

Chapter 18

The “Rebuilding the World” Post-graduation Programme at ENSAP Bordeaux: Responding to Contemporary Urban and Environmental Issues, Through an Innovative Pedagogy with a Humanist Vision



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18.1 Introduction

“Rebuilding the World” (RBW) is a post-master’s level programme that was set up in the Architecture department of the Bordeaux National School of Architecture and Landscape (ENSAP Bordeaux) in October 2016.

It is interested in new postures and new approaches to urban planning and architecture and its teaching at the present time and is part of a specific multidisciplinary educational and research space at ENSAP Bordeaux.

The programme adheres to the new paradigms currently put forward by urban planning to deal with the global environmental crisis, strongly highlighted over the last few decades with the rise of globalisation and metropolisation.

The RBW training is nurtured by a series of experiences of international cooperation carried out by ENSAP Bordeaux with foreign universities in emerging countries. The aim of this cooperation is to study in a comparative view the phenomena linked to the critical evolution of territories as a consequence of globalisation, in order to find ways of acting locally through project practice.

Today, the project practice, which is the central subject of the teaching programme, is faced with new global challenges and the urgent need to find ways of acting locally. Therefore, the project practice is invested with a new cultural role at the service of populations that are anchored in specific territories and have a capacity for concrete action.

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This article has a twofold objective: to present the key concepts which are at the origin of RBW and to describe the precise content of the programme as well as a review 5 years after its establishment.

18.2 Key Concepts Addressed in the RBW Programme

The RBW post-master programme stems from the recognition of three fundamental axes for understanding and acting in the contemporary territory, in order to effectively address the new challenges that urbanism is currently facing:

1. The study of phenomena that act on the whole planet with direct consequences on the evolution of contemporary human settlements, regardless of their size and level of development:
 - The Anthropocene.
 - Global changes.
2. The knowledge of various new operational concepts to be favoured when intervening on human settlements faced with the above-mentioned phenomena:
 - Resilience.
 - Degrowth.
 - Ecological transition.
 - Environment and identity.
 - Empowerment.
3. Taking into account new ways of approaching interventions in the living environment that propose alternative and innovative methods of action:
 - Territorialists and the local project.
 - Transitional and tactical urban planning.

18.2.1 *New Phenomena That Act on the Whole Planet*

Once considered as the goal to be achieved by all societies wanting to be modern, economic development and growth have been looked at critically for the past few decades because of the negative effects that these dynamics of evolution have caused on the planet, endangering the future of humanity. Human action is now considered to be at the origin of the Anthropocene, a new geological era which has caused considerable environmental changes. In the absence of awareness of the necessity to modify the behaviours that are at the root of these alterations, societies risk creating irreversible harm to artificial or natural environments, as well as to the human communities that inhabit them.

The Anthropocene: This term refers to the new geological era that follows the Holocene, the geological era that emerged after the Ice Age and lasted for a period of about 10,000 years. The Holocene was characterised by great stability in the biosphere, particularly in terms of CO₂, which generated a very favourable environment for the development of agriculture, enabling without which the emergence of human civilisation would not have been possible.

The notion of the Anthropocene was first introduced in February 2000 in Cuernavaca, during an international programme on the geosphere and biosphere by Paul Crutzen, Nobel Prize winner for his work on the ozone layer, who put forward the idea that humanity had entered a new geological era that replaced the Holocene. The latter was based on the observation that the acceleration of human activity following the years of strong development after the Second World War had led to an unprecedented degradation of the biosphere. Man’s actions to propel social and economic development in different parts of the world, thanks to technological progress, had allowed an unprecedented intervention on the natural environment, considered as an inexhaustible or at least easily renewable resource. This approach was now questioned as it appeared to have produced a boomerang effect that endangered the very continuation of humankind. It is therefore human activity that has produced a new geological era, the Anthropocene. Unlike previous eras which were generated by nature’s exclusive dynamic of intervention, in the Anthropocene the evolution of human history and natural history are intertwined. In this respect, climate change, which is one of the phenomena that characterise the Anthropocene, is the result of human activity. It is therefore clear that this activity has direct consequences on the collapse of biodiversity, leading to a deterioration of the biosphere, which must be addressed as a matter of urgency for the survival of life on Earth.

Paradoxically, the environmental crisis, which is the result of an uncontrolled emphasis on man’s action on the Earth, has led to an awareness that the solution to this crisis lies in a radical change in this mode of action. This requires a review of modern notions of development, which, even when subsumed under the concept of sustainable development, continue to be present in the growth models of many countries.

Global changes: This dual approach to developments on a global scale, a vision that integrates both natural phenomena and cultural and societal phenomena in an articulated manner, is now the subject of a specific study theme, that of global change.

The basic idea, as in the case of the Anthropocene concept, is that human action has a direct impact on the evolution of the environment on a planetary scale and a concrete impact on the critical state of the biosphere, hence the need for an approach that crosses these two types of natural and socio-cultural issues. This has a direct influence on the new way of approaching its object of study by environmental geography, where the examination of social and cultural issues now becomes a priority. With the impact of human activity on biodiversity now widely highlighted as a direct factor in climate change, it is important to take a systemic and multidisciplinary approach to studying environmental change. Indicators such as the ecological footprint clearly show that human activity has been directly damaging the environmental balance of the planet for several decades, irreversibly destroying its

natural capital without a return, in the absence unless of a change in societal and cultural behaviour. The reaction to this very negative framework is however present, either in the approaches of intellectuals and various protesting citizens movements, or in the progressive awareness of these themes in the world summits on the environment and the ensuing climate change negotiations and policies that are increasingly adopted by the countries involved.

18.2.2 The Knowledge of New Operational Concepts to Deal with the Crisis and Design Human Settlements According to New Paradigms

The environmental crisis has also called into question certain modes of action specific to the modern vision, such as that of the development and growth of societies that considered nature as an entity at the service of human action that had to be constantly mastered through technical progress.

This dichotomy between the natural and the artificial environment has inexorably led to a brutal divorce between man and his environment, as can be seen in the recent phenomena of financialisation and the relocation of certain activities. In addition to the consequences in the devaluation of production methods rooted in local cultures, these phenomena contribute to the progressive degradation of the environment.

However, this situation has led to a series of reactions from certain intellectuals and activists who advocate the establishment of a new relationship between populations and their environment. Accordingly, several new operational concepts have emerged in recent years, followed in some cases by new strategies for action put in place by political stakeholders.

Resilience: Resilience is a notion borrowed from physics. It has been studied in psychology as the ability of people to overcome very traumatic crisis situations. When applied to cities and territory, the concept of resilience can be defined as the capacity of an urban system to absorb a crisis which produces disturbances in its environmental balance, its social and economic organisation and its infrastructures.

This understanding of the notion of resilience highlights the idea that, even in situations of extreme vulnerability, it is possible to activate existing resources within a society and to re-use them to reconstruct organisational systems that have been severely disrupted during a crisis. This applies in particular to territories that are isolated or not well situated in global networks and do not benefit from the advantages of globalisation and metropolisation.

Degrowth: The concept of degrowth is based on an awareness of the urgent need to abandon the idea of growth to which contemporary society has gradually become accustomed.

This concept is based on the recognition that our society must move away from a productivist process that began with the advent of the industrial era because of the damage that this process has caused to the planet and because of the gradual scarcity of available resources it has induced, particularly fossil fuels, which are necessary to maintain this mode of development.

The notion of degrowth appeared in March 2002 in the context of a symposium held at UNESCO entitled “Undoing Development, Remaking the World“. It is a provocative concept, a political slogan, aimed at launching debates to imagine new non-consumerist modes of production in contrast to the behaviour that has become widespread thanks to new advances in global communication networks. The basic idea is that the growth model of industrial capitalism, which has accelerated in recent years with the rise of globalisation, has generated a race to produce goods and services. This increasingly excessive production, imposed by an economic system that depends on it for its survival, considerably harms the human and natural environment without being inherently necessary for the real fulfilment of human life. Hence the emergence in different parts of the world of proposals that imagine frugal modes of production, situated at the antipodes of the productivist vision that has created an exacerbation of needs, fuelled in recent years by a logic of accumulation of capital rent.

The notion of degrowth also proclaims itself as a protest mode of action, opposing the notion of sustainable development adopted in 1987 by the UN. According to the proponents of degrowth, the notion of sustainable development, born of the objective of favouring economic development to satisfy the needs of current populations without compromising those of future generations, is an ambiguous idea and an oxymoron, because both terms have an opposite meaning and are assembled with a strictly opportunistic purpose. It would have been adopted so that the actors who hold power in the capitalist system could give themselves a clear conscience in the face of nature protection issues and thus continue the race towards development without hindrance. The proponents of degrowth, on the other hand, propose to create a new frugal relationship between man and his environment, putting forward concepts such as re-use and recycling in opposition to the frantic race towards consumerist production.

Ecological transition: The observation that climate change is caused by industrial development and the desire to promote frugal behaviour in the face of the foreseeable scarcity of non-renewable resources has led some authors to propose experiments in new resilient development strategies based on the principles of degrowth. This is the case of Rob Hopkins, who defines transition (which has been extended to include the ecological transition) as a new concept for action in the face of the environmental crisis. This concept refers to the implementation of new and locally designed initiatives aiming to reorganise energy production to meet the needs of human activities in a frugal mode, to develop low-energy transport, and above all, to encourage the re-learning of know-how and skills linked to the natural environment that are still rooted in local tradition but forgotten at the level of neighbourhoods or villages. These initiatives have enabled the emergence of various citizens movements such as the “Cities in Transition” movement, which aim to provide

communities with an educational tool for implementing innovative actions to reduce energy consumption. The main idea is to be able to face two phenomena whose advent is to be foreseen in a joint and ineluctable way in the medium term: global warming and Peak Oil (the moment when the demand for oil will be greater than the available resources).

In line with these citizen actions and following the recommendations of international conferences on climate and environment, new policies with concrete measures have been put in place by different countries. In France, the awareness to fight against climate change and promote environmental preservation, as well as the will to reinforce the country's energy independence by offering access to energy at a competitive cost, are at the origin of a specific law approved in 2015, the law on energy transition for green growth. This law is part of a broader strategy put in place by the government from 2012 to address the issues of ecological transition. This strategy includes, among other proposals, several measures to promote the resilient development of territories, encourage the implementation of circular and low-carbon economies, reduce environmental, social and territorial inequalities, and invent new economic and financial models.

Environment and identity: The awareness of the need to establish a new mode of action with regard to the environment, different from that resulting from productivist doctrines, has also been accompanied by an evolution in the worldview of geographers. This has enabled them to enrich their view of their discipline by integrating a multidisciplinary vision, with contributions from philosophy and anthropology.

This is the case with Augustin Berque and his interest in reconstructing the relationship between man and his environment, questioning the certainties in terms of apprehension of the world, present since the Renaissance in Western culture and its adherence to the Cartesian rationalist vision. According to this vision, man and his environment are two dissociated entities and the relationship between the individual and the Earth is something abstract: nature is understood as an entity distinct from man, at the service of the improvement of his conditions, thanks to the manipulation of the environment through technical progress. This vision which persists to the present day and has spread everywhere in the context of industrialisation and, more recently, globalisation. It has led to the rise of a feeling that man does not belong to a particular environment, causing a significant break between the individual and his environment. Yet, on the contrary, what characterises a culture is precisely the relationship of identity between man and his environment which, in the case of very ancient cultures, is very visible through myths. It is also the relationship between man and his environment that is at the origin of language, because language is a mode of representation of the reality that surrounds us that was constructed to be able to communicate by creating abstract concepts from concrete facts. In the field of architecture, this desire on the part of certain geographers to re-establish a new cultural relationship between man and his environment, with a view to reconstituting an identity that has vanished in the context of the globalised world, finds its equivalent in the neo-vernacular postures advocated by certain architect. The latter

propose to revisit and reclaim vernacular architecture as a frugal approach that could provide appropriate responses to contemporary environmental issues.

Empowerment: Another concept that has gained importance in recent years in order to deal effectively with global changes is empowerment. As we have already pointed out, the damage to the biosphere is basically the result of human actions which, in the context of a productivist vision, have distanced us considerably from our environment. In order to repair the damage caused to the planet by this productivist attitude, there is a present need to recreate a solid link between man and his environment by changing the ways in which we relate to it. This implies considering the environment not as an abstract resource to be mechanically exploited to satisfy the needs of humanity, but rather as an instance with which we must reinvent, in a very localised manner, modes of action that integrate the logic and rhythms of nature instead of cutting ourselves off from it radically. This approach makes it possible to create a new cultural link between man and his environment, in order to respond effectively to the environmental issues that are leading to the fragility of the planet. It gives fundamental importance to the action of human groups on their environment, whatever means they have to act. Empowerment is thus understood as a liberating process that allows communities, understood as human groups sharing interests and identities in the same territory, to increase control over their environment. It is about fostering individual and collective achievement within a community while enabling the community to maintain a balanced relationship with the environment. This objective of promoting the empowerment of social groups opens up a new field for urban and architectural design. This new understanding is no longer focused on promoting performance and technical progress, as was the case in the productivist vision, but now aims to promote the creation of new, more responsible relationships between man and his environment.

18.2.3 New Thoughts and Intervention Approaches in the Territory That Offer Alternative and Innovative Methods of Action

Faced with the extent of the questions that call into question the productivist approach and given the damage that the latter has caused to the environmental balance, new stances are emerging within the disciplines that deal with territorial planning and urbanism at different scales. These stances are the antithesis of a scientific approach, characterised by a compartmentalised vision of reality. The aim of this compartmentalising study was to isolate reality into several specific objects of study, so as to be able to effectively develop rational methods for acting on a case-by-case basis. This method, which has proved to be very effective within the framework of the productivist vision, is no longer valid for dealing with global changes which, as mentioned above, require a multidisciplinary approach to deal with the contemporary environmental crisis.

In the case of urban planning, it is no longer a question of designing ideal but ultimately harmful models to create efficient spatial entities, in line with the productivist vision. Rather, it is a matter of rediscovering a new culture of action anchored in the territory, capable of acting locally and in stages, to restore disturbed balances. The aim is to be able to provide, through the project, effective responses that are both complex and modest, and that can create a new culture of action in the face of the environmental and social crisis that is spreading throughout the world.

Territorialists and the local project: Faced with the understanding of the territory as an abstract space where the life cycles of individuals develop without valorising the identity characteristics of the site, seen as a simple means of economic activity, the territorialists, a group of intellectuals who militate for an alternative way of acting in space, led by the Italian architect-urban planner Alberto Magnaghi, propose to return to the local territory understood as a common good for the inhabitants and as a producer of elements for the reproduction of biological and social life.

Two types of commitment have been made by territorialists to respond to these issues. The first is to identify long-term strategies to reverse the long-lasting trends that have caused the current environmental crisis. The second is to put in place immediate actions to protect cities from the consequences of climate change.

These short- and long-term strategies are based on the idea that the territory is the result of a long-standing sedimentary process that has produced anthropogenic actions on a natural environment. As a result, the territory is a common good that cannot be privatised or sold, but which requires re-signification through active citizen action and by revalorising the knowledge that has led to its constitution throughout history. This requires a recomposition of knowledge, which is currently hyperspecialised and sectorialised on the one hand, and on the other hand, the construction of systems of relations between disciplines in order to bring about the emergence of new professions that will enable us to act as closely as possible to the territory.

Under the leadership of Alberto Magnaghi, since 1991 the territorialists have set up an international network to promote this new posture of action on the environment, first in Italy and then more widely in Europe.

Transitional and tactical town planning: The empowerment approach applied to territorial management shows the need to revisit certain principles of action of modern urban planning, characterised by a top-down mode of action generally established by local authorities. This mode of action results from a will to control territorial development on the part of public authorities in order to avoid drifts due to excessive intervention of market forces. As it has been invested with a productivist vision, modern urbanism has favoured the implementation of a technocratic vision causing the progressive distancing of populations from their environment.

In view of the new environmental challenges that require awareness and new modes of action on the part of inhabitants who are closer to local realities, new bottom-up participatory approaches have been tried out in recent years. In this regard, transitional urbanism and tactical urbanism are two new approaches which favour citizen participation as a prerequisite for the definition of spatial projects. Since these projects are by nature intended for communities, these approaches aim

to make these communities more responsible in defining objectives and actions to be implemented, as well as to act as indicators to measure the effectiveness of the actions carried out.

Furthermore, the will to involve the population in a participatory dynamic is the basis for the development of more playful approaches understood as simple and effective tools to involve the community in its integration in the process of designing a project.

18.3 The Rebuilding the World (RBW) Programme

18.3.1 Postulates and Objectives of the RBW Programme

The RBW programme is based on the premise that it is necessary to create a new modality of action on the territory to face the current environmental crisis. To this end, the programme uses a project-based action research approach to teach a new culture of intervention in the environment, taking an active and “decompartmentalised” interest in the new paradigms of designing space for humans.

This programme is in line with a humanist stance of urbanism fully claimed by the teachers of the training, adhering to the postulates of degrowth in opposition to those of productivism.

Faced with the environmental crisis, the notion of project promoted by RBW implies an action to improve the condition of the environment, moving away from the one conveyed by modern thinking which privileges the performance dimension of the project. Invested with an ethical dimension, the project is conceived as an instance of collective creation and sense sharing prior to any intervention in space, in other words as a process of close and dynamic interaction between man and his environment.

The RBW training is thus particularly aimed at developing the capacity of designers to induce and manage projects adapted to the constraints of their environment, and to encourage the emancipation of local populations through collaborative processes of design and production of spatial structures. The ambition is to support the transition towards a resilient mode of management of the territory, relying on bottom-up dynamics that mobilise energies and resources closest to the material and cultural realities of the territory.

In emerging countries, experimental projects are systematically taking place in sectors that are economically and socially in a “stall” condition and where the application of urban planning regulations comes up against many obstacles. By re-establishing a direct link with the inhabitants according to a logic based on participation and economy of means, new ways of thinking and making projects are emerging in these sectors. And if the designers’ objective is to induce a process of effective improvement of the inhabitants’ living environment, they quickly become

aware of the fact that the dynamics set in motion on the scale of a specific project require the reworking of the planning procedures on a larger scale in order to last.

This implies that the professionals responsible for steering and building the projects are also capable of calling on the political representatives and technicians in charge of territorial development to propose an evolution towards more transversal and multidisciplinary modes of spatial management, open to the various scales of the territory, in order to respond effectively to the current environmental crisis.

18.3.2 Background of the Programme

The methods and pedagogical contents developed in the RBW training are based on several experiments such as workshops and research projects, carried out in France and abroad by the teachers who designed this programme (see Figs. 18.1 and 18.2). These experiments have made it possible to analyse the question of the “ecumene” (the vision of the world constructed by individuals or human groups) as approached by Augustin Berque, that is to say as an interaction between issues on a global scale that are posed in a generalised manner in the territory and local responses that produce a specific culture of the environment. These experiences have created an intellectual base that has made it possible to theorise the new issues that arise on a planetary scale in the face of the environmental crisis, through action-research that takes place in very contrasting environments, particularly in emerging territories where the crisis is quite violent. The RBW programme thus poses the idea of the project as an instance of research/action that questions and at the same time actively intervenes in the making of the environment.

Based on the previous experiences of ENSAP Bordeaux, the objective of the RBW programme is to give students and professionals the ability to situate and position themselves, through project practice, in contrasting cultural contexts and disciplinary specialities in order to address in a very open manner the current questions concerning the space making. This ability is also an asset for understanding the complexity of project situations and processes of transformation through projects in the European context. If the objective is to allow the understanding of the stakes and the modalities of intervention in other cultures, it is also the occasion to re-interrogate the practices of the project and the methodologies of its culture of origin.

It is a question of offering professionals already trained in the disciplines of space the possibility of apprehending other contexts of production of the city and of bringing them to mobilise the skills and know-how acquired in their culture of origin to collaborate in the design, realisation and evaluation of projects with professionals and researchers from other cultures.

**OPEN – CLASS #2
REBUILDING THE WORLD**



10.
12.
20.
–
15H
18H
–
VISIO

**OPEN – CLASS # 2 : BASURAMA,
INTERVENTIONS DANS L'ESPACE
PUBLIC À PARTIR DE LA
RÉUTILISATION DES DÉCHETS
AVEC MANUEL POLANCO
PÉREZ–LLANTADA* (CONFÉRENCE EN ANGLAIS)**

Open-class est un dispositif à travers lequel le post-master RBW (Rebuilding the world), propose d'ouvrir à l'ensemble des étudiants de l'ENSAP Bordeaux, certains cycles de cours et de conférences portant sur des approches innovantes en matière d'interventions sur le territoire procédant d'une vision localement ancrée et bottom-up du projet spatial, en France et à l'étranger.

Basurama est un collectif d'architectes et d'artistes basé à Madrid voué à la recherche, à la création et à la production culturelle et environnementale autour de la réflexion sur la réutilisation des déchets dans tous ses formats et significations possibles. Son objectif est d'étudier les phénomènes inhérents à la production massive de déchets réels et virtuels dans la société de consommation, en apportant différents points de vue susceptibles de générer de nouvelles pensées et attitudes.

Loin d'essayer de proposer une seule démarche manifeste à utiliser comme manuel, Basurama a compilé une série d'opinions et des projets multiformes, ne se ressemblant pas nécessairement, qui explorent différents domaines liés aux déchets dans objectif d'établir des liens subtils entre eux afin qu'ils puissent donner lieu à des réactions inattendues.

** Manuel Polanco Pérez-Llantada, membre du collectif Basurama*



Fig. 18.1 Example of conference of the first sequence: Basurama, Intervention in public space by reusing waste

**OPEN-CLASS #8
REBUILDING THE WORLD**



28.
01.
21.

OPEN-CLASS # 8 :
PLAY THE CITY
AVEC EKIM TAN* (CONFÉRENCE EN ANGLAIS)

10H
11H30

VISIO

Open-class est un dispositif à travers lequel le post-master RBW (Rebuilding the world), propose d'ouvrir à l'ensemble des étudiants de l'ENSAP Bordeaux, certains cycles de cours et de conférences portant sur des approches innovantes en matière d'interventions sur le territoire procédant d'une vision localement ancrée et bottom-up du projet spatial, en France et à l'étranger.

L'utilisation du jeu comme instance collective de négociation est une démarche assez simple et efficace qui permet d'associer différents acteurs concernés par la mise en place de stratégies et de projets urbains afin de faire émerger des solutions partagées par tous. A partir d'un doctorat à l'Université Technologique de Delft, intitulé « Négociation et Design pour la ville auto-organisée : le jeu comme méthode de design urbain », Ekim Tan a fondé en 2008 Play the city, agence qui utilise le jeu comme instance de médiation. Cette méthode a été mise en œuvre dans plusieurs villes d'Europe et d'Asie.

** Ekim Tan est architecte-urbaniste et docteur par le TU Delft. Elle est fondatrice de Play the City, société de conseil en urbanisme basée à Amsterdam et à Istanbul.*



Fig. 18.2 Example of conference of the first sequence: Play the City

18.3.3 Experimental Character of the Programme’s Pedagogy

Bringing the designer to approach the process of intervention in space from a renewed angle in terms of interaction between man and his environment requires the implementation of experimental pedagogical approaches, in a concomitant and “decompartmentalised” manner.

On the one hand, from the “objective” understanding of global phenomena that take place in different contexts as well as the characteristics of their receptivity in the corresponding environments (migratory movements, fractures between communities caused by wars, desertification of the countryside, mercantilisation of territories by the arrival of mass tourism...). This is studied by deepening the understanding of global problems that impact different environments, based on multidisciplinary approaches focusing in particular on socio-economic and environmental issues. In addition, there is a knowledge of new resilient approaches developed locally by various groups to deal with crisis situations caused by global phenomena. In particular, it is a question of studying field experiences implementing innovative bottom-up approaches that favour collaborative modes of action with regard to users.

On the other hand, in order to create a new culture of action in the territory, different from the top-down productivist approaches, it is very important to implement pedagogical devices favouring a “subjective” involvement in the territory. The programme is based on the assumption that this “subjective” involvement favours a process of collective appropriation of the environment by designers and inhabitants. In terms of pedagogical devices, this translates into an interest in investigative approaches that encourage a sensitive, intuitive and close encounter with the environment (walks, urban drifts, playful experiences, etc.). This is also reflected in the in-depth experimentation of the transitory phases of collective project construction (tactical or transitory urbanism), which are seen as knowledge-producing bodies that allow the effective anchoring of actions in the territory.

RBW training also focuses on placing the students in a professional situation, through an internship period in a high-level host structure located in emerging countries, in a close relationship with a partner university of the RBW programme. This real-life practice, which takes place in the middle of the programme, aims to develop students’ capacities to act creatively and effectively on the complexity of urban systems, whatever their context. This specific offer in the field of transcultural projects, open to the understanding of environments and cultures in their diversity, represents a unique opportunity for students to train in a creative and reflective professional practice enriched by a confrontation with a real situation in these environments.

18.3.4 Programme Sequences

The programme consists of three sequences spread over 1 year.

The first sequence aims to progressively accompany the student in the definition of a personal project on which he/she will work throughout the programme. During

this sequence, the student is expected to work on questions concerning the deconstruction and reconstruction of project situations (in the broadest sense), through the understanding and questioning of the processes of constitution of contemporary environments. The objective is to present theoretical tools and case studies to question productivist postures in the making of the contemporary environment and to present alternative approaches by calling upon a diversified body of knowledge and specific know-how. In order to achieve this, the sequence addresses three lines of thought aimed at understanding and acting in the territory according to a non-productivist vision.

Firstly, the dynamics operating in territories in transition, particularly those resulting from the phenomena of globalisation and metropolisation, as well as alternative economic approaches conceived locally. It is important in this axis to address the issues related to the experiences of circular and solidarity economy which are quite evident as an alternative process of development closer and more engaged with local realities.

Secondly, the preservation of environmental balances in connection with the updating of knowledge on the local environment. In this area, it is particularly important to follow the recommendations of the territorialists, that is to revive modes of action in the territory that are rooted in geography and history and that have become blurred by the progressive establishment at a global level of decontextualised modes of production that are part of the dynamics of delocalisation.

Thirdly, the cultural emancipation of local populations to promote resilient processes of territorial development. The objective of this pedagogical axis is to present different methods of involving the population at the local level in the design of their environment, with the support of participative experiences developed by collectives such as “Architects Without Borders” (Architectes Sans Frontières), or playful experiences or the elaboration of collaborative cartographies.

At the end of the first phase, enriched by all these contributions of deconstruction-reconstruction of a project that questions a territory under the prism of contemporary environmental issues, the student must be able to define a personal research project that has incorporated the decreasing approach promoted by RBW.

The second sequence refers to a practice of immersion in a “laboratory” territory, conceived as a “side step” in the learning process (see Figs. 18.3 and 18.4). The theoretical elaboration of the student’s personal project, initiated during the first pedagogical sequence in terms of methodology and research tools, begins at this stage with the simulation of one or more action scenarios that involve the student in a research-action process. This takes place in a “laboratory” territory—preferably located in a foreign cultural context—in order to confront the student with an effective action dynamic “in situ”, in relation to the issues addressed in his or her personal work. This territory used for practical immersion is different from the one in which he or she develops his or her personal work. Thus, the student is involved in the real-time dimensioning of the effects of an action in the transformation of the environment and at the same time takes a reflexive “side step “. These practices are the result of close collaboration with universities and local authorities, either within the framework of decentralised cooperation associations initiated by ENSAP

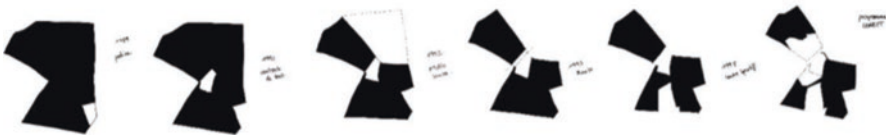


Fig. 18.3 Study of the evolution of rural areas near Guanajuato, Mexico, as part of the research practice immersion (Magali Risler)

Bordeaux, or with teaching and research networks that collaborate with the RBW programme. The challenge for the student is to understand the exchanges that take place between the designers, the project and the cultural environment of the project and to identify how and at what stages of the project the interaction between the experimental actions and their contribution to the project occurs.

The third sequence is developed after the return of practical immersion experiences in laboratory territories and has as its aim the finalisation of the student's personal work. This last sequence therefore refers to a return on experience and a repositioning in a framework of greater theoretical generality. This phase involves a critical reflection based on a combination of field experiences and the completion of a final project. This project is elaborated in the framework of a collective final seminar held every week, allowing for the results, the points of view and a comparison between the different experiences. This contributes to the collective construction of a critical vision of the problems that may arise in different ways depending on the sites studied. These themes will be used to feed the action-research mechanisms and to develop the network of laboratory territories linked to the RBW training. Several thematic families have emerged since the creation of the programme in order to

Where architecture is the mirror of the community

*Architecture

10

สถาปัตยกรรม

Architecture has recorded the great ideas of the human race. Not only every religious symbol, but every human thought has its page in that vast book.

Victor Hugo



Architecture in Ban Paen stands as an expression of thought. It is the mirror that reflects a way of life. It is very easy to understand how a family in the village lives in the community and that is through the shape of its own architecture. In this small area we can see two types of architecture. One that stands on pilotis whereas the other stands on the ground. These two expressions of architecture have their effect on the relationship that the inhabitants have with their environment. The openness of the piloti architecture exposes the family life to the walkers and makes connections very easy. Different activities can be held in the free ground level and the movement is a big part of this architecture. On the other hand The second type doesn't offer the same possibilities. The walls keep the owners in their privacy and the links with the rest of the community can only be seen indoors. The temple of the village plays, in this case the role of a community space and offers a different perspective. through these two forms of architecture connections are experienced differently.



Fig. 18.4 Study of the reappropriation of traditional habitat at Sakon Nakhon, Thailand, as part of the research practice immersion (Omar Raïs)

promote locally rooted development and foster a collective experience of environmental appropriation around themes such as reuse, the circular economy, environmental management or the consolidation of the feeling of citizenship.

18.3.5 Types of Action Research Developed After Five Years Since the Programme's Inception

As RBW is a programme widely open to young professionals from different countries, the themes of personal action research are very diverse, usually related to issues in the students' home countries. This work is enriched by the practical immersion and research experiences developed in a foreign territory in the middle of the

programme, which allow students to take a step back and look at their study territory from a different angle.

Several types of action research have been carried out over the 5 years since the programme was set up. They can be classified into three main families:

1. The project as an instance of resilient interaction in the territory, favouring the emergence of new identity relationships in the constitution of the environment. This theme is mainly aimed at territories in a « stall » situation within large metropolises and are subject to marginal use that damages the environment, particularly through illegal occupations resulting from migratory processes. However, it is possible to set up circular and solidarity economy mechanisms in these types of territories, with the aim of socially integrating migrants, replacing rural production methods and setting up resilient activities that create a virtuous productive circle with regard to the environment (as an example, we can cite the work of Magali Risler: Process of development of urban agriculture in Kinshasa. See Fig. 18.5).
2. The project as a tool for mediation and the creation of citizenship to recreate links in fractured territories.

This type of action research has been applied in particular to territories subject to conflict. This is the case in Lebanon, where students from this country have proposed the implementation of actions very close to the territory (participatory approaches, walks, etc.). In some cases, the objective was to promote a change in the perception by the different actors of sites that create a border between communities of different religious confessions in Beirut (Beirut, towards a Curative Urban Dynamics by Saïd El Helou). In another case, it was a question of promoting the reinstatement, according to innovative mobility modalities to be imagined, of the railway line that crosses the Lyban from East to West (A participatory journey on the rails of history by Christelle El Hage).

3. The project as a new approach to the creation of commons in very precarious spaces.

This type of action research has often characterised the work of students from Latin American countries who have been interested in new modes of intervention and community appropriation of public spaces in very precarious neighbourhoods (this is the case of Marcos Colina’s work: Interfaces. The creation of the urban common in self-produced neighbourhoods, The case of Valle del Pino, Venezuela).

At the end of the RBW programme, the students are able to continue their work in a real context by involving the actors concerned in the implementation of the proposed actions or to continue their reflection in the framework of a doctorate.

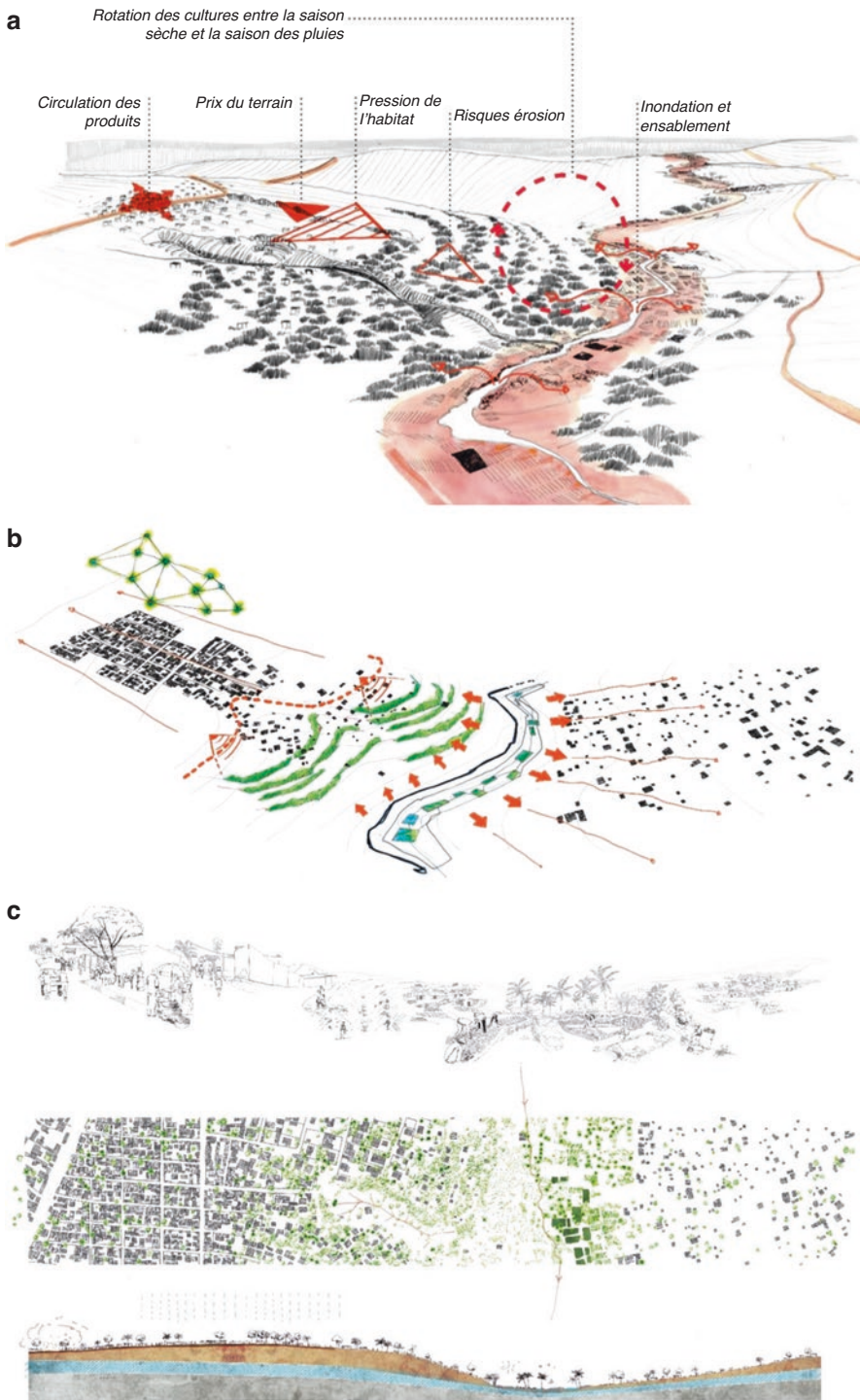


Fig. 18.5 Example of student final work: Proposal for a circular farm economy cycle to integrate rural migrants and clean up polluted territories in Kinshasa, Congo (Magali Risler), dynamics and proposed territorial strategy (Fig. 18.5a, 18.5b); plan and section of the studied area (Fig. 18.5c); detail of habitat unit with proposed aquaponics production system (Fig. 18.5d)

d

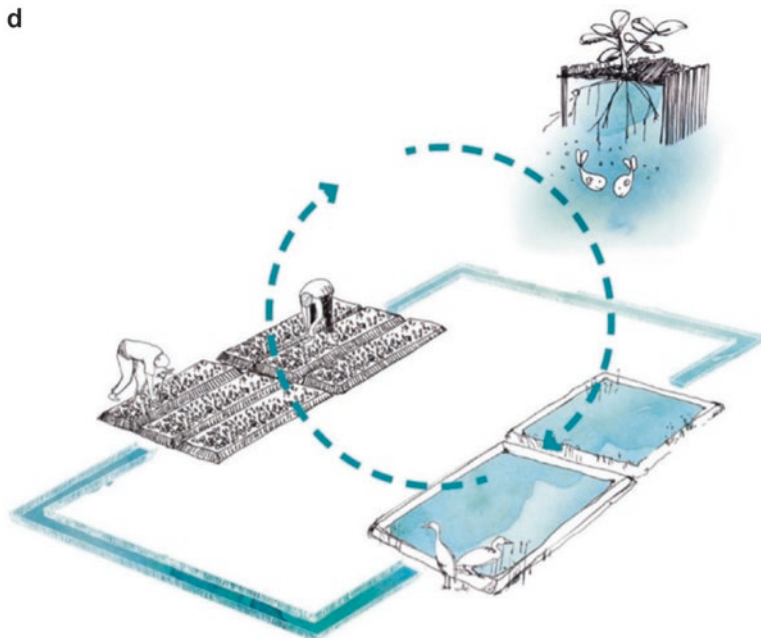


Fig. 18.5 (continued)

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