

Action based research for capacity building of neighbourhood communities

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This paper aims to present action research experiences in Romanian context and reflection on architectural education contribution to helping neighbourhood communities. The project entitled Urban Education Live - Innovative Urban Education in Live Settings - meant applying social mapping tools with a civic initiative group and then defining a common agenda that was presented to the local authorities as the first neighbourhood development plan in Romania. A new project that was initiated last year entitled Conect - Collective Networks for Everyday Community Resilience and Ecological Transition - aims to identify collaboration mechanisms among various stakeholders for helping grass-roots initiatives addressing transition challenges to have more visibility and impact. The frame of the Urban Europe Joint Partnership Initiative as a research program in which both these projects are implemented is demonstrating a solid concern for the social impact of research on communities. Research on connections between space and communities means testing ideas and tools coming from the training of built environment professionals and helping neighbourhood communities and master students to work together on concrete objectives and formats. By doing so, architects and other professionals learn how to offer their support in building bridges between grass roots initiatives and decision making processes since these formats are the ones used to plan and design interventions for transforming spaces.

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