**Together for our City!**

Timisoara is a strong micro-regional center, with a cultural history as old as the city. It is the city where creativity supports the experiment and where the dynamics of cultural life are connected to the international phenomenon. It is a charming city through its diversity, fascinating through its cultural and intercultural production and offer, but also through its existing heritage. In the context of a Cultural Strategy for the city of Timisoara, based on interdisciplinarity and creativity, multiculturalism and vivacity, the initiative of the Faculty of Arts and Design within the West University of Timisoara, through the project Together for the city aims to join cultural operators in Timisoara. the city to become European Capital of Culture in 2023.

**Cultural Heritage**

The cultural heritage of Timisoara stands out as an extremely generous cultural and identity resource, which deserves to be cultivated and valued. Timisoara has an impressive number of buildings located in protected historical areas or protection: over 14,000, but when it comes to buildings that are in a state of severe degradation, the percentage is bleak: over 90%. 2018 - European Year of Cultural Heritage and the moment TM2023 - European Capital of Culture is the occasion for which Timisoara has started an extensive process of information and awareness of public opinion and all decision makers involved in this process, on the complex issue of restoration and immediate intervention of historic buildings.

In Romania, architectural restoration is a niche still undervalued enough to redefine urban branding and marketing. The preservation of heritage buildings is a symbol of longevity, the durability of cultural values ​​and innovation. People sense the potential of urban regeneration, but are too unaware of the impact generated by the power of example. Restoring a building enhances the sense of belonging to the community and focuses on collective responsibility initiatives, attracting social recognition.

How can we shape the face of a city?

A number of specialists are involved in the development and planning of a city, especially with urban planners, architects and designers. A lesser known and rarely used profession in Romania is that of lighting specialist, ie a lighting designer. And this even if lighting plays a very important role in the quality of public spaces, especially in the context of contemporary cities that are active non-stop. Culture-based development could be a significant factor for sustainable urbanization. Education and culture play an important role in revitalization projects. Cities with a unique and interesting culture can use this tradition to create coherent cultural policies, anchored in the past, but using modern urban design trends. Restructuring public spaces can be a good way to stimulate the local economy and promote cities.

The 9 principles of ethical rehabilitation:

• Reorientation, Reuse (Repurpose + re-propose)

• Engaged participation

• Continuing education and experiments for innovation (Pedagogical Moments)

• Design. Beauty has magnetism. Defines the character. Promotes appreciation. Aesthetics is an aspect that attracts people. It offers value, importance and respect for the character of a community.

• Public Spaces (Place Over Time) Place refers more to the people who live in it and their activities than the space itself. Spaces must be flexible and agile and at the same time grow in an organic way.

• Networking (Constellations) Collaboration and interdisciplinarity help to bring together successful projects through the exchange of ideas and knowledge. A network is therefore created between / between the partners. Projects need visionaries, implementers, collaborators, evaluators and people to believe in that project. This forms a system of dynamic and creative cooperation.

• Platforms Many of our cities suffer from the same challenges - neglect, population loss, abandoned buildings and gentrification. Often the proposed solution is unique and does not integrate at the neighborhood level. But communities need a platform, which is a base where new social opportunities will be created. A platform is a mechanism that drives work - it creates conditions of multiplicity, composes ideas, expands relationships, generates opportunities and broadens access. Building platforms means developing opportunities for people to come together and communicate. People meet, exchange ideas and learn.

Cities are connected urban communities. The more responsibly and involved these communities act, the more the city transforms and becomes friendlier to the citizens. So it is an important step to create communities that want to get involved in transforming the place where they live and to ask themselves questions: “What else can be done? What can I do 10 blocks from my block? How do I share what I love to do with others? ”

**Urban Design**

The most common problems relate to infrastructure: pitted or unpaved streets, lack of parking spaces, sidewalks or bike lanes. Here comes another problem - pollution. This is reported by many people who have suggested banning traffic in the central area, improving the quality of public transport or creating bike lanes for faster and healthier transport.

Another problem often expressed is poor waste management and the non-existence of landfills in many areas. People have found that there is no selective garbage collection and would like this to be implemented. They also suggest the need for population education campaigns in this regard. Green spaces and children's playgrounds - their lack or poor arrangement are another worrying thing. There are also remarks about the aging population of certain small towns that seem to be forgotten somewhere in time. Development strategies are needed for these places to create facilities for this group of people who seem to be ignored at the moment. Smart methods of collaboration between local authorities and the community. An example might be the implementation of an application where each resident can be actively involved in the projects initiated by the authorities by answering certain surveys or reporting certain problems.

The historical monuments are also mentioned by the citizens, this being a problem invoked in several cities of the country. Residents suggest using European funds to rehabilitate these historic symbols. It also mentions ways to inform residents about their past and importance.

**Urban Planning**

Cities for people or cities for cars?

Solutions to the challenges of urban planning, design and policy, with topics ranging from open streets, cycling and infrastructure networks, interim interventions, placement metrics and mobility needs in informal neighborhoods.

Focusing on Children.

Streets are a city's largest continuous network of public space and mobility platform, allowing (or impeding) access to the city's resources.

The design or redesign of urban streets through the lens of children shows why it is necessary to raise the bar for safety, accessibility and joy. Children's environment can have long-lasting effects on their health, physical and cognitive development and social well-being. When leaders in a city invest in designing children's streets, they create streets that better serve all people.

In cities around the world, the streets are the front yards for children - and also their main means of transportation.

Children rely on the streets to get to school, to meet friends, to run errands with their parents and to play and explore their surroundings. But most streets were not built with children in mind. They were designed around cars, with wide traffic lanes and little space for human life. Parents and caregivers teach children that streets are dangerous places to avoid and to navigate them with only one adult.

This project aims to:

• Emphasize the importance of street design that meets the needs of both children and citizens of the community

• Share tools, strategies, street design examples and case studies from around the world to help readers adapt to their local contexts

The aim of this project is to propose to build areas of the city as places for people, certainly, sustainability, affordable transport and fair choices that support a strong economy and a vibrant quality of life. Children's environment can have long-lasting effects on their health, physical and cognitive development and social well-being.

The global health crisis

The main challenges that children in cities face are caused, or exacerbated, by their surroundings. Road traffic accidents, environmental pollution, poor mental health, lack of physical activity and many more are heightened by street design challenges that have consistently prioritized vehicles over people and sustainable modes of transit. These challenges affect all children, but are particularly severe for children in lower-income areas.

**Have you seen other examples of alternative urban design?**

**Let us know how you think we can make our communities & the places where we live more beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive.**

**Go to Co-design in our main menu and share it!**

