SOCIAL DRIVER

CULTURAL DRIVER

15 - 16 September, 2020, digitally

"ESSENTIALITY" OF CULTURE

"Is culture essential? Are artists essential workers?" The coronavirus pandemic has brought these questions to the front lines. Social innovation encompasses so many of our burning questions as a society. The lack of trust, civic involvement, marginalization and stigmatization are issues all of the public sector is grappling with. The question then is: **"how well cultural sector is using its potential to not only reflect on the issues at hand, but deliberately work with these issues and contribute to building a resilient and involved civic society".**

CULTURE – ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL DRIVER?

Cultural Planning attempts to change the rhetoric of the 90s and 00s, when cities were building cultural institutions, which could survive in the market economy. It is easy to see how culture is a driver for the economy as a whole, but can it be a social driver? This has been very prevalent since the financial crisis, with a visible counter-reaction to the market driven philosophy with the idea of creating a cultural product, for someone to buy. **Projects are increasingly more process driven, open and with an interactive element.**

Social innovation is the overarching theme and guiding principle of the project ***UrbCultural Planning,*** which is setting to create innovative situations around the way people view their cities and relate to their communities.
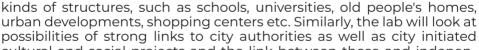
Cultural Planning takes the notion of culture in a broad framework and attempts to look at the city as a **cultural phenomena**. CP argues, that the sharing of resources, co-creation, activism, sense of ownership etc. are in fact all cultural phenomena. This shift of thinking rises a question: **where does the cultural driver stops being a cultural driver and becomes a social driver?**

IS CULTURAL PLANNING SOCIAL INNOVATION?

From the CP perspective, social innovation isn't discussed purely on demographic or geographic basis, but looked at as movement or social clusters in which there is a cultural magnet or driver, e.g. a festival. Around this cultural driver, a new social narrative is defined. The key is to encourage and define such drivers, who activate this social cluster in such way, that you empower the key people and those have a crucial role in the communities further on.

CULTURAL HYBRIDS

The lab will explore some cases where the projects are linking to other kinds of structures, such as schools, universities, old people's homes, urban developments, shopping centers etc. Similarly, the lab will look at possibilities of strong links to city authorities as well as city initiated cultural and social projects and the link between those and independent cultural drivers.

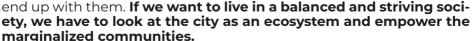## SYSTEMIC VS PERSONAL APPROACH

The lack of public engagement in planning of public projects can create a resistance in the society. There is a lack of people-based and personal communication with the society. Not through a phone line, not through a public office or forms, but on a level, where the rationale of departmental thinking is blurred and there is a broader discussion about the vision of the society and environment we want to live in. On this level one can innovative faster, one is able to make mistakes and experiment. Inevitably the results of this personal approach feeds up in the systemic approach.

MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

The project *UrbCultural planning* set out to find communities, which have deficits. Of economic resources, political power, involvement or cultural institutions. In the light of COVID-19, the realities for these communities might have gone from bad to even worse. This backs up the fundamental idea, that we have to prioratise these places and not end up with them. **If we want to live in a balanced and striving society, we have to look at the city as an ecosystem and empower the marginalized communities.**

U C Urb Cultural Planning

CULTURAL SHIFT:
SOCIAL INNOVATION AND
CULTURAL DRIVERS

Digital Riga Urban Cultural Planning Lab,
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