SoHoLab webinars

13, 20, 27 October 2020

The SoHoLab project was a 3-year research addressing resident involvement, local knowledge and stakeholder collaboration in the context of the regeneration of large-scale social estates. The project identified Urban Living Labs as potentially innovative approaches to launch open and collaborative processes in the policy context of urban regeneration. Considering multiple failures of so-called 'participatory approaches', the SoHolab tried to find out which tools and methods could be applied in order to more effectively open up the policy design and implementation phases for local voices, topics and concerns.
By evaluating and developing Living Lab approaches in different contexts, the three research units involved focused on defining research and practice characteristics supporting more participatory regeneration processes. In this webinar series, we want to disseminate the knowledge acquired during three years of research, entering in dialogue with similar practices, while addressing open questions and venues for further research.

Visit www.soholab.org for more information

1 In situ
Applying 'situated' approaches

13 October, 4:00 Pm

The complexity and uncertainty of the contemporary city and urban areas such as large-scale social estates require new readings, interpretations and analytical lenses. Regeneration cannot be thought remotely but should be rooted in place. This entails diving into everyday life and social practices, as an inherent component of the urban planning process. This practice of 'situating' in space and place can be introduced before the planning process, undertaken simultaneously or developed throughout the development process, preferably constantly contaminating the practice. But how such immersion takes place? Which methods can be applied to systematically observe and connect people, spaces, and the planning processes that impact on it? What kind of information do such methods bring to the planning table? Is it possible to open up rather rigid and formatted planning processes for local knowledge?
In this webinar we focus on how to accumulate local knowledge and nurture ongoing regeneration processes of large-scale social estates. We are especially interested in practices at the crossroads of art, ethnography, architecture and urban planning.

Introduction (5')
Pilot project SoHoLab: Jeanne Mosseray (10')
Mirror project: Sophie Ricard, Construire (10')
Keynote lecture: Ferdinando Fava, DiSSGeA (25')
Debate (30')
Summary (5')

2 Enabling spaces
Promoting local and institutional empowerment

20 October, 10:00 Am

Urban Living Labs are seen as promising approaches to transform and enlarge urban governance in the context of urban regeneration. Acting as "cross-boundary arenas" (Concilio, 2016), they are able to connect stakeholders and relevant actors at different levels. On the one hand, local inhabitants and organizations can play a crucial role in urban governance. Even though territories such as large-scale social estates are often characterized by high levels of socio-economic fragility, at the same time they represent "local tanks" of competences and social resources that often tend to remain invisible. On the other hand, institutions have a crucial role in the "public city" and their participation is essential to allow transformation and change. Yet, they have progressively lost their connection with territories and their inhabitants: they need to regain knowledge and understanding of these places and of the possible tools to intervene. Therefore, local and institutional empowerment could be considered as key ingredients for a radically new planning approach for the regeneration of large-scale social estates. Which tools and methods foster the interaction among different "social worlds"? How could we re-frame participation starting from the collaborative dimension of "doing together"? What is the relevance of co-research and how to promote institutional learning? In this webinar we focus on the potential role of ULL as 'brokers', enabling interaction among different actors and more effective collaborations among stakeholders.

Introduction (5')
Pilot project SoHoLab: Elena Maranghi (10')
Mirror project: Romain Gallart, Appuii (10')
Keynote lecture: Yvonne Franz, ÖAW (25')
Debate (30')
Summary (5')

3 Beyond commonplaces
Spatial transformations based on changing lifestyles and new imaginaries

27 October, 4:00 Pm

In the period before and after World War 2, large-scale housing developments with towers and slabs in a green environment were an important spatial paradigm in social housing construction. This came to an abrupt end after the crisis in the early 1970s. The crisis and changing models of society paved the way for new spatial paradigms, in the form of smaller-scale or mixed housing developments. Due to their limited maintenance and technical and architectural quality, today, many large-scale social estates are facing renovation. Dismissing these renovations as beaten tracks would do injustice to careful architectural and urban design efforts for creating typological variety and morphological innovation, emphasizing scenic qualities, or improving energy performance and water storage capacity. Nevertheless, large-scale social estates remain subject to persistent social-spatial assumptions. Statements on public spaces that are difficult to 'defend' (Newman, 1972), or impossible to appropriate, a social mix that is 'endangered', a lacking ecological imperative, remain part and parcel in regeneration discourses.
In this webinar we want to unpack these commonplaces, looking for new entries and outlooks, based on changing lifestyles and new imaginaries.

Introduction (5')
Pilot project SoHoLab: Dominique Lefrançois (10')
Mirror project: Anne Lacaton, Lacaton & Vasal (10')
Keynote lecture: Paola Vigano, Studio Paola Vigano, EPFL, IUAV (25')
Debate (30')
Summary (5')