A global multidisciplinary network on housing research and learning

Catalogue of Citizens Initiatives in Skopje: Mapping the Civic Society

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“Cities, like dreams are made of desires and fears...” (I. Calvino)
Natural order of the cities (Laugier)
rational and irrational are not mutually exclusive (Piranesi)
the faith in technological progress for building a better world
the role of the public in mediating the order in the city
society as total installation (control of public space)
spatial practice!

Henri Lefebvre
social praxis!

Pierre Bourdieu
the financial crisis / the crisis in the society
the landscapes of our collectivity are still the places of conflict!
new inclusive and sustainable collectivity!
Urban Cooks Platforms: Bottom-up urban planning is a project funded by Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under Culture Programme 2007-2013, Strand 1.2.1.- 2013 “Cooperation Measures”
Objectives of the project is to understand the framework around citizen initiatives in Madrid, Belgrade and Skopje, to learn how does existing programs in other cities work, taking a critical look of them, and to define a program, having in mind particular frameworks of each cities.
Final goal is to design a protocol, methodology or platform for supporting citizen initiatives, not only in Madrid, Belgrade and Skopje, but rather an exportable model for Europe and other countries.
We can conclude that:

THE MORE SATISFIED PEOPLE ARE WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES, THE STRONGER THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING

TO BELONG MEANS TO BE CONTENT.

TO BE CONTENT MEANS TO BELONG.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

REAC-H-OR
research in action

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Civic engagement is related to the sense of **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**.
In Macedonia citizens are divided...

- **57%**
  
  I believe that it is my personal responsibility to act towards improving my community.

- **43%**
  
  I believe that it is not my personal responsibility to act towards improving my community.
3 of 4 think it is important to be able to influence decision-making in their local community.

More than every other would like to be more involved in these decisions.

For:
- 77% of adults
- 73% of young people

It is very/partially important to have influence.

For young people it is less important to have influence, however personal responsibility is the same.

Those with a higher educational attainment have a stronger desire for engaging and influencing decisions.
Despite the great desire for engagement and the sense of responsibility to the community, there is nevertheless pessimism when it comes to the possibility for influencing decision-making in the local community.

To what extent do citizens believe they can change something?

- "Cannot have influence": 53%
- "Can have little influence": 20%
- "Can influence somewhat": 21%
- "Can have influence": 7%

There are no differences between youth and adults in terms of how much they believe they can change something on the local level.

Young people are the least interested in influencing decision-making on the local level.
Why do citizens **NOT PARTICIPATE** in civic initiatives?

- I don't have time, too many obligations: 40%
- I'm not interested in those things: 6%
- I don't have confidence in the efficiency and honesty of the initiatives: 8%
- No one asked me to: 8%
- There are no initiatives, people are not organized: 10%
- I did not have information, did not know who to turn to: 11%
CITIZENS WHO BELIEVE IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVE MECHANISMS ARE MORE CONTENT WITH THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY.

THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVERSARIAL MECHANISMS CONSIDER IT MORE IMPORTANT TO INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKING.

This emphasizes the importance of the existence of a cooperative system between citizens and the authorities.
### Research

- **Institutional**
  - **Citizens’**
  - **Experts’**
  - **Activists’**

  Citizens’ initiatives in municipality, non-formal, on-going, executed...

- **Communication through social media and networks of citizens, activists and personal contacts**

### Assistance

- **Initial contact with the promoter of the initiative**
- **Individual contacts**

- **Protocols**
  - **Round Table 1** with experts (architects)
  - **Round Table 2** with experts (activists)
  - **Round Table 3** with experts (administration)

- **Public debate with citizens**

- **Catalogue of citizens’ initiatives (built & un-built)**

### Promotion

- **Promotion and evaluation of citizens’ initiatives**

  (MIXER FESTIVAL Belgrade, SINERGI thematic seminar Zagreb, Local municipalities, City of Skopje, Funding agencies, Community of local citizens’ initiatives and others)

- **Selection of 3 citizens’ initiatives**

### Realization

- **Realization (construction) of 3 citizens’ initiatives**

### Analysis

- **Comparative analysis of the process of development of citizens’ initiatives in Skopje, Belgrade and Madrid**
MAP OF URBAN INITIATIVES

- Green park in Chair
- Liquid history
- Pets trash
- City Acupuncture
- Share food
- Skopje Grows
- Trash Cooperativa
- Trash Cooperativa
- Neighborhood library
- Bicycle parking
- Street art / graffiti
- Shelters for homeless
- Urban voids
- Tactile pathways
CATALOG OF URBAN INITIATIVES IN SKOPJE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Initiator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Skopje citizens (Debar Maalo and Bunjakovec Quarter)</td>
<td>Debar Maalo and Bunjakovec Quarter, Skopje</td>
<td>Reactor &amp; Arhitektri studio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SKOPJE GROWS**

Initiative for reanimation of the public spaces, children's playground and green spaces in Skopje.
Проектот 'Скопје Расте' е интернет платформа која се занимава со прикажување и анализирање на градските четврти Дебар Маало и Буњаковец низ неколку елементарни и хронопошти параметри: СТАНБЕНАТА СТРУКТУРА - како таа расте, се проширува и згуснува? ПАРКИРАЊЕТО како реакција на зголемениот број станбени единици. Кои альтернативи ги нуди ДУП-от и како се справува со истиот проблем? И секако - ЗЕЛЕНИЛОТО како параметар, кој едноставно исчезнува во рамките на оваа урбана цепина.

Оваа платформа на некој начин се обидува да влијае на микро ниво, како информативна и едукативна каписпа, која ќе поттикне вклучување на оние субјекти који претходно биле пасивни.
The idea for such initiative comes from the acknowledgment that larger part of the public green areas in the cities in Macedonia are an easy target for the densification wave of the urban mass especially in the centers. The platform www.skopjeraste.mk platform explains in a simple and transparent visual language the process of invasion of the free areas through chronological and programmatic dissection. The lack of areas of this type in Skopje is a contemporary problem which we think should be dealt with a broad civil initiative in an informal way. This approach is common and is widely used to a good effect in transforming the public spaces in the past 20 years outside the reach of the mechanisms of the urban planning system. The initiative will offer a frame in which this model of cooperation and realization can be replicated in other similar situations and will benefit in the communication between the authorities and the citizens who use the public space.
Transformation of private gardens into public green areas without specific character or program.
TRASH COOPERATIVA is envisioned as a multifunctional cooperative public space fully designed and built of discarded objects and materials.

Date: April 2014

Target group: The local community (young mothers, gardeners, retired persons, unemployed, artisans and artists)

Site: Various sites in Skopje

Initiator: Trash Cooperativa
Trash Cooperativa is envisioned as a multifunctional cooperative public space fully designed and built of discarded objects and materials. The building is intended for the local community with the purpose to provide a public space for hanging out, group cooking and preparing of pickle, organizing events, local celebrations, markets etc. The key element of the project is a communal kitchen, built from a 20' intermodal container. To create the entrance of the kitchen one side is cut open and serves as main the access point. Using wooden pallets, the kitchen elements are created (plastic crates are used as drawers and barrels as washing utility) and the bar.

All the exterior furniture is also created using wooden pallets and metal bars or metalux elements. To create the cover around the kitchen, we have used patches of PVC advertising banners (full-mesh and mesh in order to give a more dynamic shade) tied with ropes in a matrix that creates modules for adjustment of the shape and size of the cover. To secure the cover we have used metallic poles and bases created from car tires and cement. All the parts can be assembled/dissembled in order to use a little space possible when not in use. Its parts can also be rearranged so to serve different purposes. Trash Cooperativa is a bottom-up project, that can be self sustained by the sale of products and objects, and even provide a small retribution for the persons in charge of its maintenance.
comunal kitchens 600x244x259 cm - 20' intermodal container

rope

shade patches 120x120 cm - PVC banners (mesh and full mesh)

barletop 360x80 cm - euro-pallet

removable legs - metal bars

folding legs - metal bars

platform 240x80 cm - euro-pallet

tabletop 120x80 cm - euro-pallet

structure base - car tyres with cement

the shades can be moved according to the need

shade structure - used metal bars or scaffolding
**DISTRIBUTION MODEL 1**

Possible distribution during local neighborhood gatherings and parties. The kitchen with the bar serves as selling point of beverages and food. The entrance platform is closed to limit the entry.

**DISTRIBUTION MODEL 2**

Possible distribution during an artisan market. It can be organized by the locals or rented to other entities.
SOLID HISTORY + LIQUID INFORMATION = IDENTITY

LIQUID + TIME = HISTORY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>June 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target group</td>
<td>The local community and residents of the neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Debar maalo neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiator</td>
<td>GRADGRAD</td>
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</tbody>
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LIQUID HISTORY

is an initiative to add a new “invisible and liquid” layer of history in the pavement and at the streets of the neighborhood.
Водата кој тече од олуците при скопските поројни дождови, низ каналите на тротоарите се слева на улиците. Со поставување на канали од матерijал кој при допир со вода првоjувува структура/запис која е поинаква од неговата вообичаена состојba пренесуваат информации. Овие информации се врзани за улиците, просторот, настаните, луѓето и историјата на местотот каде е олукot. Оваа суштинска поврзаност на постоeчkiot елемент-олукot, со неговата функциjа-проces и новиот елемент-вода коj е неопходен услов за појавност на знаците е основата на динамичkiot процесс на создавање на урбаниот идентитет низ препрочитување на старите и новите слоеви на градот.

Овие нови, меки конструкциjи се темпорални и видливи само во одреден временски период и под одредени услови. Искуството на нивното читање е уникално и неповторливо исто како што е неповторлива комбинациjата на истите услови. Потоа повторно исчезнуваат во структурата на каменот чекаjки ja следната прилика. Тие се дел од контекстот и со ништо не се разликуваат од постоeчките материjали. Нивната реализациjа е суштински поврзана за градот таков каков што е. Новите урбани маркиери се дел, точки од новата урбана топографиjа коja го создава нашиот идентитет. Поврзувајќи ги урбаниите маркиери со биоразградлива бојa во мрежа на врски meѓu нив се создава новa, урбана топографиjа. Оваа мрежа е секојпат различна, секојпат создава нови врски и секојпат нуди различна информациjа. Поврзувајќи ги елементите на градот (објектите, луѓето, дрвjата, олуците, светилките, тротоарите...) се создаваат нови и нови конфигурации. Овие мрежи се врските коj ги градиме со градот и со луѓето во него. Тие се урбаниите маркиери коj исчезнуваат во тек на неколку дена и повторно се создаваат. Тие се основата на нашата слика за градот и за нас самите. Создавањето на овие мрежи е низ работилница со деца и возрасни коjа може да се случува во сите делови од градот. Темата на секоja работилница може да
SOLID + LIQUID = PLACE

SOLID HISTORY + LIQUID INFORMATION = IDENTITY

SOLID + LIQUID + PLACE = IDENTITY

LIQUID + TIME = HISTORY
TACTILE PATHWAY

is an initiative to adapt the streets and sidewalks in the center of the city with urban elements for assistance of visually impaired citizens.

Date
May 2008

Target group
Visually impaired persons

Site
Center of Skopje

Initiator
National Council of organizations of people with handicap in Macedonia
implementing individual solutions to improve urban life and solve a problem faced by residents

May 2012 (completed 2013)

Citizens of Municipality of Centar

Debar maalo neighborhood

Public room
Various sites in Debar maalo
City Acupuncture is a 24 month project is organized in cooperation with 5 associations from 4 different countries of Southeast Europe, in order to improve the quality of urban life through international cultural exchange. With this project, the City Acupuncture is the foundation for regional co-operation, with the role of culture as an important element in strengthening regional cooperation and development. The project involved interdisciplinary and international experts and types of students tasked to explore (on site) regional identity, urban planning and culture of a settlement in a particular city.
BICYCLE PARKING

Initiative objective is to increase the awareness and stimulate the bicycle traffic.

Date: August 2013
Target group: Cyclists
Initiator: Arhitektri studio
Site: Debar maalo neighborhood
The idea is to set the bicycle frame / bicycle parking at multiple locations in Skopje, and on every 100 parking spots for motor vehicles to mark at least one of those parking spots as bicycle parking. One parking spot for a car (2.5m/5m) accommodates 13 bicycle parking spots.
SHARE FOOD AND BOOKS

initiative for anonymous share of food and books in the neighborhoods

Date: April 2014 (realised)

Target group: Skopje citizens

Site: Skopje

Initiator: Anonymous
URBAN COOKS SPICING UP THE CIVIC SOCIETY IN OUR CITIES
conclusions (guidelines)

Interaction is Integration

participation as a social & spatial practice

participation makes community meaningful
Thank you!

ognen marina

Faculty of Architecture University Sts. Cyril and Methodius Skopje Macedonia
A project that seeks to integrate the knowledge and the experience of professionals from various European countries, together with local communities. Basurama (Madrid), Mikser (Belgrade) and ISPJR (Skopje) together with citizen initiatives and other experts will develop an innovative methodology for bottom up initiatives serving for mediate between their needs and the public administration and other entities, basing on successful examples in the field of citizen participation.

The main goal of the project will be to design a common and exportable toolkit to support citizen initiatives that manage and create public space, and moreover the creation of local action platforms “Urban Cooks Platform” in each participant city, but with the aim of being replicable in other cities through the methodology developed during the project.