

COMPETITION
BEIRUT – IDENTITY COMPETITION

PROPOSAL | 30.01.2021

Applied Research Project with different universities and international corporation

Project Title

Regenerating identity. Dynamic pills for the community of Beirut

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INTRODUCTION

The undersigned working group UUD - UNIBO + UNIRSM DESIGN welcomes the invitation to propose a series of activities for the Beirut - Identity competition.

We firmly believe that these collaborative activities between different working groups and countries with study, research and project activities can concretely recognize and propose by contributing to rethinking the renewal of the identity of this wonderful city, which has been so badly affected by the terrible event.

The UUD group is made up of professors, researchers and designers inside and outside the two universities of Bologna and San Marino who have been involved in education, research and local territorial regeneration for more than twenty years in various international contexts.

The UUD group is active in theoretical and applied research projects, university and postgraduate courses, as well as international collaborative projects in many contexts in the Mediterranean, including the Italian peninsula, the Lebanese geographic area and North Africa.

The group draws on a very solid cooperation and advice, especially with bodies such as the National UNESCO Commission of San Marino, some associations of the third sector, such as in particular the ASSOBDM association active at the level of world fair trade, the Giovanni Paolo Second Foundation, for dialogue, collaboration and development.

The universities with the GPII Foundation, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Ciheam and some Lebanese organizations are closing a three-year international cooperation project in the Bekaa Valley and the Zahle Governorate in 2021 with the title "A better future for small producers in rural Lebanon". The partners of this above mentioned project can be involved in the research and development activities.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL | DESIGN FOR A DYNAMIC AND PARTICIPATED REGENERATION

"The city's identity is its memory, made up from layers of history that design the city's spirit"¹

Based on the objectives of the international call, the UUD Group submits to your attention an articulated study, research and training project.

The study activities are already underway and the program will develop over a period of 12-18 months and will involve quick semester and project workshops, flanked by research projects and exhibition projects related to daily life activities, to the micro-infrastructure of neighborhood and the principles of Community Design and Design for Territory, particularly in the areas of Central Beirut affected by the devastation.

¹ from the competition announcement.

The project will link two main categories of analysis and project proposed by the call-in synergy: **The best food sustainability solutions and The best small business.**

Within the annual Design for Territory program, joint between the University of Bologna / Italy and the University of San Marino, we aim to work on the level of experimental and experiential Design which aims to create useful tools for the Regeneration of a dynamic and participatory identity of the Beirut community and the areas affected by the explosion.

DESIGN | EXPERIENCE AND MOTIVATION

Design today is no longer just a function, but in the era of digitalization it has become as fluid as life itself: it can be a service, it can be a digital page, it can be a virtual environment. But it is always design, and the areas of it itself expand and infiltrate all aspects of science and technology to be absorbed by everyday life in the most appropriate forms.

Consequently, design is not just a way to make things more beautiful or more functional. There is an intrinsic relationship between what and how we design and how the result of it comes back to us.

Taking the basic principle of ontological design, this relationship becomes clear as it states that:

- design is something much more pervasive and profound than is generally recognized by designers, cultural theorists, philosophers or laymen.
- designing is fundamental to being human - we design, that is, we deliberate, plan and design in ways that foreshadow our actions and accomplishments - in turn we are designed by our design and what we have designed.
- this adds up to a double movement: we design our world, while our world acts on us and designs us.

The environment today is mainly a built environment, or at least modified to generate a "natural" environment. Man moves within these physical environments, in the spaces created by him, while today the dimension of the spaces often becomes invisible as it is meaningless. How important this man-space relationship is can be summarized in the words of Martin Heidegger in his *Bauen Wohnen Denken* (Building, Dwelling, Thinking):

«The spaces open up due to the fact that they enter the man's house. To say being mortal means that in living they persist in spaces by virtue of their permanence between things and places. And only because mortals pervade, persist, spaces by their very nature are able to cross them. »

The living space is therefore a fundamental part of human life and in the Heideggerian sense, the living space is beyond its mathematical values. Therefore, the concept of living can not only be limited to the "four" walls of the private place where man withdraws to sleep and eat, but his "world", the environment in which he lives, is also **made of building, the neighborhood, the streets leading there, weekly markets and supermarkets, post office and much more.** The house, however, remains the reference point, or as the philosopher Riccardo Paradisi calls it, walking the streets the thought "is always aimed at living, like the compass needle that inevitably returns to indicate magnetic north".

Then continue:

"In his meditation *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Martin Heidegger manages to overturn the sign and director of the building-living hierarchical sequence that took place in the technical age.

"Only if we have the ability to live - and here is the overthrow - we can build".

From this it can be concluded that what makes the environment liveable is our relationship with it. Relationships with others, sensory memories, light. Given this need, intervention in a place that suffers from the absence of stimuli and relationships, must seek its solutions especially in the management of possible and positive emotions. Emotional design is an important element when generating ideas for human-centered opportunities. People can more easily relate to a product, service, or experience when they are able to connect to it on a personal level.

Within the semester program of Design for Territory, joint between the University of Bologna/Italy and the University of San Marino, we propose to work on these aspects of understanding and reviving neighbourhood in the context of Beirut, its matrix of small businesses and services to the community. Together with the Lebanese partner we will elaborate an International Workshop Program to get as much as possible near to the local realty. This workshop activity is open to any Lebanese Stakeholder interested in contributing.

DESIGN | AUXILIARY AND PROCESS FACILITATOR

The intention of this proposal is to offer residents, students, workers and visitors of the place an integrated system of designed physical products and digital networks that can evolve based on the progressive regeneration of activities, needs and values. A flexible and immaterial system that follows the phases of material reconstruction.

We will work in a sequential process that includes activities and actions to map temporary and permanent needs, to identify the values of the place and communities, to know, to accept and recognize the heritage, to protect and finally to improve with identity artifacts according to two typical dimensions of the neighborhood and the city: the immaterial dimension and the material dimension.

The design project will focus attention on some aspects of understanding, regenerating and enhancing the identity of this area of Beirut, starting with the ability to set up, support and activate micro-activities in the neighborhood in the context of food or handicrafts at small ones Corporations and nonprofits towards a desirable, sustainable, and measurable transformation in and out of context. The program involves the strategic design of a physical system of microorganisms, small cubicles, product and object families that can be manufactured on site or used by humans to regenerate the place, which is conceived as a system of molecules, cells and organs that Relationships are placed in a network and synergistic, in a vision of a self-sufficient complex organism with its own character, physiognomy and energy.

This cellular system is implemented as early as the construction phase for the reconstruction of buildings through the establishment of micro-food or artisanal and artistic production facilities. The temporary building development support system can for the most part become permanent and define a structure of network relationships that comes with the rebirth of the urban fabric and citizenship itself.

The designer contributes to the development and regeneration process in the various phases of the implementation of the activities and intervenes alongside the various actors as a process manager, interpreter of inquiries, relationship brokers, product designers and asset enhancers.

In recent applied research projects, our UUD group has assisted some small agricultural producers in Lebanon in forming a consortium of cooperatives and small rural families from different geographical areas and from different traditions and religions.

The communication plan envisaged the introduction of an umbrella brand that would allow the different actors to identify themselves in a single coordinated image, to support the same values and principles of product promotion in the market and to share a process of technological, social and economic innovation marketing the typical Lebanese agricultural product, especially in the fruit and vegetable sector.

LINES OF ACTION, ACTIVITIES AND PROJECT THEMES

In addition to the Research Activities, together with the Lebanese partners we are developing a program of specific Training Activities such as six-monthly project workshops for in-depth study of the themes, interspersed with some international workshops and exhibitions held in some phases in San Marino, Bologna and Venice and in other phases in Lebanon to get as close as possible to the local reality.

These research, training and exhibition activities see the participation of some Lebanese Stakeholders, but are open to other Stakeholders interested in contributing.

LINE OF ACTION 1 | STRATEGIC PROJECT

In the first months of studying the area, the theme and the brief, it was considered correct to define a strategic research development plan, shared with some partners. This plan will be announced shortly within the project Laboratories in order to make about 120 students of the Laboratories work on two or three specific themes.

Settle

As mentioned earlier, the strategic plan foresees the first installation of food and craft cores, including during construction and reconstruction, which form a temporary network of settlements that could gradually become a permanent system of relationships between place, people and community.

The project aims to address and involve micro-grocery stores and craft micro-stores in a single structural complex that includes activities and encourages consumers to purchase local products, a symbol of Lebanese tradition.

It would be interesting to propose the new location right in the recently devastated area as it is on the city's waterfront and represents both a strategic point and a symbol of rebirth.

In addition, all activities involved could be identified by the same visual identity (differentiated for example by colours or patterns), both in the use of packaging and in the architectural placement structures.

LINE OF ACTION 2 | PRODUCT DESIGN WORKSHOPS

The reasoning with the students concerns:

- Graphic representations of the possible material and immaterial networks of the place, of tradition, of today and tomorrow;
- Study of the umbrella brands and the coordinated image of the artisan and food districts;
- Mapping of markets, shops, materials, techniques, needs and principles to be assessed in Beirut;
- Diagrams of the possible on-time but reticular settlement of micro-grocery and craft micro-shops since the construction of new buildings or the reconstruction of damaged buildings;
- Design of the micro shop and grocery stores;
- Coordinated picture of the revitalization operation through food and handicrafts;
- Artisanal or semi-industrial products to reactivate the community design for a circular economy and short supply chain (ceramics, wood, leather or wool fabrics) to be sold in shops in the centre;
- local food;
- packaging for these products;
- micro-exhibitors for these products;
- Stalls - removable booths for a temporary solidarity market in the neighbourhood (assembly and disassembly) for food and handicrafts;
- Exhibitors for Fab-Lab stores for these products as a core for reactivating relationships between residents, craftsmen and tourists;
- Products or furniture for bookstores
- others

LINE OF ACTION 3 | DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Promotion through video narration of the identity definition processes;

Participation in the 17th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale;

Creation of a publication of narration and reflection on the topic;

Organization of Exhibitions in San Marino, Bologna and Lebanon;

Organization of round tables in Lebanon and in the group's universities and abroad;

TRAINING AND APPLIED RESEARCH RESULTS EXPECTED IN THE SHORT PERIOD

Creation of a complex network system scheme for identity regeneration;

Creation of 30 projects or prototypes of artefacts or product families to be proposed to local supply chains in Beirut;

Sharing of projects and results with local partners;

Realization of some prototypes of objects or cockpits in the context of Beirut:

FINANCING

Internal costs charged to the University

€ 10,000.00 - University of Bologna - Cost of personnel and dedicated structures for 12 months of work

€ 20,000.00 - University of San Marino - Personnel costs and dedicated structures for 12 months of work

€ 5,000.00 - Materials and processes for prototypes and relationships

External funding from partners or sponsors (to be agreed)

€ 5,000.00 - Participation in the Venice Biennale
€ 12,000.00 - Publication of e_book and paper
Self-financing by project participants (to be agreed)
€ 10,000.00 - Missions in Beirut

WORK SCHEDULE

December 2020 - February 2021 | Study of the place and identification of the brief
January 2021 | Detailed organization of the international program
February 2021 | Mission in Lebanon with partner
February 2021 - June 2021 | Project workshop with 60 students in Bologna;
February 2021 - June 2021 | Project workshop with 50 students in San Marino
April 2021 | International workshop
June 2021 | Presentation of the project with International Panel from Lebanon
June - September 2021 | In-depth study of the research and development of the project
June - December 2021 | Design and creation of a scientific publication on the subject
Summer 2021 | Possible transfer to Beirut for an exhibition on site
Summer 2021 | Possible workshops in Lebanon
September 2021 | International workshop with exhibition in San Marino
November 2021 | Exhibition or video for Venice City Solutions
November 2021 | Exhibition or video for the Venice Architecture Biennale
December 2021 | Presentation of the publication
January 2022 | Presentation of the publication

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PROJECT | FIRST PHASE | MAPPING THE METHODOLOGIES

Just as an example we think it may be useful to illustrate: - our methodology, adopted by the working group that we can illustrate here through the synthetic text published last 2020 entitled

Design and Communities_exploring rural territories_Cali.pdf;

- the project developed in Lebanon with some missions, and a workshop in strategic design, in the first 2 years entitled:

Libano_Cherry_Chain_Unirsm.pdf