

Competencies' benefit for graduate architects

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ABSTRACT: Co-operation between the University, local government and business enabled the Faculty of Architecture at Cracow University of Technology, Kraków, Poland, to obtain European funds to implement a project entitled *Designed for professional success - competencies commissioned for architects*. This grant was the only one of its kind at Cracow University of Technology. The grant commenced in April 2016 and ended on 31 March 2018, and its value amounted to PLN893,485. About 400 students benefited from it. The project aimed to increase the competence of graduates of second-degree full-time studies in the Faculty, from 2015/16 to 2017/18 by increasing their employment opportunities in the domestic and foreign labour markets, in creative industries and new technologies. The tasks implemented as part of the grant were: 1) certified training; 2) field workshops; 3) study visits; and 4) modular laboratory programme. Presented in this article are the tasks related to field workshops, the aim of which was to deepen co-operation of the Faculty with local government and business. The field workshops were organised in Nowy Sącz (Poland) and led by the author.

INTRODUCTION

Through the Faculty of Architecture at Cracow University of Technology, Kraków, Poland, in 2015/16 to 2017/18, a project was implemented under the European Union grant, *Designed for professional success - competencies commissioned for architects*. The grant was the only one of its kind at Cracow University of Technology during this period of time. The project commenced in April 2016 and ended on 31 March 2018. The amount of the grant was PLN893,485. About 400 students benefited from it. The project was co-financed from the European Social Fund by contract number UDA-POWR.03.01.00-00-K258/15 (Figure 1).



Figure 1: EU grant to the Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology, as part of co-financing from the European Fund.

Contributors to the project were as follows. Leader: Krystyna Paprzyca, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.; Assistant Leader: Elżbieta Ostachowicz, MSc; Manager of the ModularLab Programme: Ewelina Woźniak-Szpakiewicz, PhD Arch.; Assistant Manager of the ModularLab Programme: Małgorzata Rekuć MSc; Image specialist: Tomasz Ostachowicz, MSc.

The main goal of the project was to raise the competence of students of graduate studies at the Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology in 2015/16 through to 2017/18. The aim of the programme was to increase the success of graduates on the domestic and foreign labour market in creative industries and new technologies. The more specific project goals were to:

- increase the students' participation in socio-economic co-operative projects;
- contact future employers and promote students' potential;
- formalise competencies by issuing certificates or by participation in competitions/exhibitions;
- access to outstanding specialists and the latest technological developments;
- practical work experience in international creative industries [1].

The following tasks were implemented as a part of the grant:

- certified training;
- field workshops;
- study visits;
- modular laboratory programme.

Presented in this article are the tasks related to field workshops, the aim of which was to deepen co-operation between the Faculty of Architecture (FA), local government and business. They were organised in Nowy Sącz and conducted by the author.

FIELD WORKSHOPS IN NOWY SĄCZ

Field workshops with representatives of local government and business were organised in the following cities: Oświęcim, Nowy Sącz, Tarnów, Andrychów, Bochnia and Zakopane. The workshops included field work, participation in social consultations, discussions with the representatives of local government and local designers, presentation of project studies, discussions and exhibitions. The workshops provided students' concepts for the development of individual city areas or specific locations and facilities. The workshops were conducted by practitioners - representatives of local government and business - as well as the staff of the Faculty of Architecture at Cracow University of Technology. Field workshops were held in Nowy Sącz, between 7 and 12 June 2016, with the author as leader. The topics of the workshops included: Winna Góra – a lookout tower, landscaping of the Kamienica river and Nowosądeckie's Rocks (see Figures 2, 3 and 4).



Figure 2: Areas along the Kamienica River, Nowy Sącz (Photograph by the author).



Figure 3: Nowosądeckie's rocks (Photograph by the author).



Figure 4: Winna Góra - lookout tower (Photograph by the author).

Twelve students participated in the workshop programme. The aim of the project task was to *create a place* and propose more interesting solutions intended at reviving forgotten places. Students were to focus on the following goals:

- analysis of the archival design and photographic materials, carrying out site inspections and interviews with the residents;
- functional and spatial architectural creation;
- compositional architectural creation;
- aesthetic architectural creation;
- to get acquainted with the latest products of the company, Norlys Sp. o.o., in Nowy Sącz;
- to gain solid knowledge of the theory and practice design by attending meetings with representatives of the local government of the city of Nowy Sącz, representatives of local design offices and a representative of the Sądecka Chamber of Commerce.

The design studies completed during the workshops in Nowy Sącz were to take into account:

- Location, analysis of the context of the place.
- Optimal connections with the natural and cultural landscape.
- Determining the assets and properties of the place.
- *Studies - the creation of space* - a variety of creations, ideas related to a given place.

The research method adopted for the workshops included literature and field studies, analysis of archival design and photographic materials, as well as site inspections and interviews with the residents.

Workshop topic: *Forgotten Places - Programme Assumptions*

Contemporary times are characterised by the progressive disappearance of ties between people and places. Spiritual relations that connect people with places that once were a part of life are gradually broken. People are being uprooted slowly, making them more isolated [2]. Living in a given place creates a relationship between a person and the surroundings. The bond that comes as a result of this relationship is often spiritual and very important in our lives. The essence of the place is its unique content and the features associated with it: spirituality and its individuality. Places shape human sensitivity and require understanding. Everyone should develop a sensitivity that allows them to learn to *understand* and not just receive pleasure. The place in which a person lives influences who they become and who they are. People live in homes, in well-known and familiar areas; they may travel and become captivated by foreign lands where they may look for a new home, even if less perfect. It can be said that our life is filled with various places and various contents connected with them [3][4].

In the urban spaces of small towns, there are places that have been completely forgotten by the people, despite being accessible, close to the city centre. There are houses deprived of the inhabitants, empty, damaged and changed by time. Although declining, they reflect the character of their owner, while imagination allows the recreation of someone's life [4]. Since this is a time of change, when people frequently move from place to place, traditional urban spaces cease to function as a place with specific values that have a significant impact on the shaping of human beings. Sentiments, emotions and other people cease to provide a connection with the given place. New sensations, experiences, choices, a changeable lifestyle and concentration on material goods prevail [5]. The living space has become dominated by the mad pace of life, gradually transforming it into an *uprooted* and *alienated* space. This creates spaces referred to by Auge as non-places [6] *...all those spaces that are the antithesis of the house, a tame space, oriented, almost like a temple, personalised, having its history and accumulated memory. In the home space, people had names and surnames; they had well-defined identities* [6].

The lack of connection with a place has resulted in the formation of *places without a soul*. An example of this process is the recently observed phenomenon of emptying places with historical and cultural values that are located in city centres and small towns. They have been replaced with *non-places* located in shopping malls, hypermarkets, whose aim is to *lure* as many buyers as possible, creating a *magical, artificially shaped world*.

Gradually, people become connected to these *non-places*, anonymous spaces, without values, without identity. They are filled by a lonely crowd susceptible to slogans, deprived of choice, succumbing to temptation, becoming *poorer* and *poorer*. Every person *moves* from place to place with the *baggage of experience* acquired from *places*. The man *rooted out of place* is not connected to them by any sentiments, emotions, ties or people. It becomes difficult to identify with other people; there is an aversion to any contact with strangers, the fear of the unknown. Silence has become the only way of living in urban spaces [7].

However, it is not that places have been entirely forgotten. Although the more frequent temporal changes related to places are forming spaces for our existential loneliness, the real places have not yet disappeared. The anthropology of the place recognises that having *roots* creates people *...Attention is focused on people (natives) who were born in a given place. A researcher wants to show their authenticity. This means that the natives are not only the people who come from certain places and belong to them but also those that are somehow trapped or locked up within* [8].

The aim of the students' project during the design workshop in Nowy Sącz was to make the forgotten places more attractive. Although they are useless, poor, strange, they are also unique, having a bizarre power, which sometimes cannot be resisted. Degraded, devastated and forgotten, they are nobody's places. The aim is to reclaim the values and properties of these places through skilfully incorporated architecture, to discover their potential.

Meetings with Representatives of Self-government and the Business Environment

The project workshops also included joint meetings between local government, representatives of design offices, business and students. These consultations enabled a discussion about problems related to the creation of places, and to local plans, providing a vision of the city and its residents. Such joint meetings open students to gaining knowledge, tasks and information. They teach and show the practical side of the profession, mobilising students to learn and to present already possessed skills. They also stimulate creativity and imagination.

The public presentation of a project in front of representatives of local government, and the Norlys Sp. o. o. company, teaches responsibility, as well as presentation skills necessary in the work of an architect (see Figures 5, 6 and 10).



Figure 5: Meeting with local government representatives: Mr Wojciech Piech, Deputy Mayor of the City of Nowy Sącz; Mr Mirosław Trzupek, Director of the Architecture Department of the City Hall of Nowy Sącz; and Mr Grzegorz Dobosz, Plenipotentiary of the President of the Investment Committee (Photograph by the author).



Figure 6: Workshops - meeting with representatives of the Office of Mr Mirosław Trzupek, Director of the Architecture Department of the Municipal Office of Nowy Sącz (Photographs by the author).

Students participating in the workshops had the opportunity to become acquainted with the city and its surroundings, socio-economic and spatial problems, as well as the city's character and identities. They visited the Galician Town, Brenville - Multimedia Town, Museum of Modern Art. They took part in the everyday life of the city (Figures 7 and 8).



Figure 7: Galician Town of Nowy Sącz (Photograph by the author).

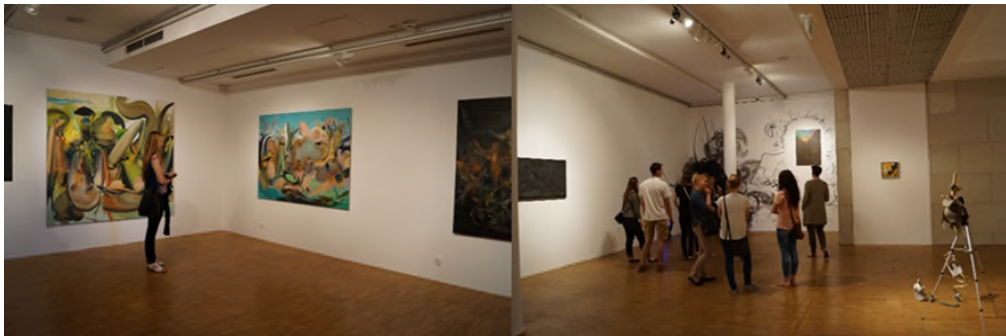


Figure 8: Modern Museum in Nowy Sacz.

Students also had the opportunity to learn about Norlys products, production technology and to take a basic lighting course at the company's headquarters. After training, a certificate was given to each student (Figure 9) [9].

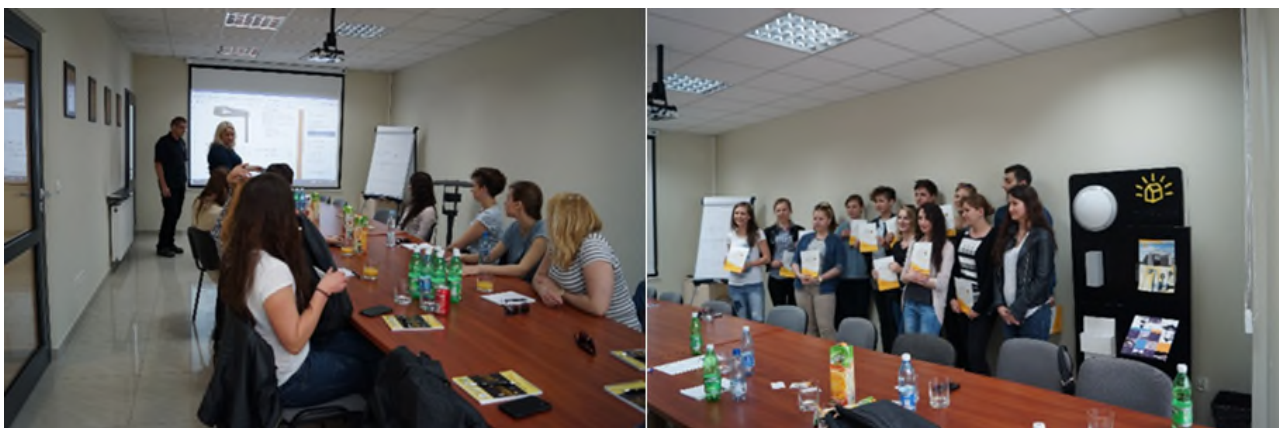


Figure 9: Training related to lighting. Norlys representatives: Ms Adrianna Książek-Gregorczyk, Head of Marketing and Sales; Ms Joanna Sarata, President's Assistant; and Mr Bogusław Królak, lighting technician (Photographs by the author).



Figure 10: Meetings with representatives of the economic environment: Mr Paweł Kukla, President of the Sądecka Chamber of Commerce; and Mr Kuba Potoczek, owner of the *Autorskie Studio Architektury* (Photographs by the author).

FINAL EFFECTS OF THE WORKSHOP

The teaching method adopted by the leader of the workshops provided the students with the freedom to choose their creative direction. They became aware of this and were responsible for their decisions. The priority was always to treat urban planning and architecture inseparably. Hence, all student studies were preceded by in-depth analyses of a place and its neighbourhood, its weak and strong sides. The aim was to extract the value of the place. This part was presented in the context of the place and its features.

Student ideas and creations were presented at various scales and aspects, and also in relation to the context and spirit of the place. The creations were presented in the form of the visualisation of a specific area. An important task posed to students was to create new forms, to awaken their imagination and creativity. Creating proper compositional and aesthetic solutions was an important element of the design exercise.

The third board was a summary of the activities related to lighting. Students used the Norlys lamps on the forms they created (Figures 11, 12 and 13).

The aim of the design activities related to the design process created during the workshops was to:

- master the skills of urban composition, forming clear spatial solutions;
- acquire technical, technological and economic knowledge based on existing and new cultural values;
- *activate* urban areas through functional amenities;
- master the skills of presenting work: defence, discussion and presentation workshop;
- master basic skills related to lighting.

Each of the participants received the following certificates:

- Participation in the programme: *Designed for professional success - competencies commissioned for architects* Project no. POWR.03.01.00-00-K258/15;
- Norlys company certificate.

CONCLUSIONS

The task of higher education is to prepare young people for work. The teaching should also stimulate imagination and creativity. To achieve this goal, and related to the Grant titled: *Designed for professional success - competencies commissioned for architects*, it is necessary to combine theory with the practical side of the profession. This goal can be achieved by developing skills, integrating knowledge and practical experience, but also by allowing students to freely explore loose, quickly shaped creations. During the education process, students are provided with theoretical knowledge. Supporting it with the skills and practical experience of local government and the business sector in an added value for students.



Figure 11 (left), Figure 12 (right): Riverside lands. Workshops in Nowy Sącz (Photographs by Magdalena Raab).



Figure 13: Riverside lands. Workshops Nowy Sącz (Photograph by Justyna Zadora).

Students appreciated the value of the workshop activities related to the locations indicated by the cities, as well as contacts with representatives of design offices, and the Norlys lighting company. The conceptions created by students

during the workshops were presented at exhibitions in the Faculty of Architecture at Cracow University of Technology *Galeria Gil* and *Galeria Kotłownia*, as well as at exhibitions organised in partner cities, for example in Nowy Sącz. Innovative creations of young people are of interest to the cities.

Students' studies are excellent material for discussion related to future activities within the city. They can focus on the best solutions regarding function, form and creation related to a given place [10].

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