OIKODOMOS

A virtual campus to promote the study of dwelling in contemporary Europe

www.oikodomos.org

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OIKODOMOS Compendium

Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

OIKODOMOS Compendium

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This document is also available in the project web portal

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CONTENTS

About the Compendium

This OIKODOMOS Compendium provides an overview of the OIKODOMOS project and the use of the project outputs. The compendium is divided into four sections:

SECTION 1 introduces the project, the underlying pedagogic model and its supporting digital platform.
SECTION 2 deals with the implementation of the blended-learning model in various settings.
SECTION 3 contains the experiences of teachers who have participated in the activities of the Virtual Campus.
SECTION 4 offers practical information on how to join the Virtual Campus and contribute to new activities.

Readers are also invited to visit the project website www.oikodomos.org, which provides access to the digital platform – the OIKODOMOS Workspaces, the OIKODOMOS Case Repository and the OIKOpedia– as well as to the on-line resources mentioned in this document.

Section 01

The OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus

This section deals with the question, “Why should I join the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus?” The reader will gain an understanding of the goals of the Virtual Campus, of the learning model that underlies it and of the digital platform that supports it.

CH01 /// What is OIKODOMOS?

OIKODOMOS is a pedagogic research project financed by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, carried out by higher education institutions and research centres from Belgium, France, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and North Cyprus. The goal of OIKODOMOS – a Greek word for "the builder of a house" – is to create a Virtual Campus to support and promote housing studies on a European scale. The project was initiated in 2007 and has evolved continuously since then, consolidating its pedagogic model as new institutions join the Virtual Campus and participate in learning activities (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The OIKODOMOS web portal **www.oikodomos.org**

OIKODOMOS is a <u>network</u>:

- of European schools of architecture and urban planning;
- of themes of study about housing in contemporary Europe;
- of learning activities – courses, seminars and design studios – dealing with housing; and
- of learners – students and teachers – constructing knowledge in collaboration.

The project was run in two stages: a development phase from 2007 to 2009, followed by a consolidation and expansion phase from 2010 to 2011.

During the first period we developed and implemented a pedagogic model for the Virtual Campus based on the collaborative design and implementation of sequences of learning activities. These activities are carried out in digital learning environments specifically developed for the project, as well as in seminars and design studios taking place at the participating universities (blended learning model). Seminars, design studios and workshops have been

devoted to studying some of the most critical issues with regard to housing in contemporary European societies: aging population, energy efficiency, mobility, work at home, citizen participation, mass customization, etc.

The second phase has been dedicated to:

- consolidating the Virtual Campus methodology and the digital platform;
- expanding the application of the pedagogic methodology to other institutions; and
- disseminating the results among the academic and research communities as well as among local communities.

OIKODOMOS is <u>not . . . but . . . :</u>

- a surrogate of a "physical" university but an open learning and teaching space that cuts across institutional boundaries;
- a closed academic program on housing studies but an open space to propose and develop studies on contemporary housing issues in collaboration with other learners;
- a joint curriculum but a space of interaction between courses included in the academic programs of the participating institutions;
- only about on-line learning but is about combining on-line and on-site activities in the Virtual Campus and in the courses and seminars taking place at the various institutions.

To learn more:

Please visit **www.oikodomos.org** or have a look at the audio-visual presentation (5 min.) introducing the project development, the objectives and the outcomes, available at **www.oikodomos.org/webcast_introduction**

CH02 /// The OIKODOMOS Learning and Teaching Model

In this chapter we introduce the basic concepts of the pedagogic model underlying the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus: the alignment of learning and teaching and blended learning. This provides the necessary background from which to understand the following sections, where more practical information is provided.

01 // Aligned Learning and Teaching

The OIKODOMOS consortium comprises a set of schools, each with its own particular curriculum, timetable and educational culture. So, how was it possible to agree on a common plan to teach together a specific topic? Where did we start from?

Although the collaborative development of teaching courses is a complex matter, we found effective solutions that made the cooperation possible. The first step was to establish a common understanding of the educational processes and the language used to describe them. This enabled the learning experience to be clearly defined and agreed upon by all the partners.

Early discussions amongst the OIKODOMOS partners indicated that all staff used goals and competencies as a basis for defining their students' learning objectives, but soon it became clear that there were significant variations in the ways these were described. It was therefore decided that we would use the definition of goals and learning outcomes in conjunction with the method of aligned learning and teaching to describe the process by which learning would take place. This is illustrated below:

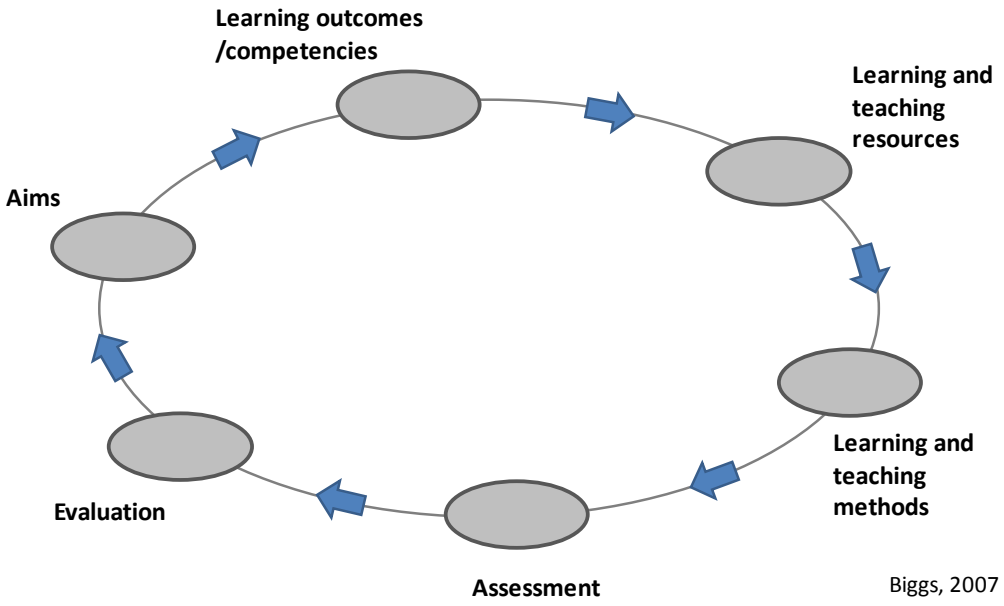


Figure 2. Schematic of the aligned learning and teaching model based on Biggs' work (J. Biggs & C. Tang, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, Buckingham: Open University Press/McGraw Hill, 2007)

As indicated in Figure 2, this methodology seeks the alignment of various elements, starting from the key consideration that everything to be assessed is supported by a learning process. In the ideal situation the first design iteration would start with goals and learning outcomes followed by alignment of the other elements around the

ellipse. In practice, a designer of learning processes might start at another point and ensure alignment by cross-checking and subsequent iteration around the cycle. In this aligned model the assessment methods should be selected for alignment with the learning outcomes, with the assignments being set to test the students understanding as indicated by the verbs used within the learning outcomes. This methodology has been used by the partnership to continuously adapt and improve the learning processes. For instance, as teachers collaboratively design the learning activities and tasks they also describe the learning outcomes that will be used to jointly evaluate the students' work. Figure 3 shows the repository of learning outcomes that has been collaboratively created by teachers from the schools participating in the Workspace titled "Housing and Proximity".

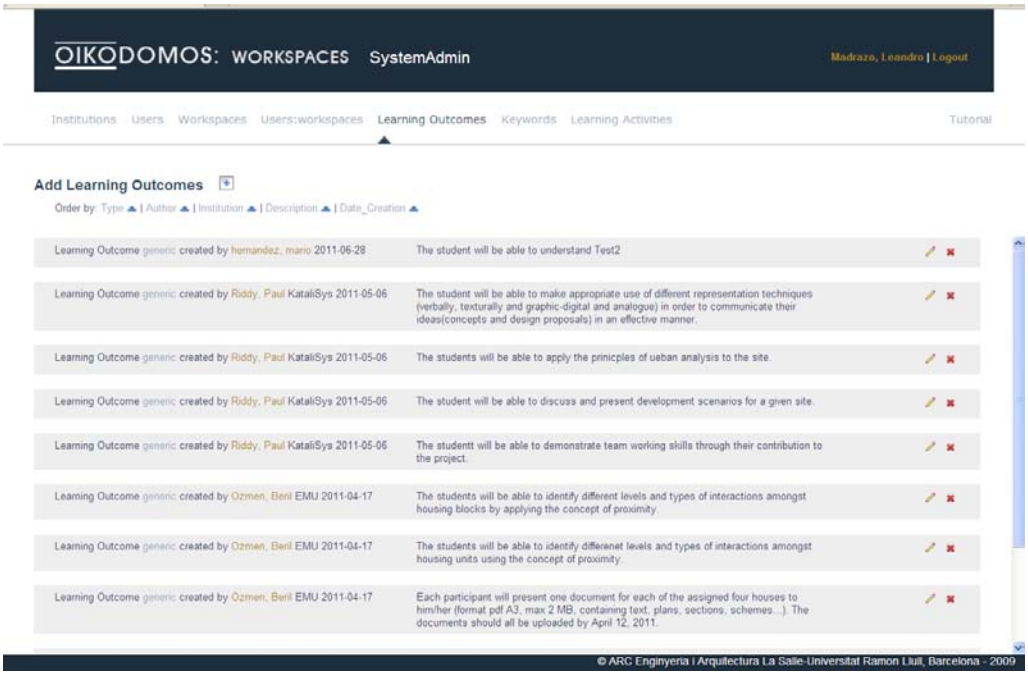


Figure 3. Repository of learning outcomes in OIKODOMOS Workspaces

02 // Blended Learning: Reconceptualising the Relationship Between Teaching and Learning

OIKODOMOS uses the term "blended learning" in two general contexts:

- First, we support blended learning through creating new on-line learning spaces that transcend existing boundaries – physical, institutional, disciplinary – where such spaces foster the construction of knowledge as a result of the interactions among learners.
- Secondly, we blend learning across institutions and integrated online (virtual) and face-to-face activities. The learning activities thus established and conducted on-line in these learning spaces have been combined with seminars and design studios taking place at the participating universities. Community representatives, local authorities and housing experts have also participated in these activities, both at a distance and face-to-face.

Examples of blended learning activities include:

- combining research seminars with design studios on housing;
- integrating architectural and urban planning subjects in housing design studios; and
- bringing together learning activities carried out in the digital platform with joint workshops carried out at a partner institution.

The key to the learning process is to intertwine the activities that can be carried out within the programme at each institution with the collaborative tasks amongst various institutions.

A complex example from OIKODOMOS is the combination of activities students follow in their own institutions' programmes with Joint Workshops where students and teachers meet face-to-face. The work initially developed at a distance is brought together through the collaboration in the workshop. This is illustrated schematically in Figure 4 and described in more detail in Section 2, Ch 03.

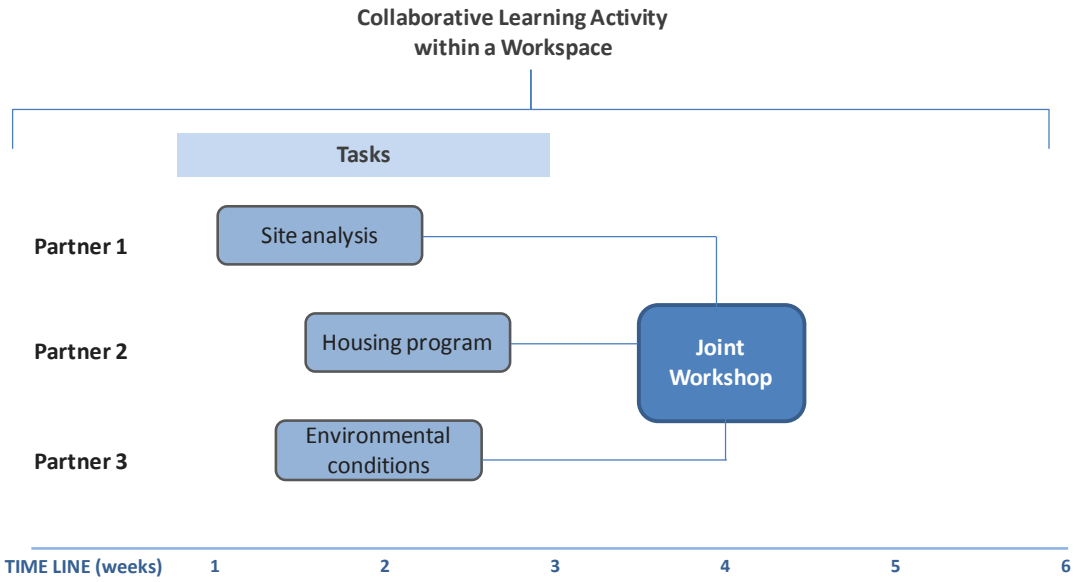


Figure 4. A Workspace hosts collaborative learning activities

The figure above depicts an example of a Learning Activity in which students follow tasks within their home institutions, which are carried out as preparation for a collaborative Joint Workshop.

Each partner can set a particular timeframe for completion of the activities.. Further, it is not necessary to completely define the curriculum for collaborative activities at the start of the collaboration. Instead, the participants can discuss and negotiate the inclusion of new learning activities or tasks as the collaboration unfolds. These can easily be added to the digital platform, facilitating access to existing resources and students' work from tasks already completed.

To learn more:

Please view the five-minute audio-visual presentation introducing the pedagogic methodology
www.oikodomos.org/resources/pedagogic_model

CH03 /// Digital Platform

The OIKODOMOS digital platform (Figure 5) provides the medium that makes the application of the collaborative pedagogic model viable. It consists of two environments: Workspaces and Case Repository. These environments can be used separately or in combination during the learning activities.

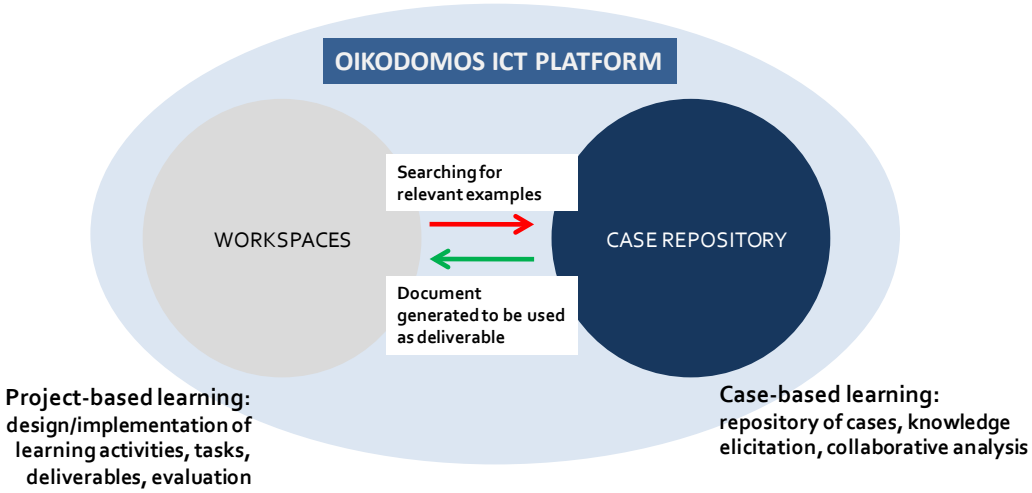


Figure 5. Structure of the OIKODOMOS digital platform

01 // Workspaces

OIKODOMOS Workspaces (Figure 6) supports project-based learning activities, such as the development of an architectural and/or urban planning project, doing so in a collaborative manner. It facilitates collaboration among distant learners who carry out joint learning activities in physical and/or virtual settings, including design studios, seminars and courses.

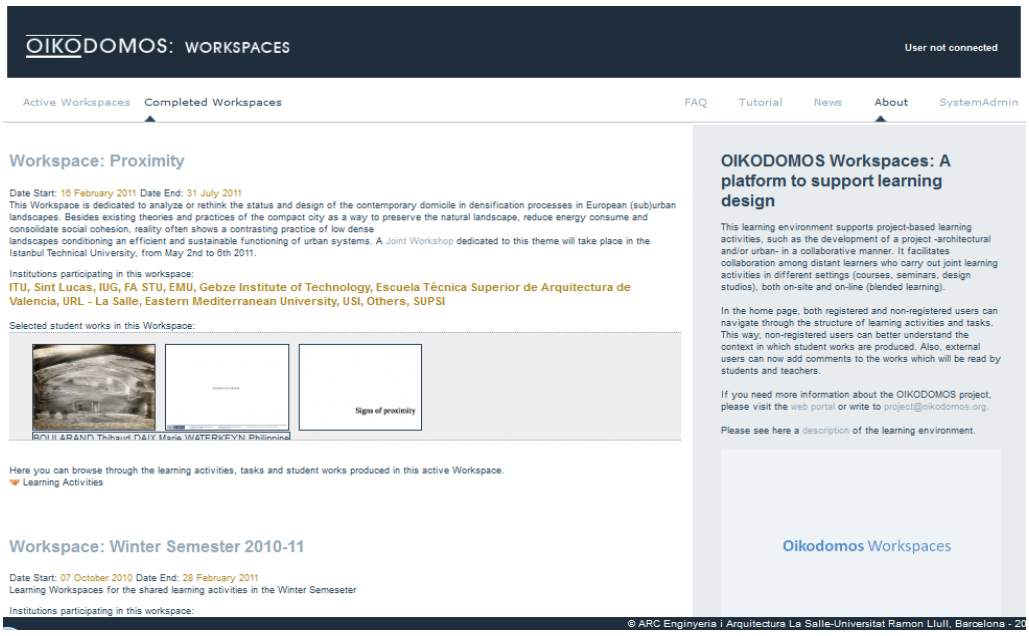


Figure 6. OIKODOMOS Workspaces (**www.oikodomos.org/workspaces**)

02 // Case Repository

This is a digital repository of housing case studies (Figure 7), which is constructed collaboratively by learners. Currently it contains more than 330 documented cases, with analysis and comments by students and teachers from different institutions. It is used to support learning based on the analysis of precedents.

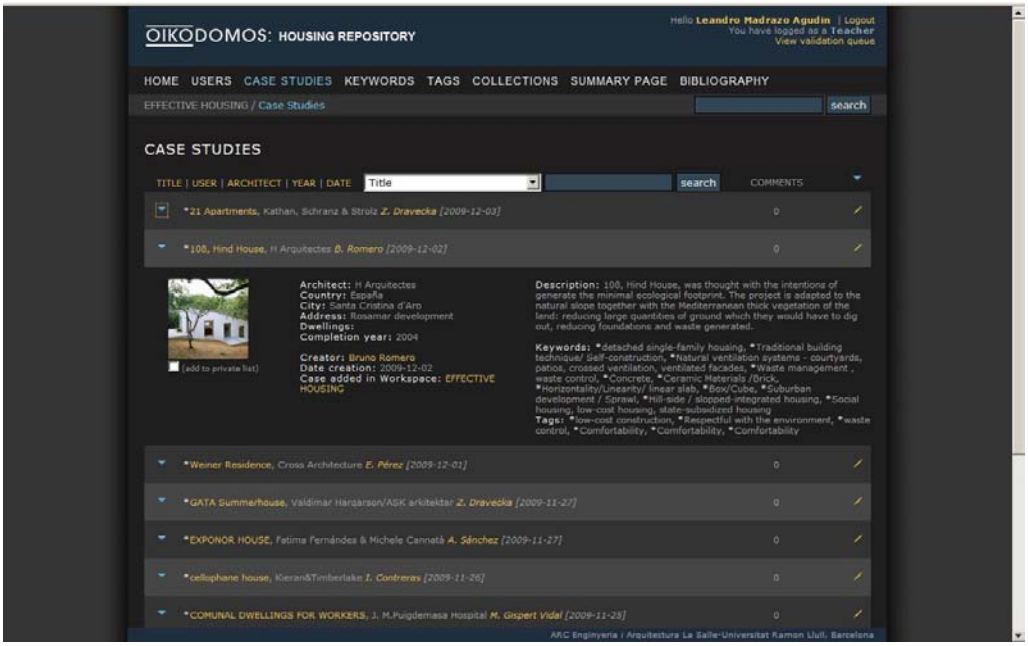


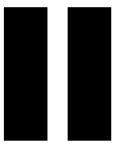
Figure7. OIKODOMOS Case Repository (http://www.oikodomos.org/caserepository)

To learn more:

An on-line tutorial is available at the home page of each environment: Workspaces (**www.oikodomos.org/workspaces**) and Case Repository (**www.oikodomos.org/caserepository**).

Section 02
Implementation of the Pedagogic Model

In this section the reader will get an overview of how the above-described pedagogic model has been implemented in the OIKODOMOS project. Following the description of the learning design in the OIKODOMOS Workspaces and the Joint Workshops, the reader will find a detailed example of the learning activities implemented in the Workspace titled “Housing and Proximity”.



CH01 /// Learning Design with OIKODOMOS Workspaces

The design of the learning processes with OIKODOMOS Workspaces gave consideration to three components:

- the learning structure: organization of the learning process in activities and tasks;
- learning spaces: spatiotemporal sequencing of the learning process; and
- blended learning: the interweaving of on-line and on-site learning activities.

01 // Learning Structure

The design and implementation of the collaborative learning activities takes place in OIKODOMOS Workspaces.

OIKODOMOS Workspaces is comprised of the following components, providing a flexible structure (Figure 8) for the design of learning activities:

- **Learning Workspace**. This is the learning space set by a group of teachers who want to design and implement some shared processes of learning about a common theme of study (e.g. “Housing and Proximity”).
- **Learning Activity**. This is a well-defined stage in the process of learning, for instance, “Site analysis” or “Analysis of precedents”.
- **Learning Task.** This is an assignment given to students within the context of a Learning Activity. For example, in the Learning Activity titled “Site Analysis”, the tasks might be “Visual analysis of the site”, “Studying a set of concepts”, etc.

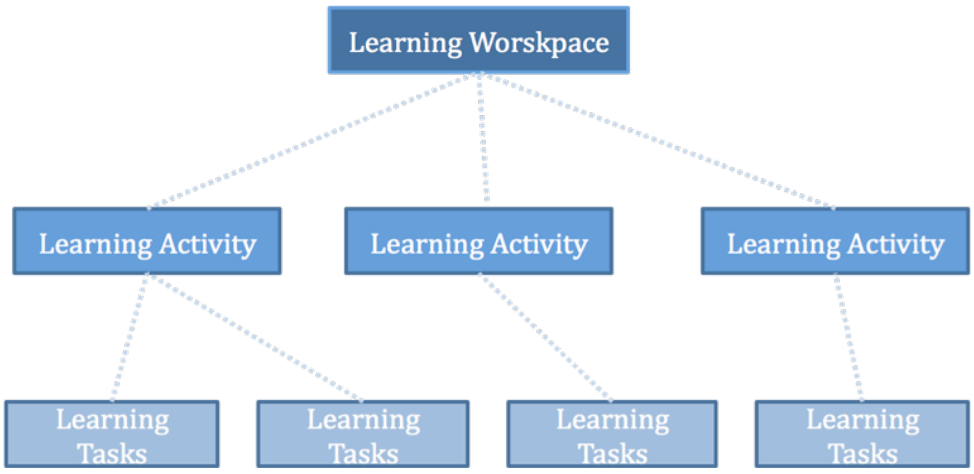


Figure 8. Structure of the OIKODOMOS Workspaces

Figure 9 depicts this structure in spatial terms: a Learning Workspace is a space containing the planes of various learning activities, which in turn enclose the learning tasks. Furthermore, it is possible to create sequences of tasks belonging to one or several learning activities.

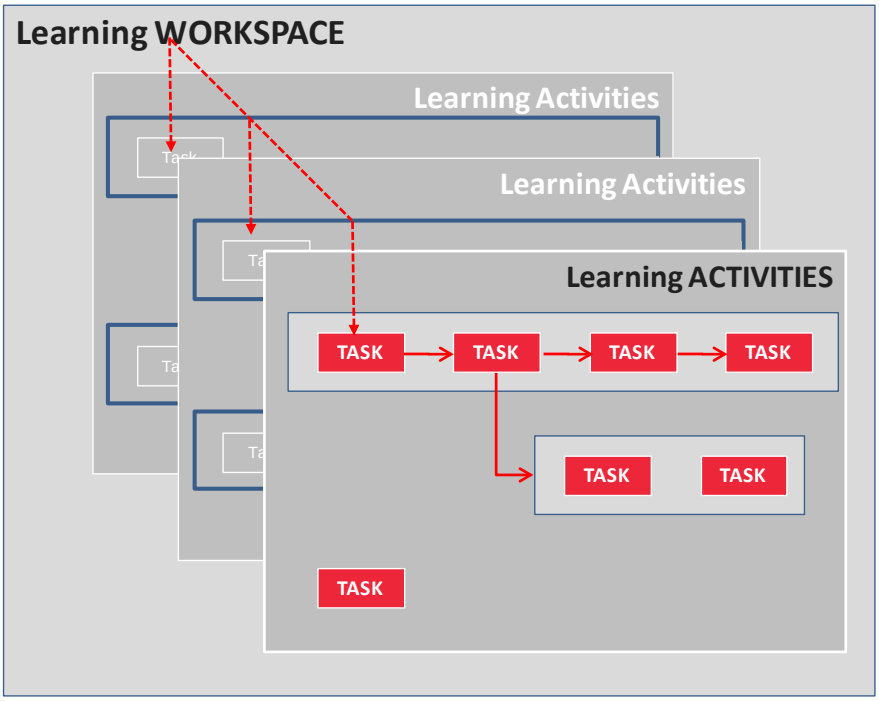


Figure 9. Structure of OIKODOMOS Workspaces

The flexible, neutral structure provided by OIKODOMOS Workspaces can be used in multiple ways in the learning design. It is also sufficiently open to be transformed as the learning process unfolds.

02 // Learning Spaces

The learning process can be thought of as a sequence of learning spaces, either on-line or on-site. For instance, some learning activities can take place in the Virtual Campus as preparation for a Joint Workshop where all the learners come physically together during a certain time period (Figure 10). The interweaving of learning activities and learning spaces is an important component of the learning design.

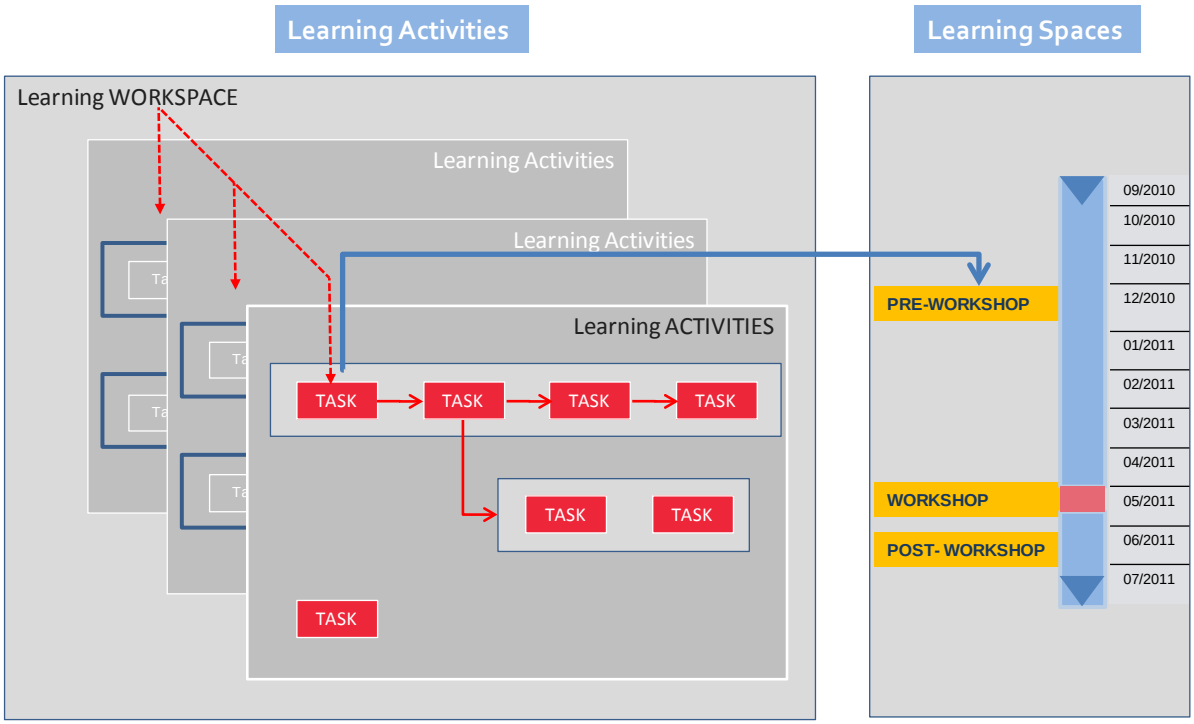


Figure 10. Structure of OIKODOMOS learning activities and learning spaces

To learn more:

You can see a visual explanation of the main features of the OIKODOMOS pedagogic model at **www.oikodomos.org/resources/learning_design.pdf**
Additionally, a case application of learning design summarized in five steps can be found at **www.oikodomos.org/resources/oikodomos_five_steps.pdf**

03 // Blended Learning

As described earlier in Section 1, Ch 02, blended learning is a distinctive feature of the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus. The blending of on-line and on-site activities can be performed in multiple ways. For example, in the OIKODOMOS project we organized both kinds of activities around a Joint Workshop where learners would work face-to-face for a period of time, typically a week. Before coming together in the workshop, learners had the chance to carry out preparatory activities in the Virtual Campus. In this way the Joint Workshop becomes a step in the learning process, enabling learners to continue working in collaboration but in a different setting. Thus the Joint Workshop is the physical and conceptual place for the convergence of activities that previously originated in the different courses as well as in the Virtual Campus. After the workshop, the collaboration can continue on a distant basis in the Virtual Campus as well as in the courses and seminars at each institution (Figure 11).

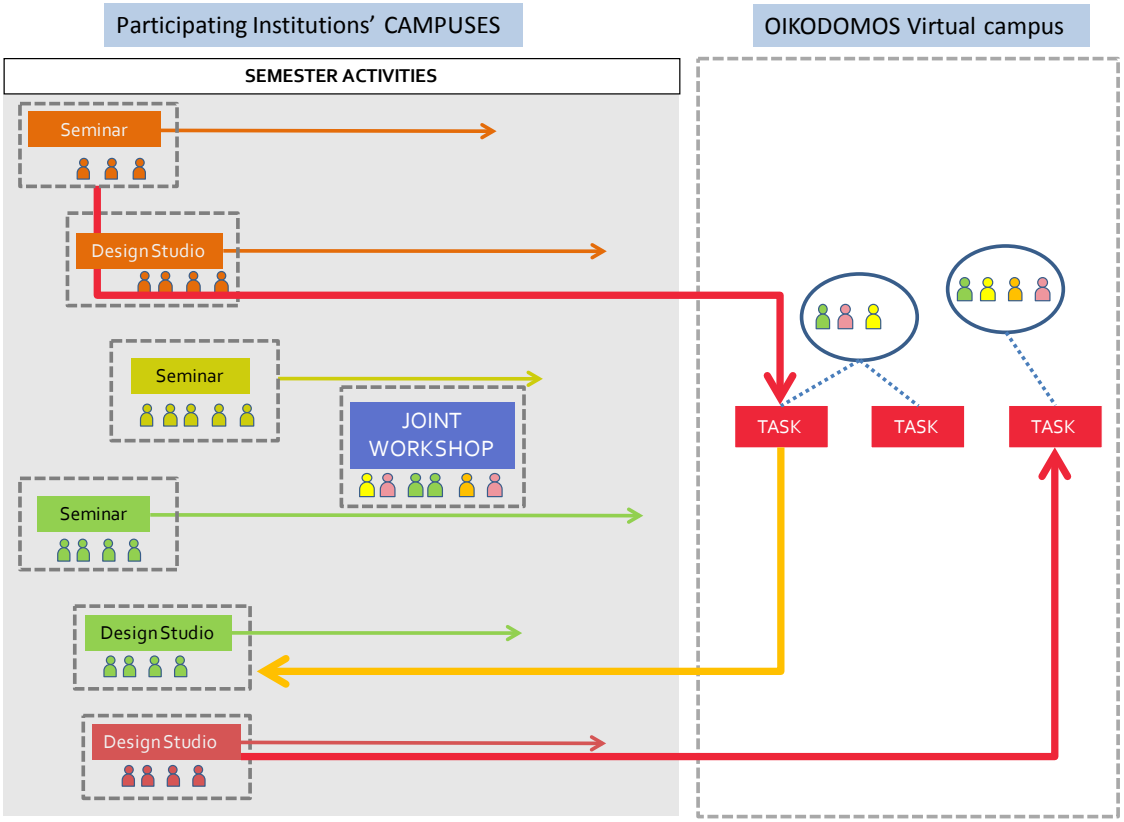


Figure 11. Integration of a Joint Workshop with other learning activities within the Virtual Campus

A Joint Workshop is part of a sequence consisting of pre-workshop, workshop and post-workshop activities (Figure 12):

- pre-workshop: building knowledge about the object of study and the site; carrying out activities at the home institution (on-site and off-line);
- workshop: discussing and designing urban strategies and architectural projects in multinational, multidisciplinary teams (on-site); and
- post-workshop: developing and designing architectural strategies using the urban strategies developed during the workshop (on-site and off-line).

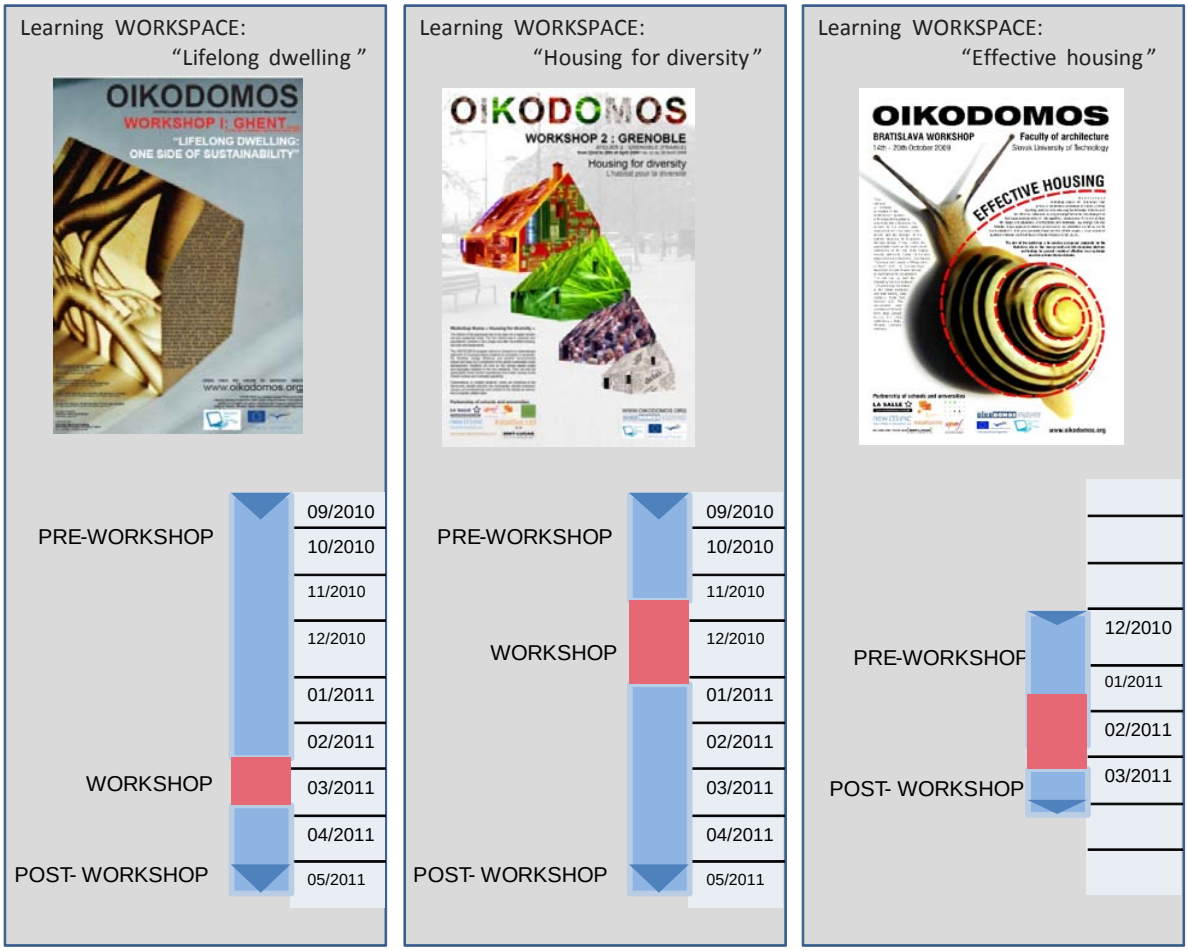


Figure 12. The integration of joint workshops within the learning activities carried out in a Workspace.

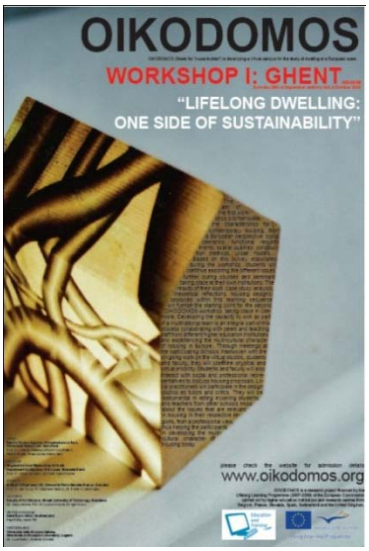
CH02 /// The Joint Workshops

An OIKODOMOS Workshop consists of a combination of lectures, design-studio work, design critiques and social events. The preparatory activities in the participating institutions help to establish a network of relationships amongst the courses, students and topics, facilitating the work performed collectively later in the workshop. After the Joint Workshops, the learning process is continued and consolidated through long-distance communication.

In the development of the works carried out around the workshops, the students and faculties interacted with local stakeholders – professional developers, public housing organizations, and representatives of tenant organizations and of the city administration, etc. – to discuss the various issues related to contemporary housing design and planning. Local practitioners participated in the design studios as tutors and/or critics. They were instrumental in introducing the professional point of view and in passing on their knowledge of the housing issues specific to the respective regions in which the workshops took place. This interaction with local stakeholders helped to achieve one of the main goals of the project: a collective reflection on the factors influencing European contemporary dwelling forms.

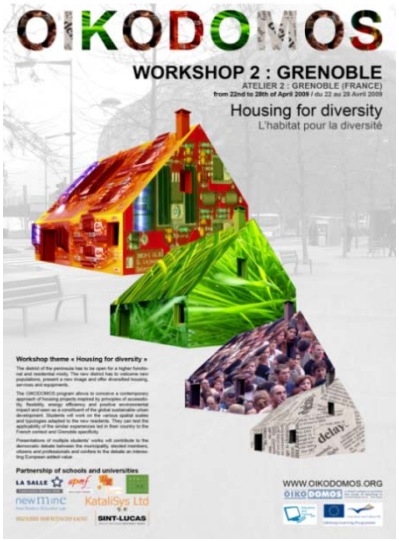
Four workshops have been organized between 2008 and 2011: in Ghent, Grenoble, Bratislava and finally in Istanbul. During those workshops, seminars and lectures, as delivered on-site and on-line, students and teachers addressed some of the critical issues that influence the way architects and urban planners conceive their methods of living and planning housing today. Design studios were dedicated to analyzing and proposing innovative housing solutions. These learning activities were designed to engage students, professionals and citizens in a collective study of contemporary European dwelling forms.

Each of the four workshops focused on one theme of study regarding housing in contemporary Europe: “Lifelong dwelling”, “Housing for diversity”, “Effective housing” and “Housing and proximity”.



Lifelong Dwelling: One Side of Sustainability
Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst
School of Architectuur Sint-Lucas, Ghent, Belgium
September 29 - October 3, 2008

The term “lifelong dwelling” refers to residential architecture that is supportive but not restrictive, in which inhabitants can dwell through different stages of life and circumstances. Thus the main learning objective of the first Joint Workshop was to make students aware of the strategies and actions necessary to attain sustainable living structures at the domestic, communal and urban levels.

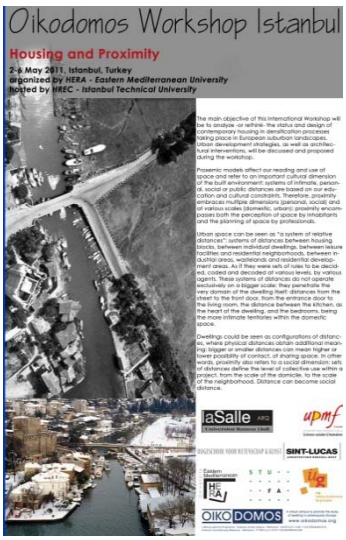


Housing for Diversity
Université Pierre Mendès-France
Institut d'Urbanisme, Grenoble, France
April 22 - 28, 2009

The primary learning objective of the second Joint Workshop was to confront students with the challenge to develop housing projects that could be integrated in complex scenarios involving multiple uses and functions. Grenoble's scientific peninsula district (the GIANT site) offered the opportunity to integrate housing along with other functions (scientific and leisure facilities). The ultimate goal of the urban renewal for the district is to make it attractive to new, diversified populations, which will in turn need more services and facilities.

Effective Housing
Slovak University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Bratislava, Slovakia
October 14 - 20, 2009

The project selected for the third Joint Workshop was to create effective housing designs in the Garden City Dúbravka Big Camp, a suburban area located in the north-western section of Bratislava. Effective housing respects the principles of sustainable development in that it aims to preserve and benefit from the specific conditions of the natural, cultural and social environment. Effective design utilizes natural sources, human knowledge and new technologies to create an attractive living environment. The workshop's objective was to develop conceptual proposals for effective housing design in the selected site, doing so at the urban and architectural levels.



Housing and Proximity
Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey
May 2 - 6, 2011

The main objective of this international workshop was to analyze (or rethink) the status and design of contemporary housing in the densification processes taking place in European suburban landscapes. Moreover, the existing theories and practices of the compact city – as a way to preserve the natural landscape, control and limit the urban sprawl, reduce energy consume and consolidate social cohesion, reality – often show contrasting practices of low-density landscapes, conditioning the efficient and sustainable functioning of urban systems. This dual reality of the built environment – compact cities versus low-density suburban areas – was given full consideration during the workshop.

CH03 /// A Case Study: The Workspace “Housing and Proximity”

This chapter describes the learning design process of the Workspace “Housing and Proximity” carried out during the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011, from mid-February till July. The following schools participated in the workspace: La Salle, Sint Lucas, IUG, FA STU and EMU. An international workshop in Istanbul during the first week of May was an important component of the learning activities. The evaluation of some student works was carried out by teachers from the School of Architecture of Valencia, who served as external evaluators.

01 // Defining the Theme of “Housing and Proximity”

The first step the teachers involved in this learning workspace was to find a common theme of study. The topic “proximity” was proposed as a loose framework that would encompass a diversity of courses, seminars and design studios. It was defined in the following terms:

> Proxemic models affect our reading and use of space, referring to an important cultural dimension of the built environment: systems of intimate, personal, social or public distances are based on our education and cultural constraints. Therefore, proximity embraces multiple dimensions (personal, social) and at various scales (domestic, urban): proximity encompasses both the perception of space by inhabitants and the planning of spaces by professionals.
>
> Manuel de Solà-Morales once stated that urban space can be seen as “a system of relative distances”: systems of distances between housing blocks, amongst individual dwellings, between leisure facilities and residential neighbourhoods, and amongst industrial areas, wastelands and residential development areas. It was as if they were sets of rules to be decided, coded and decoded at various levels by various agents. These systems of distances do not operate exclusively on a larger scale, penetrating the very domain of the dwelling itself: distances from the street to the front door, from the entrance door to the living room, the distance between the kitchen, as the heart of the dwelling, and the bedrooms, being the more intimate territories within the domestic space. Dwellings could be seen as configurations of distances, where physical distances obtain additional meaning. Greater or smaller distances can mean higher or lower possibility of contact, of sharing space. In other words, proximity also refers to a social dimension, in which sets of distances define the level of collective use within a project, from the scale of the domicile to the scale of the neighbourhood. Distance can become social distance.
>
> In recent years, social distance has increasingly been understood as a buffer and a safety measure whereby distance has become a device to guarantee separation and segregation. In this context the following question arises: have territorial mechanisms that prioritize individual identity replaced mechanisms based on strategies to share space?
>
> Text provided by Kris Scheerlinck

The deliberate ambiguity in this definition of the term proximity facilitated the integration of the variety of courses and seminars within a common framework. This way the teachers at different institutions could interpret and adapt the common theme in ways more suitable to their courses.

02 // Defining the Structure of Learning Activities

The next step in the learning design process was to build the structure of the learning activities. Guided by a shared set of collaboratively written learning outcomes, the participating teachers worked together to build the structure using a shared document (Figure 13). The tasks were identified and then grouped into learning activities. The interactions amongst the partners sharing tasks were identified and described as the learning process developed.

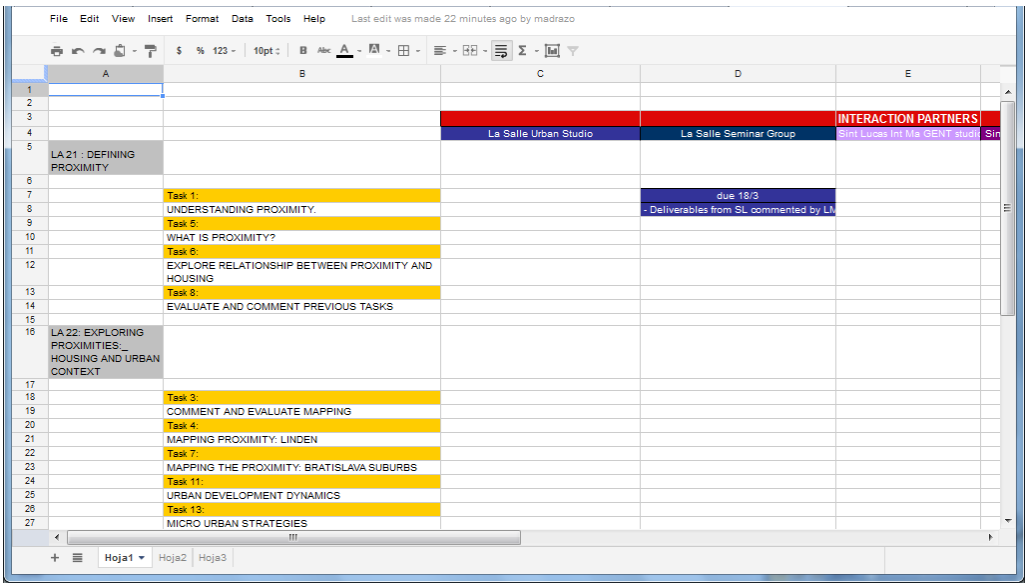


Figure 13. Shared document to design learning activities, tasks and interactions

Once the first draft of the structure of tasks and learning activities was completed in the shared document, the process to create the learning structure in Workspaces started. At this point it had already been decided that there would be a Joint Workshop in the middle of the semester in Istanbul. This had to be taken into account when deciding whether the various tasks would be done before, during or after the workshop (Figure 14).

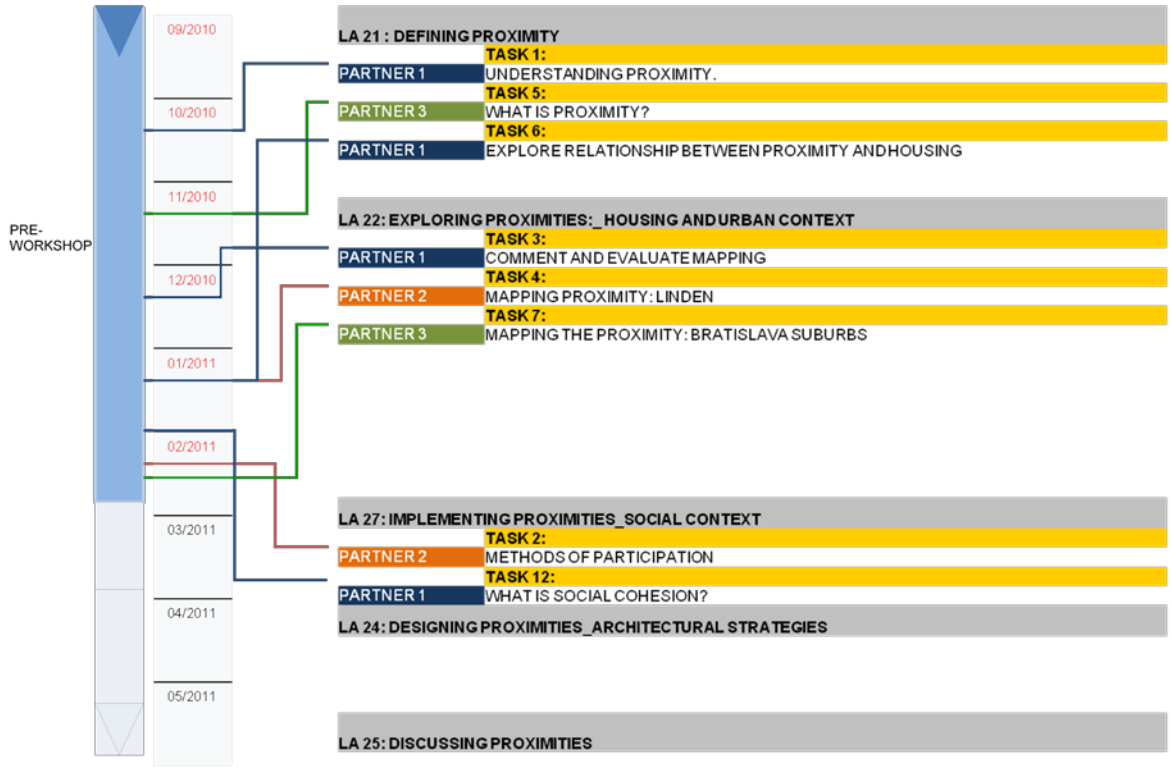


Figure 14: Tasks to be carried out before the Joint Workshop

The following is a summary of the learning activities and tasks that were ultimately implemented:

LA 21 Defining Proximity
This learning activity starts with the idea that urban space is based on models of proximity: on a small scale, as well as on a bigger scale. These activities tackle the question: what does proximity refer to?

LA22 Exploring Proximities: Housing & Urban Context
This learning activity is devoted to mapping the findings of the LA21, particularly the urban projects carried out at the design studios of the participating universities and in the international workshop at Istanbul.

LA24 Designing Proximities: Architectural Strategies
These activities focus on architectural interventions following the urban analysis carried out in LA24.

LA25 Discussing Proximities
Reflections following the work done in the Joint Workshop

LA27 Implementing Proximities: Social context
Activities dealing with the participation of citizens in the understanding and application of the concept of proximity to the understanding of the built environment

For each learning activity a series of tasks was defined collaboratively, and specific learning outcomes were assigned. For example, the following is a list of tasks for LA 21 “Defining Proximity,” with reference to the school that provided it:

LA 21 Defining Proximity

TK1 Understanding of proximity (by Sint Lucas)

The objective of this task is to define the conceptual framework for proximity: how do you understand proximity? How can it be related to the built environment? How can you read or experience models of proximity? Does proximity have a constructive or a rather defensive meaning? How does proximity relate to access? Which are the social, cultural or economic dimensions of proximity?

TK8 Evaluate and comment on previous tasks (by Sint Lucas)

This task is to evaluate, comment or critique the presented projects by the participants of the Urban Studio Sint Lucas, Brussels and EMU, North Cyprus: Understanding of Proximity. Give feedback, references or suggestions to the other participants. As part of this task, students can suggest reference projects, related concepts and questions, or can even initiate certain ideas.

The final step was to check the alignment of the different elements supporting the learning based, on the model discussed in Figure 2, Section 1, Ch.2, These learning outcomes were later used as points of reference for the joint evaluation of the students' work (Figure 15).

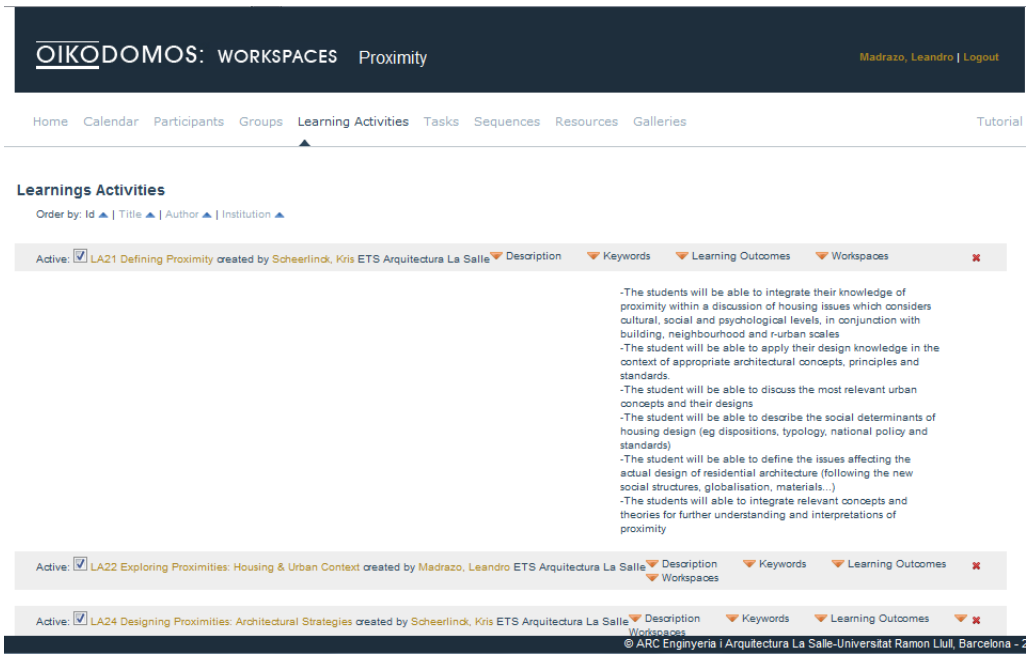


Figure 15: Learning outcomes assign to LA21 Defining Proximity

The structure of LAs and TKs evolved dynamically during the learning process, as new components were added to the original structure. Nevertheless, for the participating teachers it was important to have a shared view of the basic structure in order to start collaborating. In this way it was possible to maintain a double approach to the learning design process: top-down, a basic layout of the learning structures is agreed from the start; and bottom-up, components of the learning structure (LAs and TKs) can be modified during the process.

To learn more:

The complete structure of learning activities and tasks can be found in **www.oikodomos.org/workspaces**, tab Completed, Workspace “Proximity”.

The description of a task is based on a common template, which includes the task identifier, description, outputs, deadlines and references (Figure 16). A task is written by a teacher and can be carried out by his/her students as well as by students from other institutions. Therefore, it is important to describe it in such a way that its objectives are meaningful to all learners of the Virtual Campus.

OIKODOMOS www.oikodomos.org

OIKODOMOS is a Virtual Campus co-financed by the Long Life Learning Programme of the European Union to support housing studies in Europe. In the first two years of the project, 2007-2009, OIKODOMOS has developed, implemented, tested and evaluated an innovative pedagogic model based on a blended learning approach which combines on-line learning activities carried out in web-based environments -specifically designed for this Virtual Campus- with seminars, design studios and workshops physically taking place at the participating universities. The goal of the third year project activities, 2010-2011, is to consolidate the pedagogic model and expand the Virtual Campus to other institutions.

WORKSPACE PROXIMITY
LA 21 Defining Proximity
TASK 1: Understanding Proximity
defined by Kris Scheerlinck, WENK Sint Lucas / URL LaSalle

Description

Proxemic models affect our reading and use of space and refer to an important cultural dimension of the built environment: systems of intimate, personal, social or public distances are based on our personal education and cultural references. However, proximity can refer as well to the built environment itself.

Manuel de Solà-Morales once stated that urban space can be seen as “a system of relative distances”: systems of distances between housing blocks, between individual dwellings, between leisure facilities and residential neighborhoods, between industrial areas, wastelands and residential development areas. As if they were sets of rules to be decided, coded and decoded at various levels, by various agents. These systems of distances do not operate exclusively on a bigger scale: they penetrate the very domain of the dwelling itself: distances from the street till the front door, from the entrance door till the living room, the distance between the kitchen, as the heart of the dwelling, and the bedrooms, being the more intimate territories within the domicile. Dwellings could be seen as configurations of distances, where physical distances obtain additional meaning: bigger or smaller distances can mean higher or lower possibility of contact, of sharing space. In other words, proximity as well refers to a social dimension: sets of distances define the level of collective use within a project, from the scale of the domicile, till the scale of the neighborhood. Distance can become social distance.

Lately, social distance is increasingly understood as a buffer, a safety measure: distance became a device to guarantee separation and segregation. The question remains: have territorial mechanisms, based on individual use of space, responding to fear for insecurity and a desire for people to distinguish themselves repeatedly, taken over all collective strategies?

Outputs

The objective of this task is to define the conceptual framework for proximity: how do you understand proximity? How can it be related to the built environment? How can you read or experience models of proximity? Does proximity have a constructive or a rather defensive meaning? How does proximity relate to access? Which are the social, cultural or economic dimensions of proximity?

Deadline

Each group/participant will present one document (format pdf A3, max 2 MB, containing text, plans, sections, schemes...)
The documents should all be uploaded by **March 31, 2011**. Different groups of different partners will upload their respective work, compare and make comments to each other.

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Figure 16: Description of the TK1 “Understanding Proximity”, by Kris Scheerlinck

03 // Implementing the Learning Activities

Once the basic learning structure was agreed upon, the learning activities could be implemented. As new tasks were brought forth during the learning process, they were connected to previous ones. In this way the task sequences were constructed on the fly, and the outputs produced by some students were used as inputs for other tasks done by other students in other institutions. For example, teachers from EMU proposed TK 16, “Explore relationships between proximity and housing,” in which the goal was to apply the notions of proximity identified by students from EMU and Sint Lucas in the previous tasks TK1, “Understanding Proximity,” and TK21 “What is Proximity?” to housing (Figure 17).

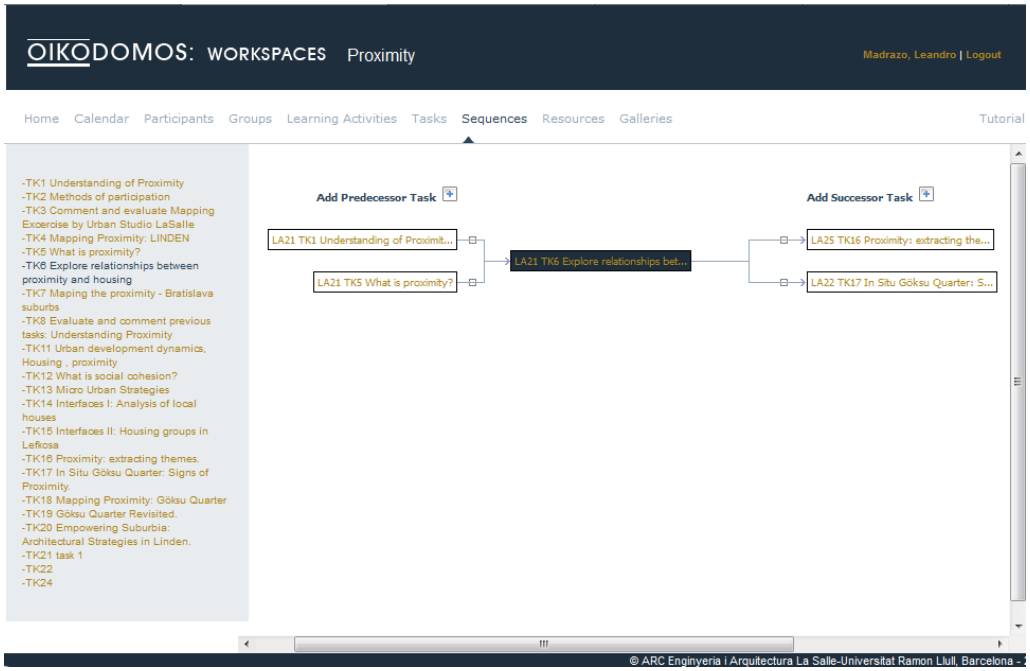

Figure 17: Constructing sequences of tasks

Student works were submitted to Workspaces (Figure 18) and then commented on by peers and teachers from other schools (figures 19 and 20).

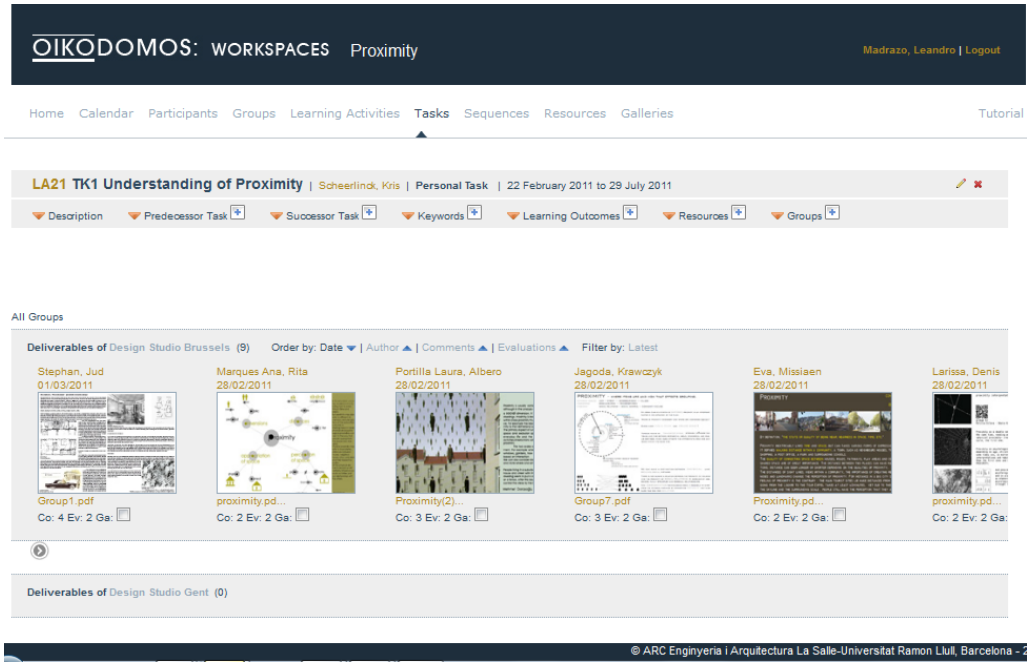

Figure 18. Works from Sint Lucas students submitted to TK1, “Understanding of Proximity”

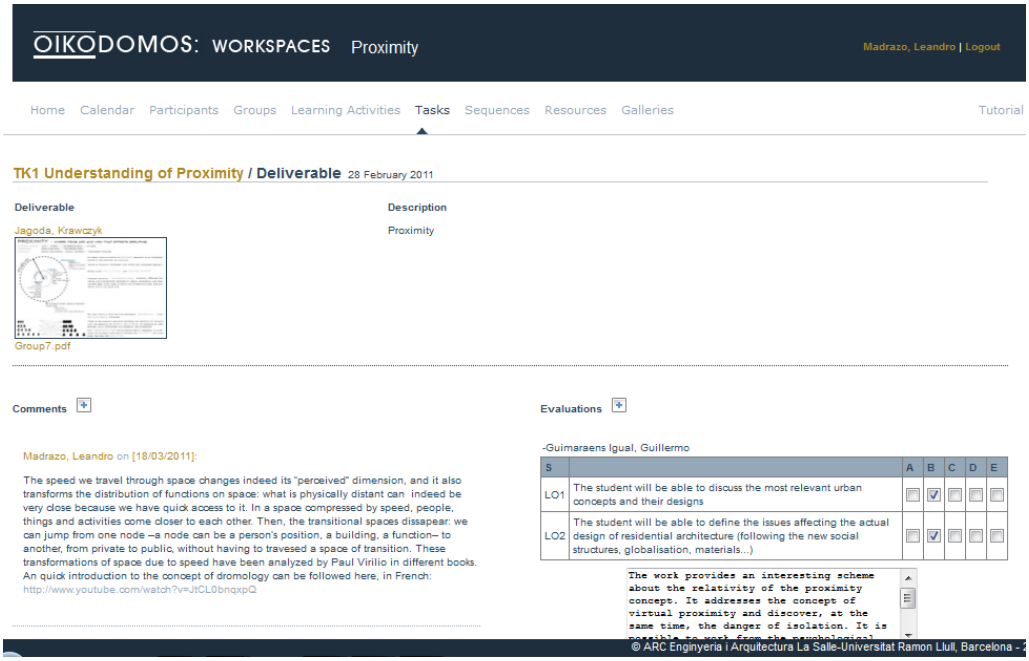

Figure 19. View of a student work, with comments and evaluations by teachers from other schools.

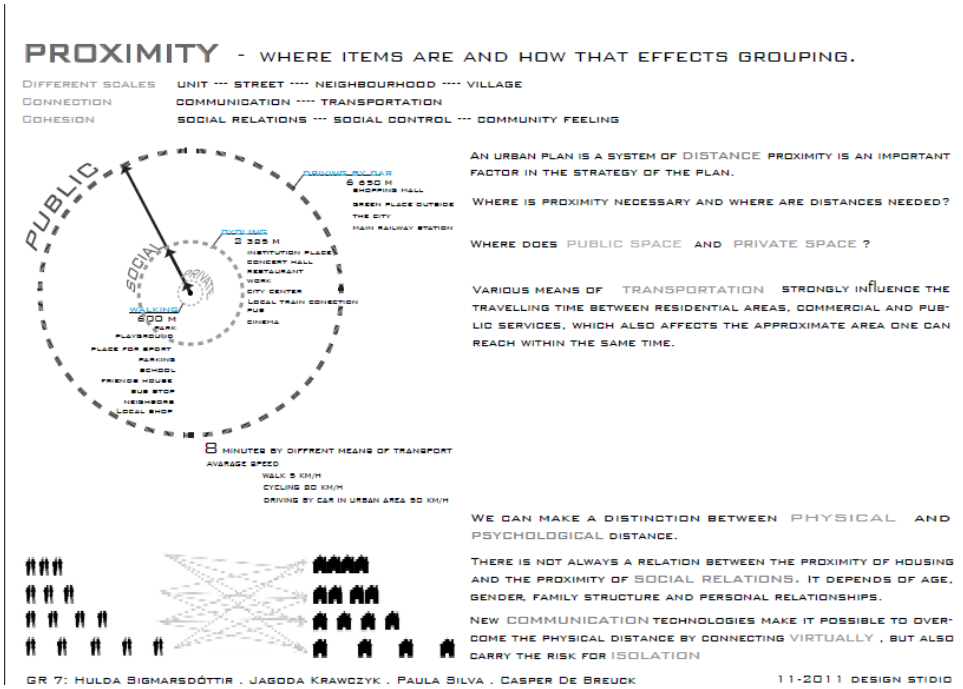

Figure 20. TK1, "Understanding Proximity"; student work, Sint Lucas

The participating institutions, over a period of two-and-a-half months, collaborated distantly as they defined, connected and carried out tasks in Workspaces. Then the Joint Workshop took place at the Istanbul Technical University from 2 - 6 of May. In the learning process, the Joint Workshop became the occasion to put together not only the participants but the knowledge that had been obtained through the learning activities in Workspaces (Figure 21).

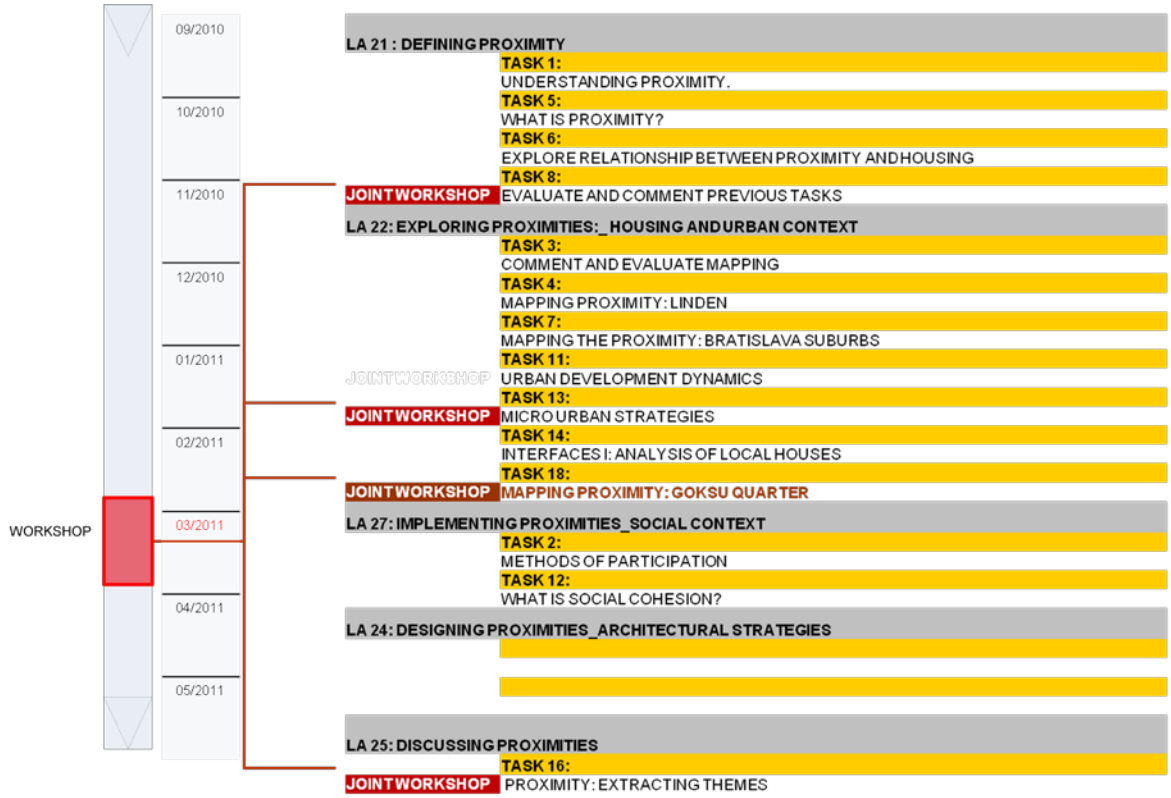

Figure 21: Tasks carried out during the workshop

In order to facilitate the link between the pre-workshop activities and the activities done during the workshop, TK16 “Proximity: extracting themes” was defined. The purpose of this task was to review the work done in the previous weeks in the Workspace and derive some conclusions regarding housing and proximity. Therefore, the predecessor tasks were all the previous ones carried out by the different partners addressing the notion of proximity from different perspectives (Figure 22).

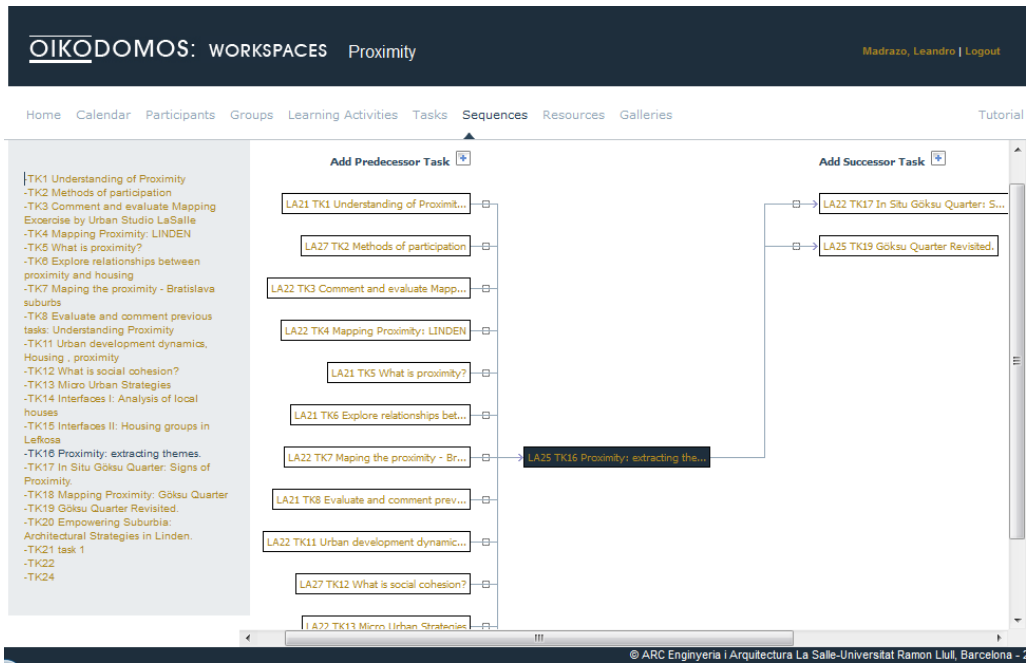

Figure 22. TK16, “Extracting Themes”

TK16 was defined in the following terms:

LA25 Discussing Proximities

TK16 Proximity: extracting themes

The main goal of this common task is to reflect on the results of the preparatory learning activities related to the Proximity Workspace, as performed at each institution over the past semester. This common reflection exercise will serve as an introduction to the workshop activities in Istanbul.

During the last months, many related tasks were defined and fulfilled at the different institutions. Some of them were developed on a theoretical or a conceptual level, but others were related to a specific site, its potentials, problems and/or a specific housing program. During the following discussion or evaluation sessions, some recurrent themes seemed to appear, sustaining an interesting discussion among students and professors. Themes such as collective spaces, barriers, transition spaces, clusters and social cohesion were repetitively referred to as the participants commented on the outcomes of the various tasks. In this task these reoccurring core themes will be used to introduce and accelerate the workshop activities and ensure the continuation of the learning process. The idea is to use these common themes to cross-check the outcomes of the previous LAs and further build upon them.

This task will be developed by mixed groups (each groups represents minimum 3 partner institutions: the same groups will be used during the workshop), before the workshop in Istanbul: during the first day of the workshop, a series of presentations by each group will occur to present these outcomes.

This task was carried out by groups made of students from the different institutions participating in the workshop. In this way, they could start to collaborate and know each other through the distant collaboration before they met face-to-face in the Joint Workshop. The results of TK16 were presented in a public session on the first day of the workshop. The same groups continued working during the one-week workshop.

Two tasks were carried out during the workshop: TK17, “In Situ Göksu Quarter: Signs of Proximity”; and TK18” Mapping Proximity: Göksu Quarter” (Figure 23). The goal of TK17 was described in the following terms:

LA22 Exploring Proximities: Housing & Urban Context
TK17 In Situ Göksu Quarter: Signs of Proximity

The main goal of this task is to apply the concept of proximity to the site in a short timeframe: each group will make a photographic reportage of the visited site, using the concept of proximity as the main focus. This task, to be developed during the second day of the workshop, helps to introduce and read the site as well as to speed up the workshop activities. In this way an immediate forum of discussion is celebrated within and amongst the mixed groups of participants.

The outcomes of this task allow home base participants, as well as external participants, to be accurately introduced to the site, to stimulate interaction with the workshop activities.

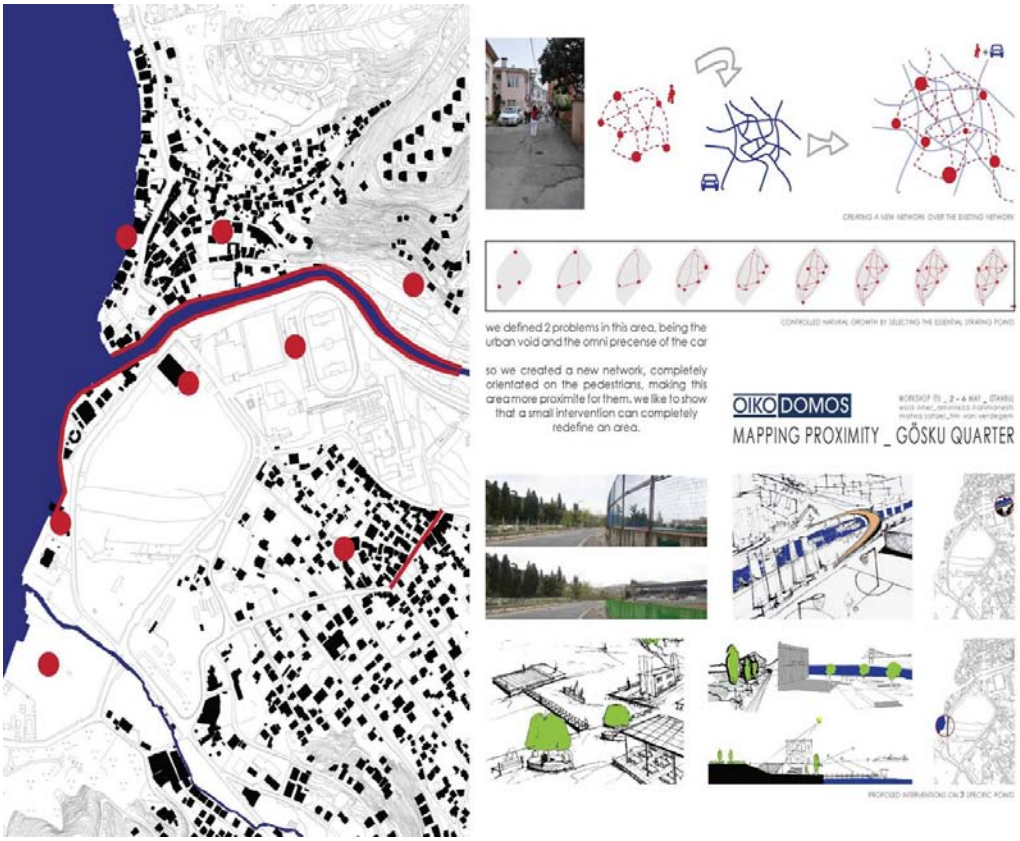

Figure 23. TK18, Mapping proximity to the Göksu Quarter; student work

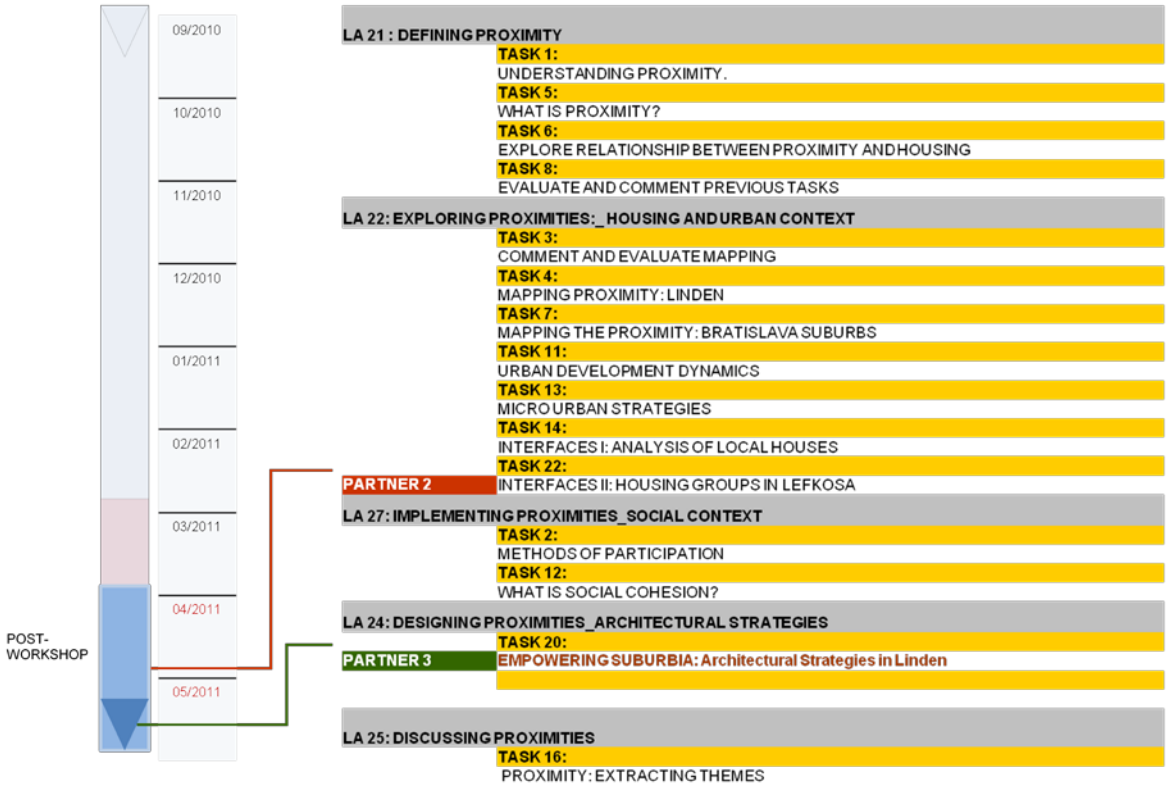

Figure 24. Tasks carried out in the post-workshop stage

After the workshop, two tasks were carried out by students from Sint Lucas: TK19 “Göksu Quarter Revisited”; and TK20, “Empowering Suburbia” (Figure 24).

The shared purpose of TK19 and TK20 was to derive a frame of knowledge from the study done in the Göksu Quarter to apply it to their own projects in the design studio conducted at their school. In this way a process of knowledge transfer across projects, places and people was performed (Figure 25).

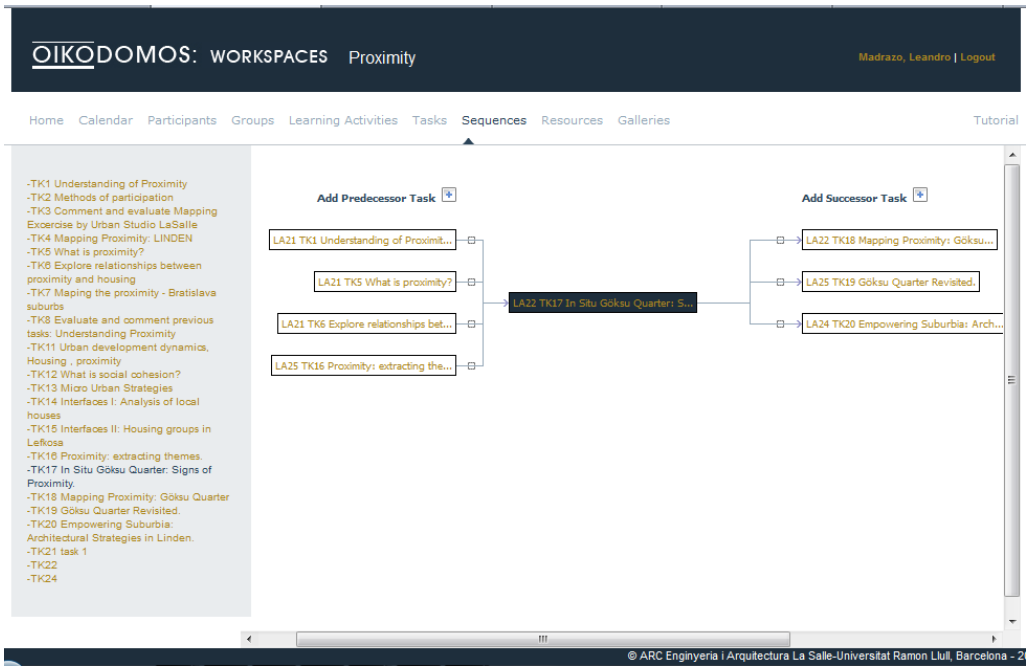

Figure 25: Connecting tasks before and after the Joint Workshop

04 // Evaluating Students’ Work

The evaluation of the student work was conducted by all participating teachers, who considered not only the results of their own groups but also the work of students from other institutions. Moreover, faculty members from the associated partner ETS de Arquitectura de Valencia served as external evaluators. Each of them used a common rubric to make the evaluation (Figure 26), which was based on the list of learning outcomes previously defined by the teachers who collaborated in the learning workspace.

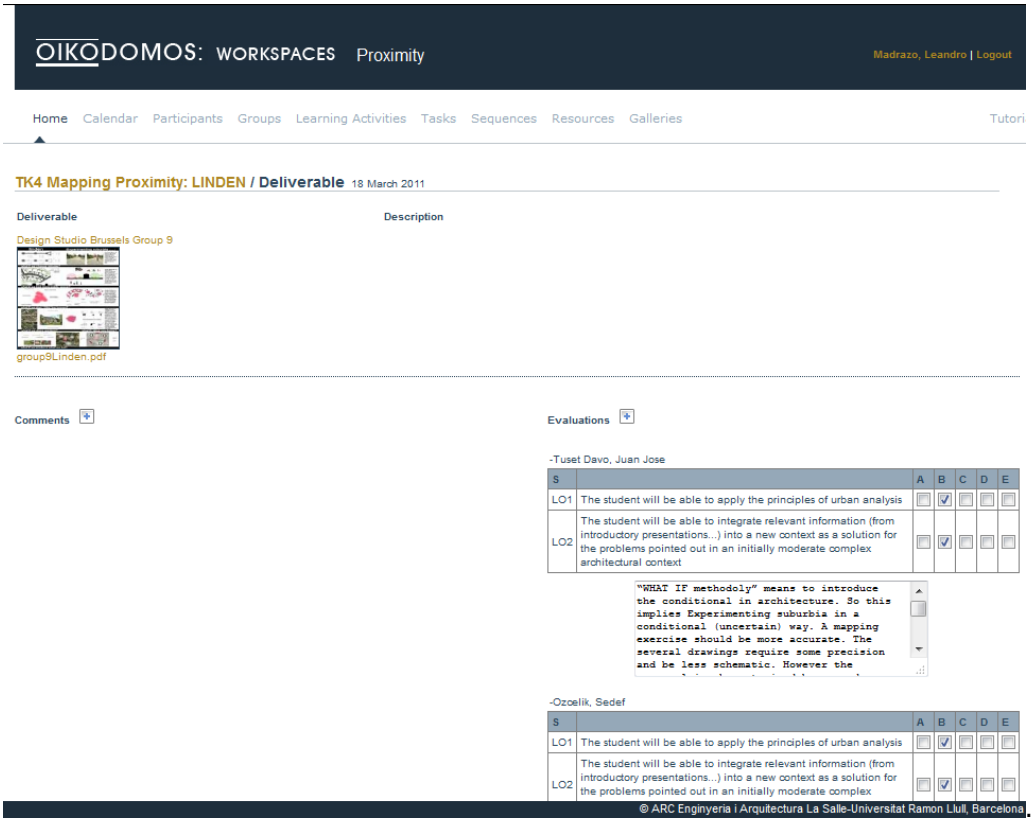

Figure 26. Rubric completed by evaluators from the various institutions

To carry out the external evaluation, the teachers from the school of Valencia received a summary of the learning structure: theme of the Workspace (e.g. proximity), learning structure and tasks. This gave them the initial, overall view they needed in order to be able to place the student work in the appropriate context. Then they proceeded in the following way (Figure 27): 1. sampling some exercises to get a partial view; 2. seeing all the works for a particular task (transversal view); 3. seeing all the works of one group through the sequences of tasks (longitudinal view); and 4. having scanned the entire “evaluation space”, they proceeded to evaluate each work (global view).

5. Action of evaluators. Parcial view.
6. Action of evaluators. Transversal view.
7. Action of evaluators. Longitudinal view.
8. Action of evaluators. Global view.

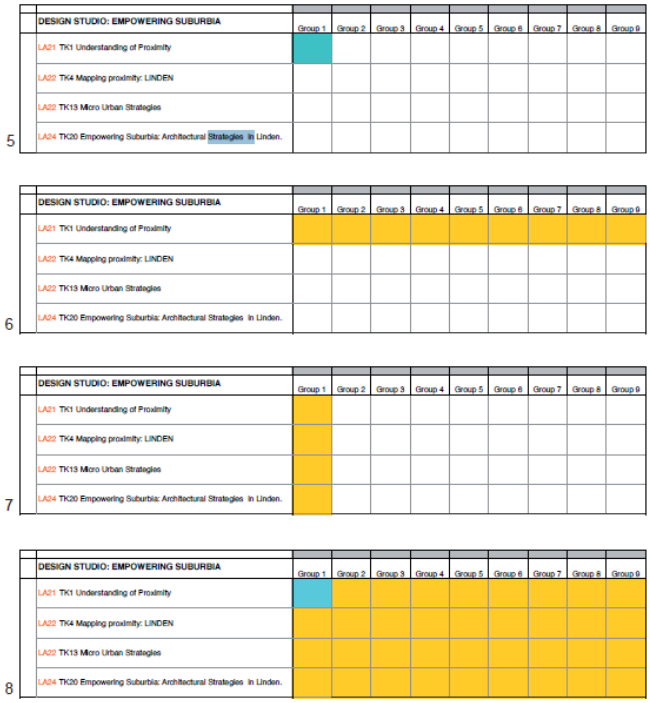

Figure 27. Stages in the external evaluation process; Mónica Garcia, ETS Arquitectura Valencia

To learn more:

Please see the report “External Evaluation: a case study from the School of Architecture, Valencia”, by Mónica Garcia, available at **www.oikodomos.org/resources/evaluation_valencia.pdf**

CH04 /// A Case Study: Integrating the Case Repository in a Curriculum

This chapter describes the strategies adopted at the Chair of Design and Building Science at Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU) in order to integrate the OIKODOMOS Case Repository into the structure of one their courses. The work was carried out during the second semester of 2011-12.

01 // Finding the Appropriate Course

The teaching program at the Chair of Design and Building Science is organized into modules, some of which are taught in collaboration with other chairs. The first issue to be solved was to identify the appropriate module to integrate with the OIKODOMOS Case Repository. A discussion at the chair at this point led to the following questions:

- On which level to engage with the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus (BA or MA) and as part of which module?
- How to assess the suitability of existing modules to blend into the Virtual Campus (design studio, seminar, lecture/exercise?)
– How to become familiar with the learning platform?
– Shall we integrate or replace existing learning activities? To which extent must we redefine learning outcomes?
- How should the process be managed?

The answers to these questions provided the strategy to be adopted:

- the identified module consisted of a mixed lecture/exercise format with the students' output comprising a case study for the chair's growing compendium of exemplary housing projects;
- the learning activities were amended to include an additional deliverable: uploading the work to the Case Repository;
- the module was taught on a collaborative basis with two other chairs; for the purpose of interaction with the Case Repository, the OIKODOMOS-related activities would be limited to the learning activities provided by the Chair of Design and Building Science only;
- the workload of the module was adjusted to conform to ECTS requirements; and
- a learning-by-doing approach was adopted by students and teachers for engaging with the OIKODOMOS Case Repository.

02 // Redefining the Learning Activities

To be familiarized with the features of the platform, students and teachers at BTU made use of the on-line tutorials. Additionally, the digital platform was explained during the lectures. The learning management of the module was assisted by "myBTU", the e-learning platform of BTU, which provided students with descriptions of the assignments, learning materials and schedules.

The exercise outline for the first task of the modules was described in the following terms:

This task will provide you with the opportunity to become familiar with the interface of the "OIKODOMOS case-repository" and the way it operates. There are many features available, and you are encouraged to test some or all of them. Other students have already uploaded more than 300 case studies to the repository. The repository is conceived as active working environment and learning zone, not just as database. You can engage with the content or you can engage into a dialogue with the authors of the case studies and provide them with "peer-to-peer" feedback. The authors of the case studies will then have the opportunity to respond to your comments and critiques, and develop their case study further . . . . Your own case study will be evaluated by other participating students in the same way later on, so that you can in turn build upon external feedback as well. This "ping-pong" process is called "cross-crit", which will help you to reflect more critically upon your own work.

Text provided by Norbert Kling

As a result of the redefinition of the learning activities of the module, the analysis of the case study that was uploaded to the OIKODOMOS case repository became part of a more comprehensive study. The full submission of the case study analysis consisted of six A3 pages summarising the complete study. Each study was carried out by a team of four students (Figures 28 and 29).

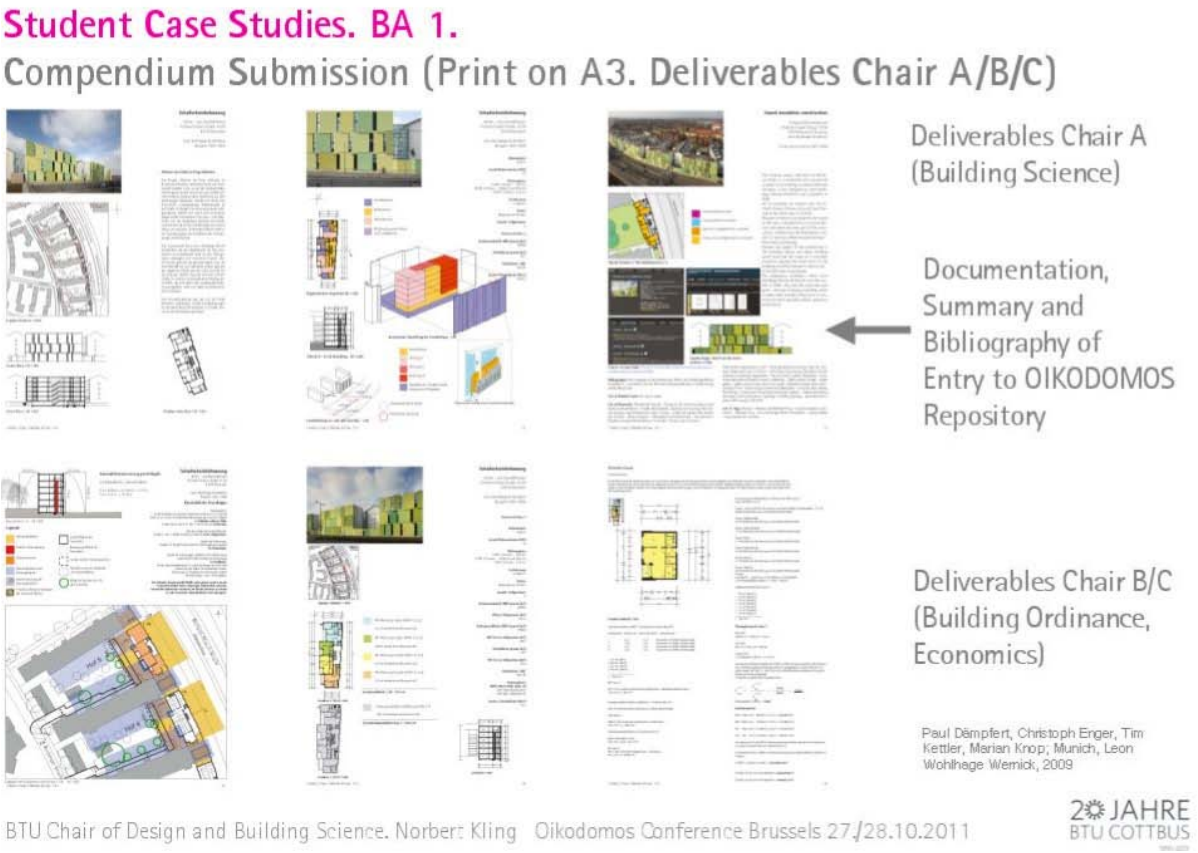

Figure 28. Full student submission, including the analysis components with the OIKODOMOS Case Repository

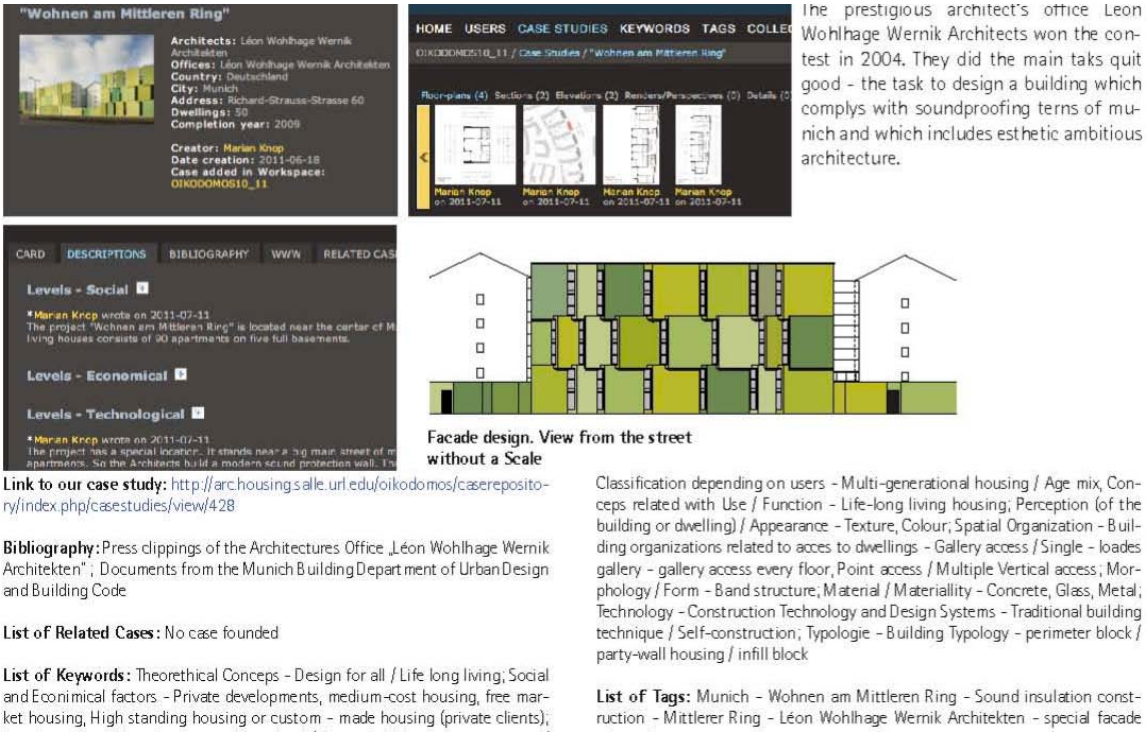

Figure 29. Detail showing the analysis components provided for the OIKODOMOS Case Repository

A course evaluation was carried out at the end of the semester in order to obtain feedback on the module and the changes resulting from the integration of the OIKODOMOS Case Repository. The overall feedback was positive, including the experience with the platform, and the answers regarding workload, content, structure and administration were consistent with those of previous years.

The following conclusions can be derived from the learning experience:

- the existing teaching modules can be modified and blended into the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus, even if they encompassed multiple chairs and had large numbers of students;

– students considered their participation in OIKODOMOS as a positive challenge that led to the enhancement of their work;

– the integration of the outputs documented in the case repository with the other outputs in a unique presentation format worked well on paper;

– the simultaneous use of our own learning management systems with the OIKODOMOS digital platform may be lead to increased administration requirements;

– it was difficult to integrate external interactions (evaluations, commenting) in the learning process. Because of this, the documented case study was submitted as “final product” at the end of the semester rather than a “work in progress”. Interactions within a workspace while working for the Case Repository would have been, with the experience we have now, probably too demanding at the outset;

– the interactions with the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus facilitated the combined use of German as well as English languages, which was an important added-value for the learning; and

– the “learning by doing” approach proved to be feasible for both, teaching staff and students; we

consider this approach important as it allows participation in the Virtual Campus without having a to go through a lengthy preparatory process.

To learn more:

Please see the report “Engagement and Interactions of a BTU teaching Module with OIKODOMOS Case Repository: a Case Study from the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus,” by Norbert Kling, available at **www.oikodomos.org/resources/caserepository_cottbus.pdf**

Section 03

The Experience of Learning and Teaching in the Virtual Campus

This section presents some of the experiences of teachers and students who have participated in the Virtual Campus activities. At the end of the section the reader will also find some recommendations derived from the experience of working in the Virtual Campus, which can be useful for future applications.

CH01 /// What Teachers Say About Their Experiences in the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus

During the academic year 2010-2011, 344 students and 40 teachers from eight participating institutions took part in the OIKODOMOS learning activities. In this chapter you can read a brief overview of the experiences of three of those institutions.

Interview with Angel Martin Cojo, School of Architecture La Salle, Barcelona, Spain

- Could you please introduce yourself?

I'm Angel Martín, a teacher and researcher at the URL La Salle Architecture School in Barcelona. I have been involved in the OIKODOMOS project for the past two years, and four years ago with HOUSING@21.EU, an Erasmus programme predecessor of the current project.

At La Salle Architecture School I have been involved in different research projects concerning housing, especially on the four years of development of the Bar_Code Housing System. I am currently an assistant teacher in the Housing Research Seminar and in the Systems of Representation courses.

- Why and when did you decide to join the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus?

La Salle's Housing Research Seminar has been specifically considered part of the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus. Therefore, although the seminar is run at our school, its main purpose is to take advantage of the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus as an active platform from which to teach and investigate, along with other universities, essential issues in the context of contemporary dwelling.

- How many students have been involved?

Over each of the past three years, the OIKODOMOS Seminar at La Salle´s University has had from 10 to 15 students who have worked in collaboration with the students of the partner universities. The total number of students from all the schools participating in last's year Workspace was 129.

- How did you manage the learning design and teaching?

Prior to the beginning of the semester, some initial contacts took place among the OIKODOMOS partners. The first agreement to make concerned the theme of study, which was "Housing and Proximity".
Subsequently, the various seminars and design studios orientated their activities to create a shared knowledge about the chosen theme. Once the theme was agreed, we designed for our seminar a series of learning activities so that our students could investigate the concept. These activities were basically concise exercises that we believed would foster different sorts of interactions with the works produced by other universities. In practice, the description of the

proposed problem and the explanation of the results by the students had to be easily understood by students and teachers from other schools.

- What were the results?

Generally speaking, the results were very positive, both in the local and collaborative tasks. The efforts of the students were remarkable, and they were highly motivated.

- Did you encounter any difficulty? How did you manage it?

Probably the most difficult part was to maintain a productive and continuous communication with the rest of the partners. The coordination of different calendars, for instance, became an impediment. Nevertheless, the virtual platform, given the way it was structured, proved flexible enough to absorb different learning processes. In order to facilitate the development of a shared knowledge, teachers need to have the ability to react quickly and instinctively to the growing structure of learning activities and tasks.

- What were the achievements?

The OIKODOMOS platform allowed teachers and students to investigating contemporary housing issues together. This interaction brought about a shared knowledge that was good for all. Its implementation though requires good communication skills from all involved parts. The platform provided an extra motivation for students to perform better.

Angel's contact information:

Angel Martín Cojo, Architect
School of Architecture La Salle
Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona, Spain
amartin@salle.url.edu

Interview with Beril Ozmen Mayer, Faculty of Architecture, Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus

- Could you please introduce yourself?

I am Beril Ozmen Mayer, and I graduated with a M. Arch degree from MSGSU and a PhD at ITU, both in Istanbul. I am currently teaching at the Department of Architecture, and I am Vice Director of the HERA-C (Housing Education Research Advisory Center) at the Faculty of Architecture in EMU (Famagusta, North Cyprus). I teach housing elective and master's theory courses, supervise studios (usually in the third year) and diploma projects, and I conduct research in the field of housing. I have two former scholarships in which I've studied housing issues. The first was in the Oxford Brookes, concerning user satisfaction in relation to my PhD (1989-92), and the latter was as a visiting scholar with an EU scholarship at DIAP in Milan Polytechnic on the redefinition of social housing for future implementation in developing countries. I heard of the OIKODOMOS project in 2008 from Prof. Madrazo in the Doctoral Symposium on Housing organized by our research centre in EMU, and I applied in February 2010 to join as a partner in November 2010 at the last stage. This year I am running a master's course specifically designed for OIKODOMOS activities, and I'm collaborating in the organization of the Istanbul workshop.

- Why and when did you decide to join the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus?

It was very interesting to run a housing-oriented teaching and research-based study with four other schools of architecture; and to share and synchronize work through the web, learning from other professors of architecture from different countries, with their varied experiences. For me, my colleagues and my students, this is a completely new experience due to use of the Virtual Campus and its interfaces. This is also very promising for our housing research centre (HERA-C) in order to integrate our studies with those of other partners. In my personal studio experience, I'm accustomed to searching for alternatives to make myself motivated, as a way to find different studio practices outside my own environment to share with other colleagues and other schools. For instance, in the past I organized a joint studio and mutual visits to other schools (e.g., with METU in Ankara, 2007) and invited other academics to our school to organize a workshop on housing, as I did with MIT in 2009. So, my participation in the OIKODOMOS project has provided such interesting dimension and atmosphere with a collaborative teaching and learning model.

- How many students were involved?

We have a total of 23 students involved in the project over the course of the year. However, there were some pitfalls in the fall term this academic year: when the project began (1 November 2010), the courses had already started, so it was difficult to modify them. Moreover, given that EMU was a new partner in the OIKODOMOS consortium, I had to construct a team in our HERA-Center to participate in the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus with our housing master course "Informal Studies on Housing", in which I had 15 students. Furthermore, six guest members of our research centre provided lectures and four assistants helped on various issues related to OIKODOMOS.

In the second term we were confident that we could work with the methodology and technology provided by our partnership. For the spring term, in the master's course we had eight students, three teachers and two assistants

involved in the process from time to time. I have to say that this project created great excitement in the students of our school, particularly when tasks were published and shared in the Virtual Campus. The Istanbul workshop itself was another important achievement and a great professional experience for all of us.

- How did you practically manage the learning design and teaching?

It was difficult for us to manage the OIKODOMOS learning system and to teach it to the students, because the school environment did not support the use of technology in the class. At the beginning it took us a lot of time. Moreover, it was difficult for me to focus on the project because my own teaching and commission loads in the school were excessive, and OIKODOMOS came onto it as another – and somewhat unfamiliar – responsibility. However, a promise is a promise. Therefore, we've achieved it so far by working harder. Once you have experienced it, things turn out to be more familiar and easier and you become more confident in what you're doing. The collaboration in the OIKODOMOS project became very successful. Whenever we needed help, the lead team has solved the problem immediately.

- What were the results?

As I explained earlier, it was a great effort but also a great source of satisfaction. The results we've obtained are very promising. Many people have gained experience in regard to remote collaboration and blended learning, and they want to continue the OIKODOMOS activities. We've had good exchanges with the partner schools in the Joint Workshop in Istanbul. Particularly, my former institution, the Faculty of Architecture at the Istanbul Technical University, collaborated with us through their Housing Research and Education Center (HREC), which hosted the workshop. Some reflections of this workshop disseminated in the Turkish websites that resulted in applications of associated partners; students request for interviews and request from Continuous Learning Programme for practising architects started by the Union of Architects in Turkey.

- Did you encounter any difficulty? How did you manage it?

Because we joined the project at a later stage, it has taken more effort to understand the terminology and how to use the workspace. Therefore, in the beginning it was necessary to formulate our learning activities and prepare tasks to collaborate. Every time, however, we have learned a new course of action, and each time extra work was involved. I have realized lots of features through the process of learning by doing. We compete with the time needed to catch up on the work. We have changed part of our schedule to fit the requirements for the sake of the project. For students, who were not familiar with sharing their work in the Virtual Campus, felt shy and intimidated about uploading their work to the website, especially in the first trials, because they felt foreign and not secure in the OIKODOMOS network. Afterwards, they felt more accustomed to the work style and communicated with other schools. Ultimately, we have achieved the ability to work with the requirements of a brand-new world.

- What were the achievements?

We have studies in which we were given the task of investigating the theoretical framework of the chosen theme, "proximity", through the learning activities. For our students, this was a powerful academic exchange. They studied very hard to produce valuable documentation from the local sites; and they shared the work performed in their tasks with the students and teachers of partner schools. Amazingly, all the students sweated together with their working group, which was mixed from other schools' students in a foreign site in the workshop; they have received critiques from the teachers that they know from the Virtual Campus and the new ones they've just met there. In the end, students have created a good work altogether. Moreover, our master students produced term papers on the concept of proximity in relation to the chosen specific residential sites in Lefkosa. It was a great challenge, and I believe the

taste of success has been encouraging for their master studies. Finally, the project has given us a different point of view from which to work and study within a general frame of planning, collaboration, co-working, co-teaching, etc.

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Interview with Kris Scheerlinck, Sint Lucas Architecture School, Brussels/Ghent, Belgium; School of Architecture La Salle, Barcelona, Spain

- Could you please introduce yourself?

I'm Kris Scheerlinck, studio instructor at the W&K Sint Lucas Architecture School in Brussels and Ghent and at the URL LaSalle Architecture School in Barcelona. I have been involved in the OIKODOMOS project for the past three years.

In Ghent and Brussels I run different architecture and urban design studios within the International Master's Programme the school organizes: my studio counts approximately 40 to 60 international students per semester. In Barcelona I coordinate the urban design studios as part of the Architecture Programme, in which I also run a one-year studio. The total number of local students in the course I coordinate there is 130, while my urban design studio, as part of this same setup, numbers about 20 students each year.

- Why and when did you decide to join the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus?

At the end of each semester, when I make the planning of the studios I'm involved in, I start thinking about the way to integrate the OIKODOMOS learning platform into the "local" activities. The contents and calendar need to be coordinated in advance to guarantee successful implementation of the model. First, a common topic needs to be decided as part of courses on housing studies in architecture and urban design. Sometimes I make a proposal in which a central theme is to be developed, such as the concept of proximity, whereas in other cases I agree on a proposal made by one of my OIKODOMOS partners, to be worked around in the studios or seminars. It's important to decide on a specific (not too general or abstract) topic, a *file rouge*, to make the learning activities in which we participate more efficient and coherent.

Each year I have high expectations for this project. I strongly believe that the students and teachers benefit from the exchange and communication tools the project provides, as it can produce a different kind of knowledge that is more critical, being detached from possible academic prejudices and open to new academic perspectives.

- How many students were involved?

In the past semester, in which we agreed on the creation of a workspace and related learning activities based on the topic of "proximity", 44 international students from 12 different nationalities were involved. The students were enrolled in the first-year master's programme organized by the Sint Lucas Architecture School in Brussels. Part of the students followed the Erasmus Programme, while others signed up for the full international degree at our school.

- How did you manage the learning design and teaching?

The project always starts by informing other partners of the “local agenda” at the university. In doing so, each teacher involved has an idea of possible common strategies and contents for the upcoming course. Then, someone makes a proposal to the other partners, which is discussed for eventual agreement. From that moment, each teacher develops his or her own “local” calendar and contents: site, theme, program, dates of introductions, visits, input sessions, midterm or final reviews, workshops, etc. After communicating this more ”final” setup, a common strategy is decided, which will be the learning activities and which tasks (some of them common ones for all partners, some of them stay local) will be linked to the studios at which moment. Once this is decided and the studio begins, all students are informed about the contents and calendar. It is important to share all this information in order for the students to be able to position themselves while insisting on the coherence of the different learning activities with the studio.

It is important to have a certain routine to integrate the OIKODOMOS activities within the studio. We start every session (which lasts one entire day) with an online session in the morning of what has been done recently, of what needs to be done. Also, the physical setup of the classroom is important, as the individual or group work areas need to be complementary to the presence of the main screen, where the workspace is always visible and operative.

Repeated “technical” advice is necessary in order to help other teachers and students work with the virtual platform and solve possible problems. A clear, systematic way of communicating and explaining the tasks is important. Once I had used a kind of template to describe and announce the task. Each time I would send a general email to each student separately, with a link to the workspaces, where they could find additional information. The following studio session, this task was explained and discussed if necessary.

- What were the results?

The results depend on the engagement of teachers and students. Generally, but particularly in the last semester, the results were outstanding during the studio and in the Joint Workshop organized as part of the learning activities. The students reacted very positively to the outcomes and experience.

- Did you encounter any difficulty? How did you manage it?

The most difficult part of this project is the simultaneous (shared) planning and implementation of the learning activities. It’s better to plan everything in advance, and regular, constant attention is required in order to guarantee success. The equal, responsible engagement of all partners is difficult to achieve but very important to work in an efficient way. It’s important to decide on a certain “protocol” to plan, manage and evaluate the projects. All of it requires constant effort.

The most recent experience showed a lack of attention towards the evaluation of the knowledge produced. Calendar modifications and communication problems between the partners did not allow sufficient time for coherent evaluation and feedback to the students or teachers. So, from now on this should be integrated into the working scenario and protocol from the first day.

- What were the achievements?

Generally, the OIKODOMOS platform was productive in two ways. First, it allowed the profound study of a subject on an international level with an abundance of references and examples. Secondly, it can be used as an “excuse” to

motivate the students and encourage their involvement; to continually confront them with renewed academic challenges.

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CH02 /// Recommendations for Future Learning Activities

Following the experience gained during the design and application of the learning activities in past editions of the Virtual Campus, the teachers who participated in them have put together some reflections. Here is a list of their recommendations that future participants might find useful:

- define the learning activities in the broadest possible way, to allow students and teachers to interpret as much as possible the proposed sites and topics;

- define the tasks in the narrowest possible way to avoid too general and random discussions and to allow to focus on the proposed sites and topics; this way it works as an incentive to get everyone more involved;

- motivate the students and inform them well about how to use the tools and what the platform is all about; repeat information sessions throughout the year to maintain the same motivation;

- start coordinating with other partners from the very beginning, since post follow-up is counterproductive;

- predict what the overlapping of contents and process could be, and try to anticipate it while making your local calendar;

- increase the level of communication on a local level, as well as with all partners involved, as regularly talking with and writing to each other speeds up the process;

- make students and teachers aware that OIKODOMOS Workspaces and Case Repository are mostly learning platforms rather than file-sharing systems;

- teach students how to criticize the work of their peers in the digital learning environments, avoiding “I like it” comments or “you should look at this and this”;

- teach students how to communicate their ideas effectively in the learning environment, in graphic and written form. Most students are not aware that the learning platform is a communication medium;

- develop and implement the appropriate means of communication (Google docs, Skype meetings, forms and templates, timetables) that guarantee an effective communication among teachers during the whole process of the learning activities: from learning design to implementation and evaluation;

- make teachers aware that learning outcomes in competencies are an integral part of learning design. The list of competencies, and the evaluation criteria, should be established at the same time when learning activities are created;

- participants in the network of learning activities, as teachers and students, should be able to visualize the map of interrelationships at each stage of the learning process. Having this map in mind is necessary as a means to collaborate in the design and execution of activities.

CH03 /// Comments by Students

The students, during and after the workshops, were asked to fill out a questionnaire, and the following are some representative comments taken from those questionnaires:

What was your most important or interesting learning?

"People in different countries, when they design something, follow different methods. That was a very interesting experience for me. I've learned about different methods of presenting and designing".

"Working with people that come from other countries, so that I could listen to the opinions of people from different cultures, backgrounds and architecture approaches".

"There were different perspectives of students and teachers on housing and the concept of proximity. By communicating to all of them, I have learned about different approaches and ways of explaining them".

What did you like, what was done well?

"I learn new things not just in architecture, but by meeting other people".

"Interaction between students and teachers".

"Bringing online educational programme and then giving the possibility to the students to physically meet and create something altogether on a theme, with a common effort".

Section 04

Joining the Virtual Campus: Supporting Materials

This section provides the reader with practical information on how to join the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus and use its learning resources, including a list of concepts that can be used as possible themes of study for development with other partners.

IV

CH01 /// Getting Started

If you are thinking of joining the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus, the following information can be useful:

1. WITH WHOM TO COLLABORATE

- in your own course: you can use, for example, the OIKODOMOS Case Repository to document and analyze representative housing projects with the students of your course only;
- with other colleagues at your institution: you can use the OIKODOMOS Workspaces or the Case Repository to design learning processes involving different courses, e.g.: a theoretical seminar with a design studio;
- with colleagues from other institutions: you can organize a structure of learning activities and tasks around a common theme of study.

2. HOW DO I START A NEW LEARNING DESIGN PROCESS?

To begin a learning design process, alone or in collaboration with other partners or institutions:

- Write to support@oikodomos.org. We will send you an agreement you will have to sign in order to have access to the OIKODOMOS platform. The agreement is free of charge and states that the OIKODOMOS learning resources can only be used for educational purposes.

3. HOW ONE CAN JOIN AN ONGOING LEARNING PROCESS

To join ongoing learning processes:

- Check the home page of OIKODOMOS Workspaces and OIKODOMOS Case Repository for ongoing Workspaces;
- Write an e-mail to support@oikodomos.org specifying the activities you would like to join. You will get an answer to get in touch with the Workspace coordinator.

CH02 /// OIKOpedia: Housing concepts

If you are searching for a theme of study to develop with other partners, OIKOpedia can be a useful resource.

OIKOpedia is a knowledge base containing the topics studied in the OIKODOMOS Virtual Campus in the field of housing studies, and is compiled as a vocabulary (Figure 30). It is structured into concepts that are described in a concise manner, featuring case studies associated with the concepts and references. This collection of concepts provides a valuable learning resource to assist teachers in the design of the learning activities and students in their learning process. As in the Wikipedia, OIKOpedia enables registered teachers to continuously enhance the contents and add new concepts. Content is provided in English as well as in other languages.

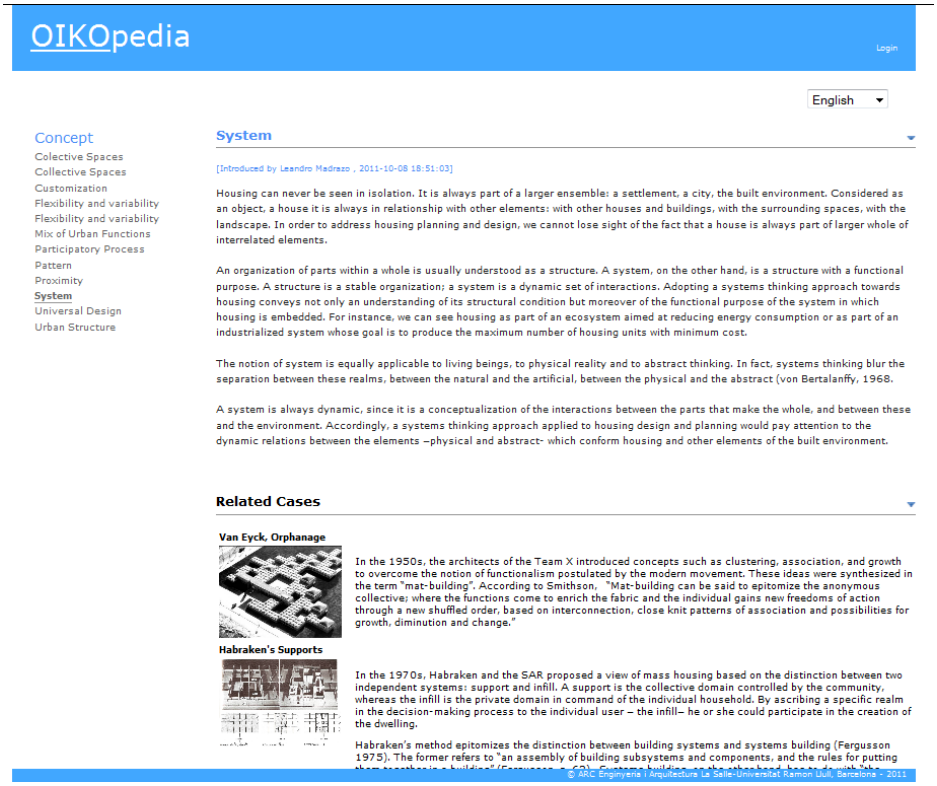

Figure 30: OIKOpedia: home page

The following is a summary of the concepts currently available in OIKOpedia (the full description can be found at www.oikodomos.org/oikopedia

Customisation

Customisation derives from “to customize” or "to build, fit, or alter according to individual specifications". It could also have the meaning "to personalize" or "to make personal or individual" and "individualize" or "to adapt to the needs or special circumstances of an individual". Therefore, to customize a house means to design and build a place to live according to the specific needs or demands of those who will occupy it, or to alter an existing place to meet such needs or demands.

Flexibility and variability

Housing flexibility and housing variability can be defined as the design of dwelling structures with an understanding of the prospective development of the site as well as life and social scenarios, and with the possibility of making appropriate changes in the living environment. Flexibility and variability enable one to change the living environment according to the new requirements in the course of their existence. It can be applied to urban and architectural

design related to the actual and future needs of the people living there. In the urban context it applies mainly to the structure of amenities of a city and community in order to design specific areas for shops, services, offices, leisure and culture.

Gated Communities

Gated communities comprise physical areas that are fenced or walled off from their surroundings. The entrances to these areas are usually prohibited or controlled by means of gates or similar physical obstacles.
Gated communities are by nature separate and enclosed areas, being isolated from the broader urban environment and enclosed through physical barriers. Besides the main purpose, which enables a specific lifestyle of a group within the enclosed area or to protect the residents from possible intruders, gated communities reflect an urban entity that is physically -often socially and economically - differentiated from the surrounding urban environment.

Housing amenities and utilities

The level of the housing quality stems from the fulfilment of the basic and superior living standards within the dwelling unit, as well as the amount of complementary services, housing utilities and amenities, including health, education, shopping, working, recreation, etc. The satisfaction of all human needs and desires represents a very wide range of factors, which must be taken into account and consequently incorporated in any design of a living environment. The creation of mixed areas with the optimal proportion of residential units, amenities, working and public spaces facilitates the design of convenient, pleasant spaces for the largest possible spectrum of users and dwellers. Design of the residential areas must be considered as a multifunctional unit consisting of mutually interconnected architectural elements that constitute the cultural and social milieu. They must cover all standard needs of the individual and community expressive of its way of life. Hence the terms “housing amenities” and “utilities” represent a very important part of architectural and urban planning design.

Mix of urban functions as factor of proximity

Urban functional diversity is generally regarded as a condition for the reduction of social distance by reducing spatial distance. The mix of functions is thus seen as a tool for managing flows and relationships between spaces. The connection to urban planning and housing diversity is obvious. Everyone recognises the problems caused by mono-functional spaces, which are land-locked and poorly accessible, resulting from "zoning" areas for housing, industry or commercial use. The spatial dimension of urban development is the right scale where we can adequately address and manage these flows and connections between places. Reflection on the urban mix is a very topical issue. Urban mono-functionality consumes more space in urban development; it poses new constraints through economic, financial, regulatory and environmental (land) pressures, thus motivating the production of smaller, more diverse housing units. The small residential "neighbourhood" with 10 to 15 flats replaces the minimalist linear structures and towers of the large social housing districts from the 1970s.
Interfaces, such as public spaces, being combinations of places with additional complementary functions, are important in a sustainable vision of dynamic urban life.

Mixed-use housing

Mixed-Use Housing Development, also been known as “Compact Development”, is not just a design/planning pattern that involves a multi-storey building whose ground floor is made up of commercial units and other floors having residential facilities; instead, it is a development that encompasses three or more significant revenue-producing and related land uses whose closeness of proximity shortens trips, lessens dependence on automobiles and encourages alternative modes of transportation such as walking, cycling and public transportation.

Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood has continued to be a subject of research. The first observations and analyses were realised by The School of Chicago in the years 1920 to 1930. Subsequently, from the 1950s through 1970s, they were pursued

by the various approaches of urban sociology in developed countries such as the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany. Today these research results remain controversial because the question of the existence of neighbourhoods needs to be reconsidered. The concept of neighbourhood has several definitions that spark debates between researchers. In a first sense, the term “neighbourhood” – herein being an area or district – designates a part of the city that can be defined by its physical geography, history, housing and architectural aspect or by its residential, industrial, commercial and administrative functions. In the latter sense, the notion of neighbourhood means the place where people live. The neighbourhood represents then an intermediate space between the housing and the city, a practical device that allows the link between what is the most intimate (the private space of the housing) and what is the most unknown (the whole city).

Participatory Process

Participatory processes are spaces for reflection where architects and inhabitants try to reach a consensus. The architects contribute their knowledge about the built environment, and the inhabitants contribute their personal experiences from living in different places. A participatory process is therefore an educational process, not only in terms of giving and receiving but also of sharing knowledge.

Pattern

Housing conveys repetition and variation over time, at different scales (town, building and house) and periods (a lifetime, a generation, etc.). A housing type, repeated throughout different generations, gives rise to a town structure. The repetition is not just duplication, because it also conveys an adaptation to changing needs. Over the centuries, vernacular housing has proceeded in this way: maintaining a particular way of building throughout time, “a timeless way of building”, using the expression of Christopher Alexander.

Proximity

Proximity is clearly about distance, but we should not simply define a distance as the length between two points. Its meaning should widen and define proximity as a mix of social, territorial, symbolic and physical aspects. For example, one can utilize the physical proximity while experiencing a set of important social boundaries. This is exemplified in a housing block where one lives close to neighbours but have no real social relationship. The opposite situation can occur as well: living in a house with a surrounding garden and having a real intense relationship with one’s neighbours. Likewise, we can notice the difference between rural or more urbanised areas that affect the model of proximity: density, functional mix, accessibility and the way of defining limits affects the reading of relative distances.

Reconversion/Regeneration

The concepts of reconversion and regeneration designate a state of transition for spaces that have been abandoned or have undergone economic decline, such as religious, military, railroad, harbour or industrial wastelands. These abandoned or economically depressed spaces are the object of transformation today. Some become mono-functional spaces as residential spaces and/or cultural spaces, whereas others become multifunctional as residential, cultural and economic spaces, etc.

Social Mix

The social mix becomes a main theme in the new tastes for city and neighbourhoods. Planners have for many years endeavoured to encourage neighbourhoods, specifically those in Western Europe and North America containing the appropriate social mix of residents along with a variety of public policies, to achieve diversity among their residents. The image of the "liveable city” has thus become a key factor. The post-industrial cities have a growing interest in marketing themselves as being built on a foundation of neighbourhoods and therefore being capable of harmoniously supporting a blend of incomes, cultures and lifestyles.

Social Diversity and availability

Architecture and urban planning are part of the physical manifestations of a society, being expressive of its values and resources. A city, as a complex system comprising a multitude of elements, is thus generated in the course of a city development. The phenomenon of architecture and urban planning should reflect social diversity in providing living environment forms that are socially generated. Social housing diversity and housing availability are significant factors in the phenomenon of city formation; they introduce a very wide scope of problems connected with the social and economic aspects of life. The understanding and implementation of social differences in the planning of living environments helps to fulfil the various desires of humankind in the process of constructing dwelling forms, thereby contributing to the examination of these forms for various social groups.

System

Housing can never be seen in isolation. It is always part of a larger ensemble: a settlement, a city and the built environment. Considered as an object, a house is always in relationship with other elements: houses and buildings, the surrounding spaces and the landscape. In order to address housing planning and design, we cannot lose sight of the fact that a house is always part of a greater assemblage of interrelated elements.

Universal Design

The term “universal design” was coined by the late Ronald L. Mace, from the College of Design, North Carolina State University, USA. In 1988 he defined the term in the following way: “Universal design is an approach to design that incorporates products as well as building features that, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by everyone. Universal design is a simple concept, but one that requires a fundamental shift in thinking. Traditionally, design has catered to averages, creating a world in which few people can actually thrive. Universal design strives to encompass the widest possible ranges of size, strength and capability, doing so without the need for adaptation or specialised design. The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications and the built environment usable by as many people as possible”.

To learn more:

OIKOpedia can be accessed at **www.oikodomos.org/oikopedia.** If you would like to be a contributor of OIKOpedia please write to **support@oikodomos.org**