

NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS DISCUSSION IN LITHUANIA

OVERVIEW

March 25th

Discussion Nr. 1	<i>Urbanism and architecture: challenges and opportunities for the new european bauhaus in Lithuania</i>
Moderator	Giedre Ratkute Skačkauskienė from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How to regenerate and improve degrading and not attractive urban places?2. What is the role of architecture in urban regeneration and how the NEB can change the future role of an architect?3. Developers perspective: sustainability, circular economy and private sector role and responsibilities.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A priority should be trying to take in local resources and use spaces that are not yet enabled, such as rooftops for example.- Green oasis should be integrated in the urban landscape.- Given the uncertainties of the future demands for built spaces, the buildings of the future have to be designed to fit universal purposes. The buildings have to be designed in a way they can be transformed to fit new purposes and demands.- The public spaces as well should be designed to fit universal uses.- With regards to innovation in the construction sector, the legal instruments have to be in place and adapted to facilitate innovations.- It is possible to observe that all the issues are very complex. Complexity in planning can only be addressed through a thorough dialogue and multifaceted perspectives.- There is a question whether it is possible to find universal solutions to sustainable development challenges that could fit different cultural contexts. For that we have to not deviate too far from the basic human needs, but also we have to take into consideration socio-economic context and identity that we want to highlight and nurture.- Initiatives are very important. Initiatives that are complex by its inclusive design. Empowering local communities to work independently and prioritise simple, but not weak solutions, meaning solutions that are simple to execute, but they add proper added quality and are accessible to all.

Discussion Nr. 2	<i>Soviet built housing and district renovation</i>
Moderator	Ruta Leitanaite from Lithuanian Architects Association
Discussed	<p>The aim of the discussion was to start a <i>think-tank</i> and to name preliminary problems and ideas on the topic.</p> <p>The questions, addressed by the panelists, were, among the others:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of the artistic, historic and cultural value of the housing, built in soviet period (second half of 20th century). How to preserve those values during the renovation? 2. How can renovation improve private and common spaces inside and outside the buildings? 3. How can we lead a more sustainable and quality way of living in renovated housing? 4. How to engage inhabitants, to ensure social equity, availability, accessibility and social variety in renovated housing? 5. How to implement innovative and sustainable technological solutions during renovation? 6. How to raise the financial value of the renovated housing? How to attract private business into the process? What are the new, innovative models of renovation, in terms of organization and financing?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We don't have renovation, we are simply insulating buildings for energy efficiency purposes. We are putting a fur coat over it, but we should seek for complexity and solve other problems in Soviet neighbourhoods: streets, yards, district identity and housing itself. - Soviet planning deleted the borders of what is private and what is public. Accordingly, lack of the feeling of safety is one of the main issues in Soviet neighbourhoods, that might have caused many people to move away from these neighborhoods. By focusing on the safety dimension, we can find ways to improve these neighbourhoods and change them. - We have to begin from the correct terminology. <i>Renovation</i> is not it - we are seeking for urban <i>Transformation</i>. - We must humanize the Soviet yards and neighbourhoods. Currently, there are no proper public spaces that could stimulate community engagement, recreational activities or local businesses. This issue calls for a search for an innovative, out of the box urban design, tools and solutions. - Urban spaces and typologies that are common in city centres or old towns will never be adapted to Soviet districts, because these districts were built fundamentally differently. Accordingly, we have to almost reinvent these spaces and create new urban spaces for communities to enjoy and live in. - Must find the special things about places. There is a clear lack of identity in these neighbourhoods. We must find something to love.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some percentage of renovation finance could be dedicated to beautifying purposes specifically. Perhaps we should also invert the process and first we should beautify the district and then renovate the buildings, not vice versa. - A detail: a majority of Soviet housing entrances are with metal doors. It is known that urban and architecture design has a direct impact on mental and emotional health. There should be an initiative to change the doors, to make them see-through glass doors for example. That may have a positive psychological health impact on the communities. - We must find ways and tools to engage with communities. Communities have to be educated and initiatives have to be created to facilitate their engagements. Enabling citizens with the right tools and knowledge is the key to successful neighbourhood transformation. - The initiatives and instruments that are available to citizens have to be communicated in such fashion, that is easily understandable. A <i>perception of barriers</i> is one of the greatest factors of citizens' willingness to participate, thus we have to make sure that the processes are explained as simply as possible. The processes have to be clear and with least bureaucracy to encourage citizens and communities to take action. - We should not stigmatize the Soviet built districts housing. We should look at that housing as a necessary and affordable economy class housing which is a very much necessary and valuable asset to any urban agglomeration. - Citizens do care about the quality of their neighbourhoods, but we have to not forget that first and foremost people look at the economy of it all. The renovation processes must be affordable as well as add a clear value to their housing. - There are many social challenges when it comes to neighbourhood improvement in these areas. One is that technically people do want to live in a better urban environment, but practically, a lot of people just want to have a good parking lot close to their house. Hence, private car use and a parking problem is a huge issue in these districts. - Wood is a very powerful and necessary tool that can be used in many innovative ways to improve the existing housing. There are many projects, especially in the Nordic countries and central Europe, where wood was used to innovatively transform and improve the existing housing. In Lithuania we do not have any similar projects and the public sector especially must be more active to facilitate this movement, with financial instruments, legal devices and other incentives. <i>Timber on top</i> projects have a lot of potential in Lithuania. - The state and municipal institutions have to work closely in trying to find the right tools and instruments to facilitate the transformations in these areas. The legal environment is of big concern. Some regulations are not helpful and others disable new ideas from being developed and created. - We must be more brave and eager, and approach the renovation with a new sense of urgency, excitement and ambition.
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Discussion Nr. 3	<i>Communities, community activities and social inclusion</i>
Moderator	Eugenijus Kaminskis from XWhy Agency of Understanding
Discussed	<p>The goal of this session was to evaluate the state of the art of the participatory processes, and initiate a discussion on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the involvement of communities in the planning processes really mean; 2. How can NEB contribute to better participatory planning in Lithuania? 3. How participatory planning can contribute to the achievement of NEB goals?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was indicated during the session that there is a lack of dialogue between different stakeholders. - Currently, it is usually a one-way process, and we need to encourage different dialogues between different actors. - Specific skills of planners and communities are needed to engage society in a creation of a sustainable living environment. - We need to develop tools and methodologies more productive dialogue and use education of all stakeholders in different stages of the process. - There is a lack of mutual trust in the planning process, and we need to cultivate it by changing how we see society in general and creating spaces for everyone. - Small initiatives can make a big difference in creating a sustainable environment, we need to discover and promote those with the most potential, using the local knowledge and aligning different levels of vision.

Discussion Nr. 4	<i>The role of culture and design in the New European Bauhaus in Lithuania</i>
Moderator	Jonas Liugaila from Lithuanian Design Association
Discussed	<p>The aim of the discussion was to identify issues that are recognized by the Lithuanian design sector in the context of the New European Bauhaus.</p>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the course of the discussion it was possible to refine three levels of the way we are approaching challenges. The first way is to identify and name the challenge or problem itself. The second is related to the necessary conditions for solving problems. And the third is the decision. - As an integral part of any process or a product, design is most closely linked to the second level of conditions. At this level, in any sector, it can offer aspects that are important for both sustainability and the user experience.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Further, discussions focused on the circumstances for the design to become a quality condition in other contexts, raising issues such as the integration of science and the arts, the availability of secondary materials for sustainable development, the elitization of design in education and dissociation from industry and market realities, the importance of the universality of design solutions.- One of the major challenges in thinking about some of the organisations from the design sector being an owner of some challenge and solution is that design, as was mentioned before, is in all cases an integral part of any service or product. It is more consistent to find an integrated role in existing issues. One of the scenarios for further participation will be precisely this, qualitatively complementing the quarterly renovation project initiated by the Union of Architects.- In addition to this integration, by using the focus provided by the New European Bauhaus some other current challenges are still being discussed among stakeholders. It is very likely that we will seize this opportunity. The next challenge we are going to work on is public sector procurement process improvement. The public sector must become the guiding star that sets the standard.- In conclusion, we want to remind ourselves and others that we are in a conscious experiment. That enables and motivates to act bolder and more innovatively. |
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complexity of the solution

trust

the soul of experimentation

make more iterations - it creates a better result

object as a participant of my **environment**

universality - create spaces

that later can be successfully transformed

rewilding strategies

test - plan, test again - plan, invest

invitation for a new **way of thinking**

eliteness of design & it's separation from industry

professional integrity

build connections

public interest isn't equal to the sum of private interests

value the uniqueness of territories

painful points

- where do they exist?

stay close to natural needs,
always check - are they fulfilled?

**citizens behind glass doors
& citizens behind metal doors**

be responsible and love what you do

district - as a **work of art**

make a market of secondary materials

create the love for your country

using **local resources**

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Giedrė Ratkutė Skačkauskienė

Donatas Baltrušaitis

Lukas Rekevičius

Mindaugas Statulevičius

Ričardas Skorupskas

Rūta Leitanaite

Remigijus Šimašius

Darius Kvedaravičius

Mindaugas Pakalnis

Rolandas Palekas

Marija Drėmaitė

Tadas Šarūnas

Artūras Melianas

Paulius Milčius

Rokas Kilčiauskas

Dalia Mauricaite Kalinauskienė

Ernestas Parulskis

Evaldas Klimas

Jonas Liugaila

Rūta Valušytė

Marius Urbanavičius

Algirdas Orantas

Gabija Vanagė

Jūratė Tulytė

Eugenijus Kaminskis

Martynas Germanavičius

Beatričė Umbrasaitė

Laura Petruškė

Jekaterina Lavrinec

Liutauras Nekrošius

Valdas Kavaliauskas

don't be afraid to make mistakes

find binding interests - it creates trust

love your space with your hands

an idea that touches as many people as possible

getting out of the comfort zone - a new habit

a conscious experiment -
it liberates

make contact with your neighborhood
(either in the city, either in a village)

adapting streets for humans

**park is not enough -
forest is also a need**

create plots **meant for living**,
not for giving services

designers & architects as **partners**, not as task executors

universal design

the aesthetics of boredom

find the charm of the place

soviet blocks

do not stigmatize?

do not romanticize?

placemaking

the attractiveness of a place -
value, safety, identity

act together

no need to invent something new - **adapt/improve**

renovation of things (fix)

culture of consumption

school without borders