GEN-Y CITY CASE STUDY: CIVIC-TECH AS A REGENERATION TOOL

Projecto Ha Baixa, Coimbra

Whilst many people might only think Digital when thinking Civic-Tech, Coimbra has developed a very successful and inspirational project, Há Baixa, a project which is built on University, Municipality, Citizen and Business Participation in the field of Social Architecture.

The reason the project is inspirational is because;

- It solves physical problems in the city and promotes renewal and the importance of caring for public realm;

- It enables young people (in this case architects) to work in 'live' urban renewal and regeneration projects, as social activists, gaining experience whilst studying;

- It demonstrates how technical disciplines can be fulfilling careers and how technical skills can improve people's lives;

- It re-engenders a sense of community spirit, to solve societal problems and achieves outcomes that are consistent with the goals of the residents, the university, the municipality and the business community.

The project has been created by a group of students from the University of Coimbra whose motto is 'helpful practice' and it encourages young architecture students to set their talents to work on working with local communities and residents to solve local 'built environment' challenges in Baixa, Coimbra.

This project is based on volunteer students who want to build, help and learn, establishing a very direct relationship with the practice of architecture, with the subject, technicians and former masters, and above all with the community.

Each project is developed, from the beginning, by the students and all phases of the work are carefully studied so that the construction work is carried out according to various workshops on all types of material to be handled, guided by professionals specialized in each area concerned.