



RECYCLING THE PAST: THE CASE OF THE INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME IN URBANISM “RADI RIGU!” (CREATE RIGA!)

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Abstract

This paper traces the etymology of the case in continuing professional education (CPE), restoring its historical societal roots, and discusses advantages which an integrative approach offers to planning education, to the urban planning practice and urban development in general. The narrative is drawn from the initiative of a multidisciplinary team of practitioners and scholars in the fields of planning, architecture, landscape architecture and transport engineering. The project RADI RIGU! – a number of innovative workshops undertaken in 2011/2012 - actualized the role of urban public spaces in social revitalization processes, the communicative and procedural character of the urban project. It made an effort to place the idea of spatial strategic planning in post-Soviet mindset as well as to elaborate new, more communicative tools and an “emotionally rich language for planning” (Sandercock, 2001). Finally, it introduced an integrated three-dimensional format of continuing professional education, amalgamating lifelong learning, urban action and implementation-aimed outcome. The methodology of the programme is inspired by a series of workshops on public space on the Belgian coast (Schreurs, 2007). It is also based on the reconstruction of the “*talka*” methodology, the popular form of volunteer work in the USSR. The paper introduces the notion of social heritage and declares its ultimate place in the “ecology of planning” (Schreurs, 2012).

1. Introduction: three perspectives

Olden times are settled for us in a perspective, where a lot of circumstances are shaded, direct lines dominate, and we are disposed to take them for conclusions, for the simplest contours of evolution. And partly we are right: historical memory passes by the insignificant facts, holding only those that are fraught with a further development. However, historical memory can be mistaken, in these cases the new that has to be observed, is a gauge for the old, lived over out of our experience (Veselovskij, 1989)

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Being placed in the centre of urban triangle “real world”– professional practice – professional education, we observe three (evidently) interrelated perspectives. The first - “real world” – is at the moment in the process of crossing the “post-bridge” from not yet fathomed past into a difficult, unfathomable future. Like in post-colonial or post-dictatorial environments, post-Soviet space is revising its own “social” past: right now an overwhelming revelation of the “historic facts”, as well as their reconsideration and interpretation, is taking place. Society is waking up after a twenty-year long “shock therapy” of wild capitalism. Confused collective memory is trying to allocate itself in unknown surroundings, looking for help and answers in the past. All realms of life – art, economics, politics, social life, education – are going through external and internal revision of processes: both “in the wild” (Hutchins, 1995), and within their own fields. Cinematography shapes the form of „historical memory”³, endowing “with a poetic value that which does not yet possess it” (Aragon, 1918, Hammond, 1978, pp.28-31) in order to transfer into present public images of feelings (Geertz, 1973). Searching for new forms of relationship with society, politicians brandishing poetical images of Harmony⁴ and Integration are undertaking attempts to restore and apply some tools to collective work used effectively in Soviet time.

Secondly, mirroring the processes “in the wild”, the academic world related to the realm of human settlements nowadays is searching for new, more integrated and interdisciplinary, forms of education. These forms strive to reflect the needs of different overarching fields, growing demand for all kinds of participation, interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration and international co-operation. It is possible to trace similar tendencies in Latvia as well. However, intellectual and structural damages in the system of education, especially high education and research, practically paralyzed this field for two decades, and the recovery probably will require much time and financial resources. Combined with a wild and chaotic urban development caused by the spreading of private ownership, the heavily bleeding education and research in architecture have been laying in a coma. City planning as a discipline had died.

Thirdly, unlike the professional education, last years’ professional practice evidently reacts to the chaos created by financial capital based on a dogma of holy real estate (Redbergs, 2012) by alerting people both in everyday city making and professional education about the existing “dead ends”. Young professionals in architecture,

³ Popular Russian series „Александровский сад” [Alexander’s Garden] recreates the last days of Lavrentiy Beria, the most influential of Stalin’s secret police chiefs in the film “Охота на Берия» [Hunting Beria] (2008) <http://www.domkino.tv/announce/6545>, rus. [Accessed 5 May 2012].

⁴ “Saskaņas centrs” [Harmony Centre] is the name of the popular Latvian political party, which has declared overcoming ethnical and social conflicts their main goal.



planning, geography and sociology are successfully experimenting with new creative initiatives, promoting social revival in different ways. Challenging the prevalent black-and-white picture of the Soviet past (Rozenvalds, 2010) in the 1990s, when the terms “social” and “collective” were coloured dark black, they create “Socmap”⁵, “Ideju talka”⁶, “Pagalmu talka”⁷, SPP⁸, involving inhabitants, children, students, city departments, real estate developers and politicians in debates and action.

Urbanism as an approach is frequently on the agenda of city makers, but urban activism becomes a form of implementation of urban innovations. New NGOs which promote urbanism are appearing in the Baltic States - *Linnalabor*⁹ in Estonia and Urban Institute Riga (2011) in Latvia. There are two significant features which characterize public urban action today. First, it obviously functions on a regional level, building tight and creative cross-border cooperation (e.g. Est-Lat urbanist days 2011 in Kabli, participation of *Linnalabor* in RADI RIGU! Forum and others). Secondly, it declares and exercises a shift from protest-based action to trust-building action. In this respect the comprehensive RADI RIGU! programme delivers convincing results.

2.1. Planning status quo: pre-Soviet, Soviet and present-day Latvia

When trying to understand today we turn to yesterday and consequently to the day before yesterday. This “day before” draws some surprising parallels with today. Geopolitical cataclysms throughout the centuries as well as national renaissance shape the “seismic landscape” of the country which at that moment did not yet have own statehood and was a part of the Empire of Russia. Mental environment of nascent national consciousness sensitively responds to the processes in European cultural life and especially to the rise of modernism. We can read this today in the built environment of Riga. At the turn of the 20th century Riga created its own unique ensemble of Art Nouveau, which nowadays has become a spectacular part of the

⁵ Recently (2009) built and pending approbation virtual interactive platform for inhabitants for active participation in improvement of their own environment <http://socmap.com/> [Accessed 18 May 2012].

⁶ Ideju Talka (The Talka of ideas), translated as Do Talk, is using the homonymy of the Talka (volunteer work, *latv.*) and talk (act of speech, *eng.*). The DoTalk co-creation event technology was developed in mid-2009 in Latvia based on belief that we can organize ourselves in a way that everyone's ideas, motivation and contribution work in synergy with contributions of others towards making ideas happen, reaching common goals and overcoming the crisis. <http://idejutalka.lv/pages/en> [Accessed 18 May 2012].

⁷ Pagalmu Talka (Courtyard Talka) is a kind of volunteer work aimed at improvement of own environment. <http://www.talkas.lv/?page=621&lng=en>, [Accessed 18 May 2012].

⁸ Skolnieks, pētnieks, pilsētnieks (SPP) means Pupil, Explorer, City-dweller. It is an initiative (2009) of young architects for educating children in architecture and planning, using a creative game-based workshop method. <http://www.skolniekspetniekspilsetnieks.lv/> [Accessed 18 May 2012].

⁹ Linnalabor (Urban Laboratory) is in 2006 founded Estonian NGO that exercises urban activism. <http://www.linnalabor.ee/en/?lk=0> [Accessed 18 May 2012].



national heritage. The garden city idea made Riga one of the nicest and earliest (1901) examples of this movement in Europe (Dāvidsone, 1988)

One may argue that at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century Latvia was in the avant-garde of modern planning and architecture developments, following other European cities like Berlin, Munich, Copenhagen or Saint-Petersburg. Some milestones of professional history mark rapid development of and about architecture, synchronized with the building of Latvian national identity in that period. Among them are the opening of the Polytechnic School in Riga in 1862 akin to those of Karlsruhe (1825) and Zurich (1855), creation of the building department in 1869. There is a remarkable difference between the activities nowadays and those of the first generation of Latvian civil engineers and architects in politics, cultural life and education: a civil engineer A. Anderson became Lord Mayor of Riga (1921-28), professors of architecture founded the new Faculty of Architecture in the University of Latvia (1919) and the Union of Latvian Architects (1924). (Le Bourhis, 2010, p.47)

The fight for independence following the First World War resulted in the first years of independence in the history of Latvia: in 1918 The Latvian Republic was proclaimed. It was a time of building national identity. After gaining the status of capital city in 1918, Riga started to develop the features of monumental character in architecture, monuments, memorials and also in planning (Redbergs, 2012)

The reflection on the city favoured the introduction of international knowhow. Urbanism (elaborated by *pilsētu būvniecība*, a copy of the German *Städtebau*), being a discipline taught in Riga since 1917, kept the tradition of the beginning of the century of the cultural exchange between cities. After 1920, the city of Riga, strong in having a heroic and sensible part in European debates on the city, did not renounce urban growth. Riga, convinced of having a national and international exemplary mission, tried to form a „Great Riga”, promoted by Latvian architect-urbanist Arnold Lamze (Le Bourhis, 2010, p.47)

World War II ended for Latvia with annexation to USSR in 1945. That was also a start of intensive economic, industrial and building development as well as a rapid increase in population due to immigrants coming from all Soviet republics. Soviet Latvia was presented as a “model Soviet republic” to the Western world, and the geographic position of Riga determined its position as a “borderland avant-garde”, administrative centre of the Baltic region (Redbergs, 2012) Three planning events crucial for the present situation were carried out: nationalization of land, followed by organized deletion of the notion of “private property” and the system of centralized planning adapted to the “one landlord”.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s Latvia regained sovereignty and established a free market. The effect of an “avalanche-like” transition from a rigid system of central planning to a free market economy in its wildest, uncontrolled form on



social as well as emotional and mental environments can be compared to an effect of a military intervention: a significant part of society was not able to adapt to the new unknown, obscure and, more importantly, alien order of rigid capitalism. Not for the first time and not only with us, history “played a bad joke”: striving for independence and departing from the “prison” of Soviet Union with an extreme enthusiasm, we found ourselves in the middle of storming water¹⁰ without an appropriate boat or necessary skills. Used to free services and rights guaranteed by the state – work, education, recreation, healthcare and housing - we were not able to understand the new meaning of “my private property” concerning own living place.

The inhabitants’ small concerns about their own and common physical environment, low social activity and participation in urban development, explicit apolitical behaviour, inability to act in the urban space, absence of understanding and culture of communication in the new economic conditions were the side effects of the gained “freedom”. These were the general feelings of the common people in the 1990s, and it was no different for professionals of urbanism. Knowledge about these aspects of “life of feelings” (Geertz, 1973) at that time is crucial for understanding the processes in city development today.

Booming real estate, becoming a major force for urban development, required quick solutions for the conflict zones. Shortly after 1991¹¹ an elaboration of the Riga development plan for 1995-2005 started. Its author A. Roze called this time a „time of metamorphoses” which completely changed the art of social life of the last 50 years Riga had to transit from the industrial type of social city to the post-industrial model of spreading agglomeration which consequently led to structural changes.(Redbergs, 2011)

Professional society met this “time of metamorphoses” without the necessary skills and education in planning. There are two reasons for this. First, the system of centralized planning was destroyed and together with it the Soviet system of planning institutions became obsolete. Second, the few planners who had been active in Soviet times, had started their professional careers after the Second World War, and in the 1990s had reached the age of retirement. (Le Bourhis, 2012) Culturally and professionally attached to the Soviet period they were neither skilled for the planning of a free market environment nor able to communicate with a new type of political leaders. Furthermore, the “volume architects” could not rescue the situation because of their concentration on the aesthetic dimension of architecture.

¹⁰ Interesting embodiment of the ‘water’ metaphor applied to the first post-Soviet decennia is presented in the documentary about the former owner of Yukos Oil Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Film “Hodorkovsky” “tells the drama of Khodorkovsky’s Odyssey, all the way from socialist believer to perfect capitalist and subsequently becomes the most known Russian prisoner....” <http://www.khodorkovsky-movie.com/> [Accessed 1 May 2012].

¹¹ The year when was internationally accepted the state status of Baltic countries.



As a result, the “workshop-kind” and “spot-kind” planning and design became very popular. The well-known (Gehl, Kolhaas, Forster, Meinhard von Gerkan etc.) foreign specialists were invited to consult and to create representative architecture. However, unlike the post-social cities of Central Europe like Berlin, Budapest, Prague or Warsaw, Riga implemented only a few of their projects. A significant number of international workshops, seminars, contests and *plain-airs* were organized to develop large-scale real estates and to provide expertise in urban development.

Despite these activities, their actual impact on the built environment of the city remained insignificant. The weakness of the planning structure, absence of comprehensive approach to city development and political interest in public space, land-use based urban development regulations are the main reasons for the inefficiency of the existing system. The Riga Spatial Plan 2006-2018 is in fact a transition between the Spatial Structure Plan and a land-use-based planning document (Geldof, De Vriendt, Gutmane, 2009), but strategic approach to public spaces is not present in any form and in any kind of planning documents (Gutmane, 2010).

However, two more reasons of organisational character should be mentioned. One is undeveloped expertise and extreme shortage of good professionals in project management as well as a lack of understanding of its importance. In the last 20 years Riga has not realized any remarkable public space projects, and all of the few ongoing projects are struggling with the designing process as well as communication within different departments and with inhabitants.

The second is negative attitude towards any form of participation within city administration and politicians, based on insufficient knowledge about this trust-building instrument. Existing regulations for public discussion provide a legal platform for participation. However, because of the dominating mistrust and fears of negative reaction among politicians and city officials, these regulations usually are fulfilled very formally. Participation and involvement of all relevant actors is not deemed either necessary or very effective for the outcome of the project. Therefore these actors are not integrated into the planning and designing process on a regular basis.

The idea of integration as a two-way process is often stressed as the idea of cooperation and the necessity for both sides to overcome mutual mistrust and a feeling of being threatened. (Kunda, 2010, p.61)

2.2. Education: historical “conceptual gross section”

Although implementing modern planning ideas in practice from the beginning of the 20th century until the Second World War, in the realm of education professional society in Latvia remains focused on the aesthetics of built environment and does not develop its own school in planning. This tendency became a tradition which one could call a



“school” or “volume architecture” oriented look on urban environment in Riga. A comprehensive approach to city development, which requires serious research in the fields related to built environment, is also absent due to the repeatedly mentioned influence of the fall of the Soviet system.

In the Soviet Union the functions of education and research were delegated to different institutions, however, they were not separated. The dense and multilayered (and also well-financed) network of the Научно-Исследовательский Институт (НИИ, scientific research institute) ensured development of scientific research in different spheres related both to theory and practice. The realm of architecture and planning had and still has its own scientific organizational body – Российская академия архитектуры и строительных наук (the Russian Academy of Architecture and Built Sciences) A significant amount of work in scientific research was elaborated in high schools. The post-graduate researchers (doctoral candidates), whose research was attributed to the high schools, were the “binding layer” between universities, the НИИ and the practice. Russia to a large extent has kept this system nowadays, adapting it to the current economic situation (Сабитов [Sabitov],, 2002).

The situation in Latvia after the fall of the system built in the Soviet times was antipodal. After the demolition of industry, the system of field-specific scientific research and following academic layer of scientific education that had functioned so well before was completely destroyed: research institutions were closed, post-graduate education was left without financing, and demand for scientific research decreased considerably.

All aforementioned phenomena – transition to a free market economy, collapse of the Soviet planning and education system and traditionally aesthetics-based school in professional education, determined the current status quo in planning education. Despite the fact that the Faculty of Architecture and Planning in Riga Technical University includes the word “planning”, systematic knowledge in planning has not been provided.

However, the evident changes of socio-economic situation all over the world, rising awareness of urgent necessity of integrated approach to urban practice and education do not leave much space for pure aesthetic issues. Growing quality of education in landscape architecture in Latvian University of Agriculture, on a regular basis provides comprehensive to planning and design of open spaces, opening of the alternative programmes in architecture, urban design and planning and active interaction between the students from different universities influences the interests of the new generation. Good illustration of this was the recently (February 2012) organized exhibition of the diploma projects of the Riga Technical University alumni, “40 jauno arhitektu stāsti” (Stories told by 40 young architects). The majority of the projects deal with public and open space issues rather than with pure architectural subjects.



Thus the professional environment in today's Latvia, especially in Riga, seeks to obtain skills, knowledge and professionals with a comprehensive mindset appropriate to the rapidly changing environment. The education field does not provide enough possibilities either for young people or for practitioners. The latter, having more urgent need of urban knowledge, are especially “deprived” - in Latvia there is not one possibility of lifelong learning in urban planning which would give chance to gain information and skills without leaving one's own practice.

2.3. “Subbotnik”– a sustainable form of social co-operation?

Participation in networks is an important form of social capital. In times of need it can be activated, and under certain circumstances it can be transformed into economic capital.(Rajevska, 2010)

Riga's rich cultural heritage¹² forms the basis of the qualitatively built and successfully functioning system of built heritage protection. However, there remains an equally rich social heritage which is currently underestimated, unexplored and therefore not used in urban practice. The history of Latvian society provides us with unique examples of collaborative creation of the built environment already in the beginning of the 20th century. We compare two historical social events in Latvia - one from the times of the Russian Empire in the beginning of the 20th century and another from the Soviet social practices.

The first took place in the area of Riga's garden city *Keiserwald* (germ., old), today's Mežaparks (latv., Wood Park) in 1913 as an initiative on laying out a new public park. The action was organized by the recently founded public organization *Latvijas Izglītības Biedrība* (Latvian Association for Education) which was indented to promote and develop Latvian schools, kindergartens, libraries and reading rooms. The process of building *Saulesdārzs* (Garden of Sun, latv.) was organized as a common action, with the participation of Latvian businessmen, intelligentsia, inhabitants and city officials. The private property was bought with donated money; the design and implementation were created in a participative way (Neimane, 2012, p.9) Today *Saulesdārzs* has kept its public function in a reduced form (albeit an attempt of its privatisation was undertaken) as well as its historical composition. However, its most important quality, which nowadays is discussed as element of sustainable urban development – its significant role as a facilitator of social activity, national identity, collaborative design and economic activity - is completely lost.

A different phenomenon, appearing in recent urban practices, is *Subbotnik* (from *суббота* – Saturday, rus.), the form of volunteer work developed during the Soviet time. This contemporary legend was drawn from Lenin's articles “*О героизме рабочих в тылу. По поводу «коммунистических субботников»*”, (1919, About

¹² Historical centre of Riga is protected by UNESCO



heroism of the workers in the rear: the case of communist *subbotniks*) and “*Великий ночун*”, (The Great Initiative, 1920), and based on the real event of volunteer work on Moscow’s railway in spring 1919. The success of the first event and its enormous positive impact on the mood of the people determined the following systematic development and popularisation of the initiative during the whole Soviet period. Although the form of the event has changed, shifting from the industrial sphere in the beginning of the USSR to the works on public space towards the end, the mental and (one may argue) also emotional positive image of *Subbotnik* has remained deeply rooted in the mentality of the Soviet people.

Under circumstances of general instability and bewilderment in the years of financial crisis Latvia has restored (2008) the initiative of *talka* (Latvian equivalent for *subbotnik*) in its later form – as an “*Lielā talka*” or Big clean-up day (one might draw the parallel with Lenin’s “Great initiative” in 1919) of outdoor space. Officially *Lielā talka* was initiated by the President of Latvia at that time V. Zatlers with an overarching aim of “making nature garbage-free, allowing it to recover and urging people to take care of their environment.” (www.talkas.lv, 2012) In 2010 the new dimension - of upgrading public spaces – was added as an initiative of social workers and landscape architects. This new form, gaining more and more popularity by inhabitants as well as by professionals, this year gathered professionals and students of architecture, landscape architecture and art and had huge success as socialization act with visible results of improved living environment. The format of *Pagalmu talka* (Courtyards’ talka) includes workshop based student competition, competition based selection of the courtyards and principles of public private partnership in implementation.

2.4. CPD as an instrument for urban development

By the year 2010 an international group of professional planners and landscape architects working in Latvia started to explore the possibility to apply the principles of *Talka* to urban planning and design. A scope of several factors worked as the driving impulse: the aforementioned lack of political interest regarding public spaces, insufficient professional knowledge and experience in urban planning and design, passive societal attitude, growing mistrust, aggression and segregation between all social groups – politicians, professionals, inhabitants, city departments and businessmen. A year later an intensive training program *RADI RĪGU!* (Create Riga! 2011-2012) for practitioners in city planning, architecture, landscape architecture and road engineering was launched. The subheading and main subject was “public space as lever for social revival”. The broader aim was to bring to the “round table” as many stakeholders and shareholders of Riga’s development as possible, in order to activate discussions about an integrated approach to city development and to create trust among professionals, politicians and inhabitants. This defined the heterotopian nature of the programme.



2.4.1. Professional training + urban action + implementation

“RADI RĪGU!” had a 3D aspiration – as a professional training programme in urbanism, as an urban action and as an at implementation aimed research by design. All three dimensions of the programme were interwoven with a strongly expressed socially interactive and communicative character.

2.4.2. Professional training

The training programme RADI RĪGU! had the intention to provide experience in all stages of planning and design, from project definition to project management, for a multidisciplinary team of practitioners: architects, landscape architects, city planners and road engineers. Despite objective and subjective difficulties – a rather high price for training in a time of economic crisis, the large amount of time required, a very vague idea about the issue of spatial planning, project management, participation and involvement – 25 professionals working in Riga’s architectural bureaus, among them in Latvia well-known professionals, responded to the call. A multidisciplinary, multi-aged and international group started training in April 2011 and worked together in nine workshops during one year.

High-level professional expertise was guaranteed by the international team of coaches from University of Leuven (prof. J. Schreurs and prof. Jef Van den Broeck), Free University of Brussels (prof. Marc Martens), Belgium and experts from Copenhagen (Tina Saaby, city architect), Barcelona (Jordi Farrando, architect) and Moscow (Anna Shtetinina, architect, leader of “Arhistojanije”) were invited to participate in different phases of the work.

The workshops were organized in three phases, each aimed at a different stage of project processing.

Phase 1

- Project preparation
- Project definition

Phase 2

- Concepts
- Sketches

Phase 3

- Strategies
- Management

In order to provide exercises in the beginning stage of urban project participants were invited to select cases – spaces in Riga’s neighbourhoods. Before the start of the programme the participants decided to work on city neighbourhoods rather than the city centre. They were motivated by the necessity to pay professional attention to the periphery of the city, left out of professional interest for the last 20 years.

From twelve spaces offered for selection they had to choose five according to the following criteria, given by the coaches:



1. Strategic character of the neighbourhood
2. Large involvement of inhabitants
3. Ownership
4. In favour of local authorities
5. Complexity
6. Shining example

Selections were made in an interactive role-based way. One of the stages of selection included voting. The interesting fact is that by voting the chosen cases were re-evaluated guided by emotional attitude, which was influenced by feeling of social justice or, in other words, social sympathy: mono-social and identity-lacking neighbourhoods built in late Soviet time were preferred instead of spatially and socially more diverse ones which was more interesting for planning and design.

Instruments like mental mapping, analysis of different scales (“from space to place” method), visits of the sites, cross-evaluation and diversity games, combined with theoretical information given in the lectures by coaches, helped to receive and to adapt significant amount of new information as well as to apply the principle of integrated approach in the workshops and own everyday practice.

2.4.3. Urban action

RADI RĪGU! has made an attempt to build the trust by bringing public space users and policy makers closer to each other in co-operation. The call “City makers are on the street!” was the non-written slogan of *RADI RĪGU!*

The ultimate task of the intensive programme, disclosed in its title “CREATE Riga”, is to make participants assume the role of mediators between decision-makers, stakeholders and the public.



The traditional soft PR campaign tools were used: a website (www.radirigu.lv), information in public media and open lectures given by the external experts. Two public conferences were organized during the programme: a mid-review of the results during the second phase and a two-day closing conference in the City Hall, which brought



together most of the important actors: politicians, decision makers, inhabitants, professionals, foreign experts and urban activists.

An effective tool for getting closer to users and city administration was “moving workshops”. Started in the House of Architects, participants worked in all selected neighbourhoods, in the schools or district administrations, involving the local people. It created a platform for effective communication with inhabitants and local authorities.

Between the seminars participants did their “homework” on participative design, organizing workshops for children and involving different departments, real estate developers, NGOs, police and port authorities.

The integrative approach, applied as a methodology to all levels of the programme - aim, structure of the workshops, preparation of the process, selection of the cases, branding and implementation of the results, doubtlessly served as a strong communicative platform.

The integrative approach also determined multiple, layered aims of the project, which can be articulated in eight flows:

DISCOVER LEARN REALISE COOPERATE INVOLVE MARKETING LINK CREATE - RIGA!

1	2	3	4
DISCOVER	LEARN	REALISE	COOPERATE
the world of planning	about a design process from order to project definition from project definition to concept from concept to design from design to project	real projects: - on short term -relatively cheap -substantial -eye catching examples -pilot projects -best practices	all stakeholders and actors in all stages of the process: - decision-makers city administrations (national level) -district officials -external actors - NGOs
the importance of public spaces in all stages of the process	project and process management from idea to project from project to realisation from realisation to governance to cooperate with: stakeholders, actors, inhabitants to preserve spatial qualities during the whole process	-projects that improve daily living conditions in own neighbourhood	



5	6	7	8
INVOLVE	MARKET	LINK	CREATE RIGA
inhabitants in all stages of the process, including realisation and governance	integrate several stages of the process into public events: -happenings -exhibitions -design contests for children	link the project and its process to parallel events and programmes: - RIGA 2014 - Talka - Apkaimes	hand over a set of tools to the City of Riga in order to develop a real Public Space Policy: - methodologies, guidelines - motivated staff - skilled professionals - enthusiastic people

As an example one can mention communication with city officers at the early stage of the programme, which was organized not as passive information, but as active involvement. They were also invited to evaluate the variants of the programme’s logo, which added an informal note to the communication process.

This preliminary friendly communication helped to create interest, understanding and personal engagement of the city officials invited to the discussions. Indeed, during the process they changed their positions from “observers” to “participants”. Initially discussions were not aimed at gaining permission or “financial support” (the project is partly financed by the ESF programme and participants themselves) but sharing opinions about questions such as “Is it necessary for Riga?”, “What do we need to make Riga better?” and “Which are the tools to achieve it?”.

All these activities definitely placed *RADI RĪGU!* on the public stage of the city. However, it must be admitted that the PR programme planned by the organizers was not entirely successful due to financial and time shortage. The biggest contribution to the successful “RR-story” concerning “best practice” public image was made by the well-organized and broadly popularized last conference in the City Hall as well as the FORUM –format of this event.

2.4.4. Implementation

Despite the great number of different workshops organized in Riga in the last two decennia, there was a lack of practical results: very few ideas found their path to realization. Therefore *RADI RĪGU!* and the city administration agreed (by signing a contract with the city development department) about possible implementation of the programme’s results.

It is worth mentioning that this agreement was an encouraging step and a sign of trust from the side of the city administration and politicians, because of a rather vaguely defined outcome and unknown result of the whole event. Moreover, the agreement was closed with a programme which was just an urban action, without any legal status. One



can argue that *RADI RĪGU!* is a unique example of (positive) collaboration between city authorities and urban activists, built on mutual trust.

3. Results? Results!

Before articulating the outcome of this heterotopian one-year-long urban action/training programme, it is worth briefly describing the initial emotional landscape of the story. Rereading the negative comments on the article announcing the start of *RADI RĪGU!* in the archive of the interactive architecture platform A4D (www.a4d.lv), remembering scepticism and mistrust, even resistance from the side of politicians as well as professionals, one would wonder if there ever was hope for (positive) results. There was, however, a shared space of enthusiasm, eagerness for new knowledge, love for one's own city and a rare air of creativity mixed with friendship. It was exactly this mixture that delivered results which were officially and publically approved on the *RADI RĪGU!* Forum in March 2012.

The first and most important result is the fulfilment of the main goal, namely, to raise awareness of the need for a comprehensive approach to city development. During the year *RADI RĪGU!* activities – communication with inhabitants, public lectures, discussions with city officials – attracted enthusiastic people who joined the groups and worked on the projects together with the participants.

Due to its 3D character the training programme turned into a common event. Students and professors of three Latvian universities, civil servants, district authorities, Ministry of Environment, police, schools and inhabitants were all involved in the action.

The “homework” in communication and participative design resulted in the foundation of NGOs in two of the five programme's neighbourhoods.

The most mistrusted and (even among the coaches critically discussed) intention, to deliver practical results for the City in order to implement them, is in the stage of possible realization at that moment. Decision-makers publically announced their willingness to further develop the programme for neighbourhoods and particular projects created by *RADI RĪGU!* The city development department has officially started to work on the proposals.

As a continuing professional development this programme fulfilled its task most successfully: all practitioners and students who participated in the training programme emphasized the high importance of the gained knowledge and skills for their further professional careers and understanding of the processes in the city.

The *RADI RĪGU!* initiative has also gained international interest. Recently there have been discussions about possible collaboration with Umea within the cultural capital programme in 2014 and launching a set of parallel workshops on resilience, urban policies and community building in Latvia and Flanders.



However, the most important outcome of the programme, which was meant as a positive and constructive action of the professionals, may be that it is a demonstration “for” rather than “against”. It is the first step in building trust and mutual understanding between participants of the urban project in its broader sense.

4. Conclusions

Searching for the more effective methods of professional education, the social aspect of learning appears not less important as the methodology. In this concern historical perspective of social life comes forward with forms of co-creation rooted in local culture. Together with material cultural heritage and not-material ones like song festivals, carnivals or religious rituals, the social heritage as ritual of spatial co-production has a capacity of being transformed into new forms of urban planning practice and education. The case of *Talka*, its shift from industrial production to spatial co-production provides us with valuable information and methodologies.

Contemporary urban development more and more turns into mass creativity and mass innovation, but urban co-production requires interaction of all actors. Learning in architecture and planning, having creativity at the bottom (Schreurs, 1986), has to become a platform for urban development as open source and co-creation (“yes, you can use my ideas”). As much as urban project “in the wild”, the “laboratory” of urban education as mayor task has to provide professional training in co-existence, non-aggressiveness, tolerance. The programme *RADI RIGU!* with its evolution from shared mistrust and resistance to shared enthusiasm and willingness to co-operate, offers a convincing methodology for creative learning.

RADI RIGU! has a heterotopian character and combines learning, urban action and the aspect of implementation. As such it was like heterotopias often are (Dehaene, M., De Caeter, L. 2008), a “reaction on crisis”. It complies with a planning cycle which analyzes an existing situation, develops a vision about a better future, implies transformations and evaluates these in the light of a next cycle (Schreurs, J., Moulaert, F. 2012) and marks a shift from ecological approach to planning education.

5831 words



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