning is mainly understood as the process of a deeper knowledge of the city, its social dynamics and urban evolution.

d. Graphical representation is understood from a double perspective, where freehand and digital technologies are combined. Mapping the city will be the most important task and the background will combine the urban analysis and the architectural proposal scale.

e. The project would be resolved from an exhaustive knowledge of the place, as the generator of the concept.

f. Urban complexity of Nicosia analysis needs a coordinated action. AUC has elaborated a collaborative work with other Institutions to develop the whole project:

f.1. The Municipality of Nicosia has provided digital copies of the British survey done in 1927. This survey is a 1/500 scale detailed map of the walled city.

f.2. AUC is updating the information and converting it in a cad file able to be used in the future by the Municipality and inserting in its GIS system

f.3. The survey is an important tool, especially for the urban analysis of the areas which have not suffered a radical transformation. This study is initially focused on the Arabahmet and Karamansade neighborhoods. A part of these analyses will feed the database of GIS system, more specifically, the updated land use data.

f.4. AUC students will work together with GAU and UniGe<sup>18</sup> colleagues to improve the results and interact with other perspectives and pedagogic approaches. All of them will work on real commitments. Arabahmet-Karamansade the proposals must take into consideration two eventual scenarios. The first one would be a divided city and the implementation of a new eventual check point recovering the fluxes of the old Victoria road as well as the rehabilitation of the surroundings through the proposal of a bi-communal project with a Sciences museum. The second scenario must preview the consequences of a reunified city and the transformation of the sector.

f.5. The proposals will be developed by students of different degrees working together, organized by several groups. Each group will have students of PhD degrees (GAU), Master degrees (GAU and UniGe) and bachelor students (AUC and GAU). These groups will use full or part time AUC installations for having the deepest possible

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<sup>18</sup> UniGe is the acronym of Università degli Studi di Genova (University of Genoa-Italy)

knowledge of the place. The Municipality will help to get the necessary permissions for visiting some of the areas of the buffer zone.

f.6. The different proposals will be the basis for a reflection on the projects to be developed whatever the future urban scenario.

f.7 Locals in the case study will participate actively, as a personal reference of the transformation process during the last 60 years. This participation is to be done through the University plus program, providing memories, images and perceptions of the different places.

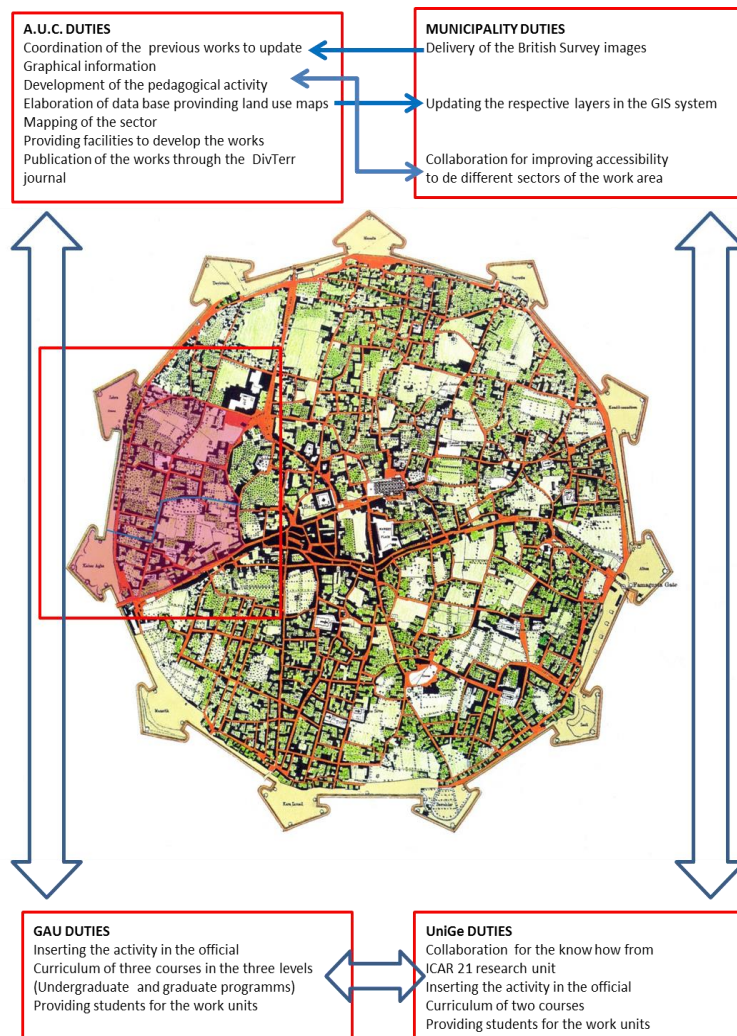
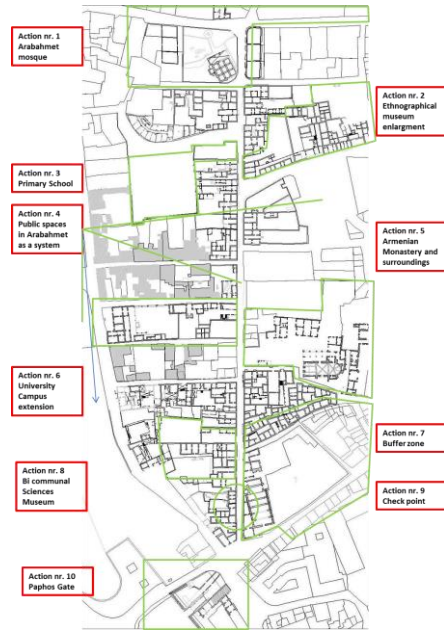


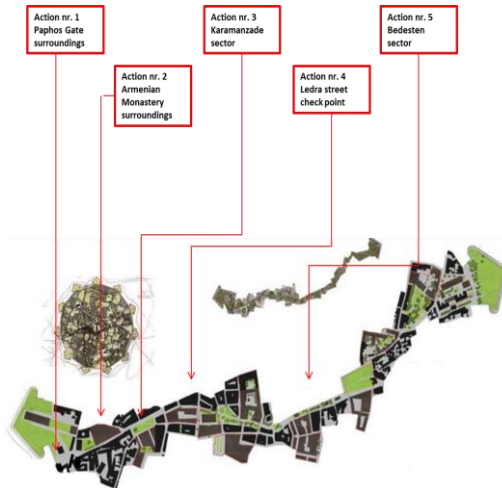
Fig. 29 General scheme of the community project “Architectures for Arabahmet”



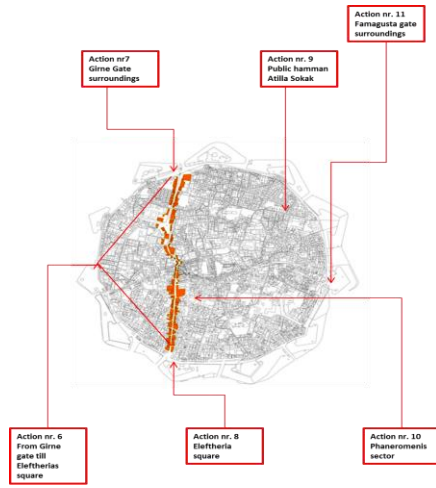
**Fig. 30** Complementary proposed projects in Nicosia



**Fig. 31** Comprehensive vision of “Architectures for Arabahmet” project



**Fig. 32** Buffer zone area proposed projects



**Fig. 33** Commercial axis sector. Proposed projects



## 7. SOME PARTIAL CONCLUSIONS

Different case studies presented several attitudes and possibilities for converting the teaching-learning process into a transformative way. All the different cases have a common element which is the main instructor, who works directly in two of the cases and coordinates the third one as the chairman of the department. But the results are different. We must pay attention to the different cultural systems and contexts, as well as the diversity of goals and community projects concepts.

If we analyze the social consequences of the different case studies, we can observe how the Italian case reveals a positive social maturity. In this case the community project is a normal fact assumed in the academic curriculum. It could provoke a certain inability to generate a surprising situation which is a negative factor for the whole development of the project. Final results are not really involving and engaging the end user of the created object.

Relationships between the Universities and the end user or “client” in this experience have revealed in such cases a clash between those two parties in at least three major fields: the style of work, social justice understanding, and power relations.

Both Lebanese cases are similar regarding the capability of both processes to involve the leaders of the several social groups. The failure can occur because of the same lack of capability to engage the end users, the citizenship.

From a pedagogical point of view, all the cases were useful for the students to explore how their designs communicate with others. It was clearer in the Lebanese cases than the Italian one. The personal contacts with potential clients help the students to demystify the relations between clients and professionals.

In the second case the community Project was clearly useful for enriching the students' experiential learning in community settings. In addition to the above it was essential to improve build communities' organizational capacity. The last case study, here the students were close to urban planning project, was very useful even for perceiving the differences between the architectural scale and the urban scale one. At the same time they found out the different ways in which the disciplines communicate with clients.

“Teaching to transgress” could be in the end the topic for these works. Mediterranean cultures are not so into the community projects culture in relation with design studio courses of Schools of Architecture. First transgression could be the own conventional method, facing new positions into the pedagogical board. Collaborative works and transformative pedagogies are able to run together in a harmonic way.

But the most important transgressions were in the students' minds. They discovered in some cases a transversal vision of the design process. And the flexibility to run from the urban scale to the architectural one in the last case was obvious. It happened mainly in the individual phase of the work.

In the end, the more we try to improve community-university collaboration, the more we will require restructuring of the university pedagogy, more specifically the design studio courses in the Architecture curricula. In any case, we never could forget students used these experiences to gain a deeper understanding of course objectives in the context of civic life.

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## DRUŠTVENI UTICAJ PROJEKATA U ZAJEDNICAMA MEDITERANSKE ŠKOLE ARHITEKTURE

*Arhitektonski star koncept se poslednjih decenija promovise od strane medija i društva. Kulturne predstave podstiču konstantnu produkciju ikoničnih dela i projekata. Tako su mnogi univerziteti zabeležili porast broja studenata, a i osnivane su nove škole arhitekture. Ekonomska kriza u Evropi u poslednje vreme nas upućuje na važno pitanje: šta je uloga arhitekta u društvu? To je izvanredna prilika da se arhitektonsko obrazovanje shvati kao odraz društva u teritorijalnom i urbanom smislu. Projekti u zajednicama koji su razvijeni u okviru programa škola arhitekture pomažu podizanju sveukupnog nivoa obrazovanja, pogotovo viših godina studija.*

*Transformativna pedagogija primenjena na predmete urbanizma i arhitektonskog projektovanja studentima predstavljaju društvenu ulogu arhitekata. Predlažu se praktične važbe, koje rezultiraju pozitivnim rezultatima primenljivim u socijalnom okruženju. Rad predstavlja iskustva projekata u zajednicama koji su u vezi urbanističkog planiranja u dve različite mediteranske škole arhitekture, jedne u Italiji i druge dve u Libanu. U prvom slučaju, studenti su bili pozvani da razmisle kako da unaprede kvalitet života stanovništva i turista koji posećuju region Ligurije u Italiji. Sačinjeni su predlozi za ujedinjavanje sredstava nekoliko opština da bi se razvili novi teritorijalni modeli. Druga studija slučaja nam pokazuje dve inicijative studenata, koji su razvijali predloge za UNHABITAT program i opštine u južnom Libanu i predloge za reneraciju rečnih tokova u Biblosu, u okviru programa 100 istrajnih gradova koji razvija Rokefeler Fondacija. Konačno, rad je predstavio novi program koji je razvio Američki Univerzitet na Kipru, a tiče se Arabahmet i Karamanzade oblasti u Nikoziji.*

**Ključne reči:** *Arhitektonska pedagogija, studio urbanog projektovanja, projekti u zajednicama, Mediteran, Američki Univerzitet na Kipru, Univerzitet u Đenovi*