Expanding the Scope of Architectural Education: Creating a culture of global citizenship for students

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an alternative model of community-engaged architecture teaching, bridging professional practice activities and speculative studio-based reflections by enabling experimentation within the context of the needs of communities. Our unique teaching framework uses a project entitled Crossing Cultures as its vehicle of investigation to experiment with forms of integration of asylum seekers and refugees into depopulated Italian villages, whilst offering students to positively impact and become an integral part of this new community, thereby, ensuring its continuity long-term. Such pedagogical experiments provide an education beyond architecture, and shape society by teaching citizenship to students.

Introduction

As increasing numbers of young people are given access to universities, Higher Education is provided with the unique opportunity to shape their formative experience. This paper argues that universities can play a key role in the development of active citizenship amongst students, in line with the Charter for Active Citizenship,[1] developed in the UK by GuildHE and the National Union of Students in 2016. Along these lines, it explores if this can be done by actively initiating community projects, which engage students during and beyond their studies in social activities, developing a greater appreciation of their role as global citizens.

The paper presents a case study of practice-lead teaching within the field of architecture to explore, reflect upon and understand the real-life setting for innovation in this sector. It provides an opportunity to evaluate if our ambitions have been met and what was achieved to date, after four years of building a community in one location. The paper will explain in more detail how this project adds ingenuity to the educational context of architecture through a carefully designed framework which secures three annual engagement points within the academic curriculum and, thus, can grow the body of work and the community. Further, it will discuss the advantages to students, communities and society of undertaking such projects within the university framework, and how students experiencing such learning environments during their studies might contribute to setting up similar projects in the future, growing and spreading this knowledge.

The design project Crossing Cultures, which is discussed here, came into being after a student-led summer workshop in 2016 initiated by a group of students who later formed the non-profit organisation La Rivoluzione delle Seppie (Le Seppie)[2] – an active ensemble interested in exploring the boundaries of practice and education. The project aims to equip students with the diverse skills needed for their future profession and learn how to both design with 'accuracy and specificity, straight lines and window schedules'[3] and, as Jeremy Till proposes, to negotiate with 'people, time, politics, ethics, mess: the real world (…) beyond the direct control of the architect'.[4] This is important as it addresses the juxtaposition within the architect's job, where the negotiation within complex social relations might matter more than the mastering of systematic tasks. Much of the referencing of this paper relates to the teaching practice in the UK where students are taught. However, the project is sited in southern Italy, where the students spend scheduled time during their studies. During these visits, learning and innovation is nurtured through time-based interventions, such as small constructions, events, community dinners, as well as architectural designs and urban strategies. Reaching out of the London-based studio has also created a platform for different disciplines to collaborate with each other and a growing number of stakeholders, adding to the architectural students' ability to address design problems through engaging with a diverse community of people and professions, with whom 'they would not normally work with'.[5]

Architecture of Multiple Authorship: Developing citizenship

Architecture of Multiple Authorship, a university practice established in 2000, has provided students with opportunities to work on live projects to learn citizenship and global competences during their studies. Education and students are in this context taken out of their proverbial 'ivory tower' to share the privilege of knowledge with community members outside of the university. Enriching the 'signature pedagogy' of the architecture studio as the dominant learning environment in architectural education, through which students acquire knowledge,[6] this practice creates real situations, *live projects*, for our students to engage with.

For two decades, this work-based learning practice has offered an alternative model to conventional education practices by bridging professional practice activities with speculative studio-based reflections. This not only enables experimentation within the context of the needs of communities and informs new approaches to architecture, but also enables students the experience of making a difference in the world. It is crucial to understand the fundamental difference of this practice compared to other examples of practice-led teaching in architectural education. Learning environments such as the ones discussed here expand the scope of teaching towards an understanding of architecture that, as Gordon Murray writes, 'is no longer simply about designing buildings, places and spaces'.[7] Crossing Cultures demonstrates the impact that architectural education can have in supporting long-term and open-ended participatory processes, in order to develop a common ground amongst different groups and, in doing so, build new kinds of communities between the educational and the everyday context, consisting of locals, refugees and students, and bringing together their diverse backgrounds. It is located in a wider educational framework for architecture that, as Jane Anderson describes, 'find(s) ways and reasons to go outside' and return knowledge into a real world context by establishing new connections.[8] The process and creation of a situated learning environment are fundamental to this process and based on the belief that 'knowledge needs to be presented in authentic contexts – settings and situations that would normally involve that knowledge'.[9]

It is possible to draw a comparison of Crossing Cultures to Leeds Beckett University's work on the New Wortley Community Centre. This was developed through a co-design process between students and tutors with community members, and equally validated through situated learning.[10] However, the outputs of the two projects are very different: New Wortley Community Centre is an example where the situated learning of students working with a specific community has led to the successful construction of a building, whereas the situated learning environment of Crossing Cultures essentially concerns the growing of the community itself, wherein students can develop a clear understanding of citizenship by experiencing the impact they have on communities without budgetary or time pressures. In this context,

whereby students learn and develop knowledge through addressing real-life community issues, yet, they do not have to deliver a traditional client/architect service; experimentation and individual self-fulfilment seem more achievable. Alongside the learning process, the local community benefits from the interest of the international students and tutors from London, bringing a new perspective to the area and enabling the locals to re-evaluate their towns and traditions. As such, the project sets out aspirations of redefining what the role of the architect could also be.

There is also perhaps a parallel to 'service-learning', an educational approach developed in the USA at the turn of the twentieth century founded on John Dewey's idea of 'democracy as a way of life, where everybody has to participate in bringing democratic values to life'. According to Titus Pacho, Dewey defined 'the fundamental purpose of education… (as) to prepare students to function productively as adults in a democratic society, (…) regardless of social class, race or gender'.[11] If effective learning consists not only of the architecture course curriculum, but benefits of active engagement with potential clients, then working with communities as part of students' studies can serve both, the process of learning and the outcome for communities, including students. Similarly, Laura Martínez de Guereñu and José Vela Castillo at the IE School of Architecture and Design in Spain believe that this is achieved through the educational framework at their school. Comparable to our ambitions, the learning settings they have created provide a 'multi-national and multi-cultural forum' and require students to 'find a common ground', hoping to educate students as 'engaged global citizens' who can be successful professionals in a culturally diverse, fast changing and uncertain world.[12] A notable example where John Dewey's educational ideas have been translated into practice today is the Centre for Community Engagement in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati, founded by Thomas Dutton. This collaboration between the College of Creative Arts at Miami University and local community groups offers courses designed to develop citizenship and confidence by using skills, knowledge and work with low income housing development organisations on design/build projects in the local area.[13]

Lastly, a parallel can be drawn to the Grangetown project carried out by Cardiff University. Crossing Cultures puts emphasis on the development of long-term partnerships between architectural students and locals as a base for active engagement, while the Grangetown project has 'co-produced an annual cycle of public celebrations and collaborative research' through long-term community engagement.[14] The argument of placing such projects in the university education setting is significant for us, echoing Mhairi McVicar and Neil Turnbull's proposition that the university and students are in a unique position 'to dedicate substantial time and resources' into such projects, while researching, experimenting and learning in ways and contexts that a commercial practice might not be able to financially sustain or value.[15]

Crossing Cultures: curriculum design to develop global competencies

Crossing Cultures is the ongoing community-led architecture project in the Italian mountain village Belmonte Calabro, by Architecture of Multiple Authorship. Since 2016, it has been facilitating a process leading to community integration and the increased cohesion of local groups in Belmonte, including asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, it offers different student cohorts the opportunity to become an integral part of the community they are helping to build, through continuous involvement and ongoing presence during field trips and construction workshops. Most students even remain part of this community beyond their studies. We have observed that our students' *becoming* part has secured continuity and steady growth of the community, and we believe this will be decisive in ensuring the project's and community's long-term continuity. It is this community building which differs from community live projects at other architecture schools, where the focus is on working *with* communities through time-restricted interventions rather than *within* them.

The site, currently an important frontier for migrants and refugees from Africa attempting to gain access to Europe, is also a frontier for locals attempting to sustain their towns against the magnetic pull of the large cities in the North. The overarching task of this project is to create reasons for the local young generation to stay and build up the community by bringing new and purposeful activities to the town. These activities offer the locals joint experiences with newcomers, refugees, as well as – what makes this project original – the students themselves. Lately, this inclusivity has been reflected

into calling the community 'Belmondo', referring to a 'beautiful world' (*mondo*) rather than a beautiful mountain (*monte*). In her article in Domus, Giulia Ricci described the emerging community as 'an open and inclusive imagination, (where) anyone can potentially become a local'.[16]

For the first summer workshop in Belmonte, a group of our UK-based architecture students, some of whom Italian nationals with local connections to the area, invited tutors and refugees to explore with them the boundaries between practice and education, setting out *to cross cultures* as the leading theme to be continued as a university project (Fig.1). This was the 'seeding event' that developed the engagement of architecture students from different year groups during the academic year towards developing architectural proposals and strategies for the region. This initiative has since become a movement of integration. The care given to the first summer workshop has started to 'reseed' itself, with young locals and refugees having taken ideas from Belmonte to other villages of Calabria and starting similar initiatives.

The key area of innovation of this project is the introduction of three annual engagement points within each academic year and their integration into the existing courses to build the framework for the project. We have not changed learning objectives or assessment criteria, but interpreted module specifications, interweaving the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum with credit-bearing but optional engagement opportunities. The framework allows students from different years to engage with this project within several design and technology modules. For example, for the last four years undergraduate and postgraduate students have been able to opt to work on this project as part of their year-long design studio modules which includes a ten-day field trip. During the first academic year running the project, we faced the challenge of ensuring the trust of the local community between the field trip in November and the summer workshop in July. Responding to this we promised to return by adding a third annual engagement point, a *making week* in February. During this week, second year students can apply to join the construction workshop in Belmonte as part of their compulsory technology module. In this way multiple groups within a cohort as well as from different cohorts altogether build a growing body of work whilst passing knowledge from one to the next. Students often take the opportunity to continue their engagement with Crossing Cultures by also joining the summer workshop Crossings, which is organised by former students who set up the non-profit organisation Le Seppie. As this sits outside of the curriculum it is also open to students and graduates from other universities and brings students and professionals from all over the world to the project. As a result, the series of three annual events forms a successful structure of continuous engagement with the growing project, for students as well as people from outside of our university.

The project's success builds on the continuity of development achieved in Belmonte, operating independently from the academic calendar, with
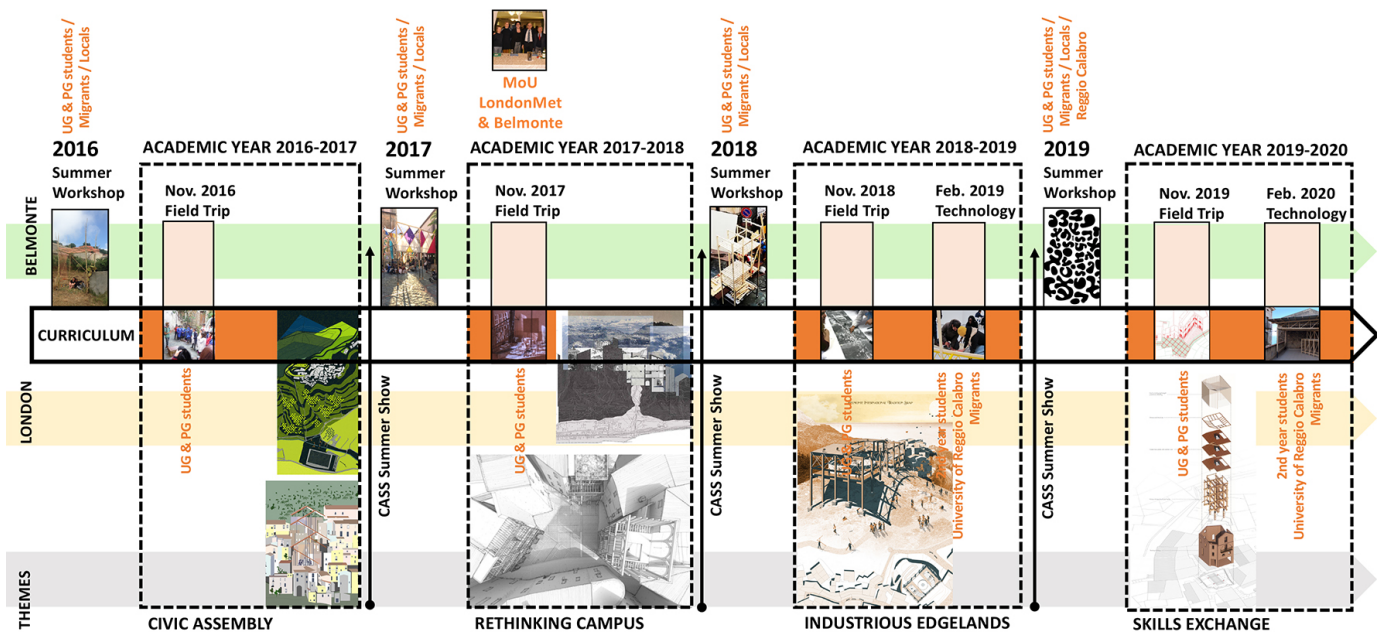
Figure 2:
Academic framework for
Crossing Cultures in London
and Italy (Sandra Denicke-
Polcher 2020).

some activities being part of the curriculum but others being separate or complementing it (Fig. 2). Moreover, bringing annually changing student cohorts to Belmonte has helped the community itself grow. Students stay connected with the people they meet and follow ongoing progress. It is notable that the curriculum enables students to return several times and some have become experts in introducing the next cohort. The individuals supporting this project have formed an international community of open-minded people, not always present in Belmonte, but always connected globally through social networks. Importantly and additionally, a vision for positive transformation remains in the locals' memory, created through the small constructions and the booklets of visual representations left behind. Through the different engagement methods our students produce a body of work which creates a vision for Belmonte and a more positive future for its inhabitants, potentially attracting new settlers. As part of their design modules and project briefs, the students face design questions with a different theme every year, relating to education and industry (Civic Assembly 2016-17, Rethinking Campus 2017-18, Industrious Edgelands 2018-19, Skills Exchange 2019-20).[17] The proposed themes require students to design buildings that form part of a sequence of proposals. The design solutions developed throughout the year are presented back in July as paper-based *visions* for Belmonte's regeneration as a new place of civic living, learning and working. During Rethinking Campus, for instance, the removal of many dilapidated and unoccupied buildings was proposed to open-up new public piazzas for community services, which could be built by the locals and students (Fig. 3). During Industrious Edgelands, students proposed a project to revive local agriculture and industry by growing the trademarked Belmonte Tomatoes at the periphery of the village to sustain a tomato processing factory and a restaurant in the centre. These paper-based projects give the locals the

possibility of seeing their village with 'new eyes'. Characteristically, the vice-mayor of Belmonte, Luigi Provenzano, has acknowledged that the students have brought a valuable outsider's view to the town, different to the Italian way of seeing things, and that 'the community of Belmonte would not have been able to imagine and see (a possible future) as it can now'.[18]

Additionally, students explore related themes to the ones set in the project briefs during on-site workshops with locals and refugees, being involved together in the hands-on construction of furniture pieces, small scale structures, projects such as the renovation of the so-called 'Casa', a former nunnery slowly being converted into a permanent base for hosting community activities (Fig. 4), and the construction of an outdoor kitchen roof (Fig. 5). These constructions are manifestations of change with flexible use (Fig. 6), often testing selected student projects (Fig. 7). They provide an aide-memoire for positive change in the everyday life of the village and continue being used by the locals when students have left and the village quiets down. Equally important to these paper-based and physical outputs are social activities and events, such as community dinners (Fig. 8), dance and music events, outdoor cinema screenings, exhibitions, and talks, which together create lasting and growing memories for the village.

Figure 4:
Renovated Casa di Belmondo
2019 (Luca Pitasi 2019).

Figure 5:
Roof Structure Casa 2020
(London Metropolitan
University).

Figure 6:
Physical outputs of summer
workshop 2017
(Florian Siegel 2017).

Figure 7:
Materialised vision 2017
(Jane McAllister 2017).

Crossing Cultures has shown to have a measurable impact on the village creating interest from academic institutions, local business activity picking up and asylum seekers and refugees entering traineeships. On one occasion, the villagers set up a long community dining table to host a joint eating experience, a follow-up to the community dinners we had organised during our stay (Fig.9). These positive observations are evidence that the long-term engagement in Calabria as a method to drive social change is working towards the integration of newcomers to Italy.

Engaging with communities for the purpose of education while avoiding disappointment remains a challenge within academia because of the restrictive academic structure. The legacy of the site visits and onsite workshops and its impact on what happens in the village when students leave, is a key priority for us. As students become themselves members of

Figure 8:
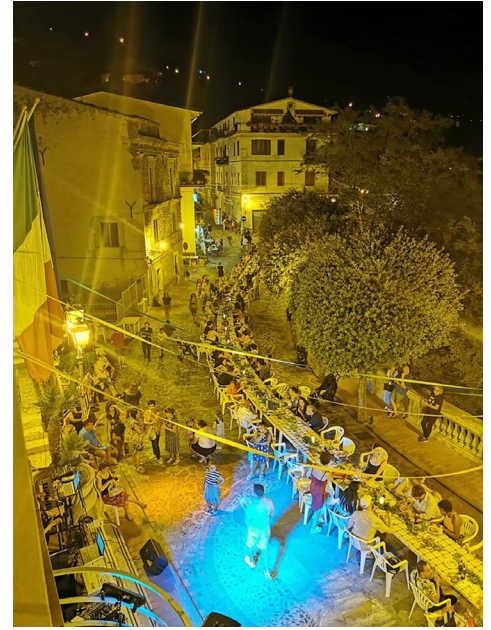Community dinner during summer workshop (Florian Siegel 2017).

Figure 9:
Community Dinner by the villagers 2019 (Facebook Belmonte Eventi 2019).

the community and return to Belmonte, they build trust, a key condition for ensuring the continuity of the project. Gaining trust between the different groups happens gradually, and also enables the integration of refugees as trainees by local craftsmen. The involvement of consecutive student cohorts in Crossing Cultures over several academic years has enabled the students to pass on their insights and constantly grow the overall knowledge base. Even if temporary, students gain a regular presence in Belmonte as collaborators and community members, which has established new networks amongst the existing population and empowered our students and the locals to co-ensure the long-term continuity of the community. As much as the university was key, at the beginning of the engagement, in validating the involved Municipality's decision of supporting this project, we are lately reassured that the project will soon be able to continue without the university's presence. The project's continuation can rely on an infrastructure which consists of a new culture of participation with local ambassadors and alumni that have moved to Belmonte, and even a physical home, the nearly finished Casa (Fig. 4).

Internationalising the curriculum

The project has impacted on many levels, connecting students, recent graduates and tutors from London with locals, asylum seekers and refugees in Italy, as well as students and academics from the local Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria. However, most importantly, it has contributed in forging stronger links between the refugees, the locals and students, involving all in a shared future for Belmonte and the region. As one of the participating asylum seekers explains, '(I'm here) because it gives me many experiences [sic] to meet with people I don't know'.[19] Creating opportunities to meet is a first step towards mediating cultural difference; in the asylum seekers' words, 'you would not know about my culture if meeting (me) on the street'; '(here)

Figure 10:
Locals and refugee (Nicola Barbuto 2019).

Figure 11:
Students, locals and refugees working together (Florian Siegel 2017).

you are not afraid of me' (Fig. 10).[20] It is important to recognise the benefits for our students in being part of this initiative taking place in Italy, because these cultural encounters of difference can create an inclusive educational environment and a platform for international collaboration that provides a common ground where all participants are involved in negotiating the shared terms. Interestingly, the foreign setting seems to produce a common language for interaction and communication 'without language'; as a student describes, 'at times in life differences are uncomfortable, here we can focus on the work'.[21]

The reason why this particular location has been so successful in creating a strong sense of belonging amongst all participants might be linked to South Italy's history as an ancient crossroad for different cultures, probably better placed to host our activities than the more individualistic culture in the UK. Today, we recognise many foreign plants as integral elements of the Mediterranean landscape, which have originally been brought from other places. Similarly, people have arrived here – and a great number settled – without us today identifying them as foreign to Italy. If we acknowledge this locality as a place where cultural crossings have continually brought on and evolved new identities, we can assume that this integration of foreigners also happens when people materially reflect on their social behaviours through simple day to day communal activities. Students' responses highlight this effect on their learning experience:

> Here we are all confronted with each other. There is a density of working in the same place and then meeting in the same bar in the evening and again for breakfast. It is good to be forced to be around each other.[22]

With the emphasis on working together and not on backgrounds or professions we have created a closeness amongst all participants, a safe working and learning environment very different to the conventional academic environment, which is seldom genuinely inclusive (Fig. 11). In the words of a student, in Italy 'we are all migrants, (...) everyone can take part'.[23] While students, locals and refugees develop empathy and respect for each other, as well as a sense of equality, they build lasting emotional relationships, which in turn positively impact their learning.[24] This has surely developed intercultural competences, an understanding of global issues and social justice, which are essential attitudes in a well-functioning society. As such, this holistic collaboration has created an international and inclusive educational environment, which echoes the OECD's agenda to educate 'global citizens (who) have the knowledge and understanding, relevant skills, and the values and attributes to meet the demands of globalisation'.[25]

Despite this achievement, the university is in a difficult position. Although the students' success on site gives legitimacy to the project, students do not always manage to appropriately communicate the nuances of their work in the conventional format of the portfolio. Effective group work,

Figure 12:
Signing of Memorandum of
Understanding (Florian Siegel
2017).

largely a result of our students' collegiate working manner and echoing how
most architectural practices work today, is still a challenge to assess and
requires individual representation within portfolios, to assure compliance
with professional accreditation frameworks. However, it is vital to value the
success of what students have achieved in the real world, that is, building a
community and raising social capital for the area they are working in. This is
a dilemma that has been previously raised by Jane Anderson, who argues for
an expansion of the range of learning outcomes of architectural education.
New criteria of success should 'reflect the breadth, depth and vitality of
work done by architectural students and supported by their tutors as being
valuable, significant and relevant'.[26] Our students experience the impact
they have on the Belmonte communities as confidence boosting, and the
stimulating feedback of effecting change through their hands-on engagement
also benefits students' mental health. Fascinatingly then, by taking the focus
off grades, students' academic performance often improves, as the real-life
application of their work means that students can effectively make more of an
effort than in a purely academic setting.

Required conditions for successful outcomes

Our experience working with students on different projects of Architecture
of Multiple Authorship has shown that for community projects to promise
a successful impact it is vital to meet several key criteria. Firstly, as argued
above, it is the international environment of Crossing Cultures, which had
a particularly positive impact on the student experience. This consists of
two elements: on one hand, the project is located away from the students'
academic basis and constraints in London, on the other, it brings together
overlapping international cultures in the specific Southern location. Compared
to previous, London-based projects by Architecture of Multiple Authorship
such as Made in Hayes, which allowed students to visit the site regularly,[27]
Crossing Cultures offers a far more immersive experience. The residential visit

Figure 13:
Construction during summer
workshop 2018 (Zeshan
Mazhar and Silvia Gin 2018).

to Belmonte enables the sharing of everyday life with the locals. The distance and limitation this imposes, enhances the immersion while the specific characteristics of the area become key for achieving successful outcomes. Typically placed in a deprived area to be *awakened* and transformed through a new vision, Belmonte is open for experimentation. Its underpopulated old town – only about 50 people live there today – offers an openness to new ideas, which we retrospectively realised made the engagement easier than with existing community groups in denser, urban environments.

The university should create the framework for regular engagement opportunities through course design and other activities, which, we have found, offer situations for students to develop a sense of belonging and increased social integration. The provision of such a framework also applies to the physical outputs and social activities, whereby prefabricated structures are used in the construction workshops to guarantee the success of the outputs, enabling participants to contribute freely while fitting within a given structure. Similarly, events are part of a flexible timetable, which allows spontaneous activities within a given schedule.

Students are obviously fundamental to this process, even if only joining temporarily. They contribute critical mass to the project, a *crowd* of students building up a workforce over time. They benefit from the unique status of the 'non-expert aspiring-expert',[28] half-way between citizen and professional, which permits an understanding of what is happening on the ground that is often invisible to professionals. This type of participation entails an ethnographic element, within which the students represent a worldly-connected generation of 'experts' on how young people want to live today.

The project should also be supported by influential local insiders who facilitate deeper connections to the areas of intervention in the level of both communities and institutional frameworks. For instance, it was the vice-mayor Luigi Provenzano, aspiring to establish an International Campus in Belmonte, who pushed for a Memorandum of Agreement between the Municipality of Belmonte and the university (Fig.12), securing onsite support. This agreement offered an important validation for the community-university collaboration with a growing number of partners and educational institutions (e.g. Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabro), and triggered applications for regional regeneration grants. Rita Adamo, PhD student and co-founder of Le Seppie,[29] acts as the onsite academic facilitator for the university and supports the project development, both in Calabria and in London. Her involvement is key to the success, as she is anchored in Calabria, offering insights from a local's perspective, and ensuring spontaneous communication with the students about project updates beyond academia.

Further, it is important to avoid the creation of a culture of hierarchy and service production, familiar to the conventional architect/client relationship. Students mentioned as reasons for their positive experience in Belmonte the lack of a 'vibe of hierarchy or intrusion' and the 'equal importance of all contributors'.[30] In this context, students, teachers and local participants are all equal co-learners comprising a productive workforce without the need for a client-commissioner. Thus, the network of partnerships between local community members, local stakeholders, students and tutors can develop over time into a trusting relationship. Drawing upon the literature concerning participatory practice and 'other ways of doing architecture'[31] that cast the practitioner as a 'spatial agent', here the architect is no longer a service provider or an 'agent operating for' but rather a collaborating 'agent operating with' other stakeholders.[32] In Belmonte, foreign students and locals become collaborators, working together to achieve a common goal (Fig. 15). It is this non-hierarchical working method, which is based on mutual respect, that allows 'clients' to become co-creators and has developed a mutual learning environment equally benefitting both students and locals. This places all participants, including locals and refugees, not only as co-learners but also as co-teachers within the university curriculum. The non-hierarchical nature of the project structure is intrinsic to its long-term sustainability, as it does not rely on individuals but on the whole group and, therefore, is not destabilised by the departure of a single participant.

Figure 14:
Onsite screening of
collaborative films developed
by architecture & animation
students (Florian Siegel 2017).

Conclusion: Outputs, Outcomes, and Continuing Collaboration

The most important element of the project lies in the ways it varies architecture and enables the learning of architecture's complex dimensions by setting out the conditions for students to take on a multitude of different roles, which are in reality intertwining rather than distinct. While working on this project, they are required to act as students, architects, contractors, consultants, researchers, field workers, collaborators, builders, community members, friends, global citizens, insiders, and experts in contemporary youth culture. All these different roles are played out through an intensive residential experience in a foreign location away from the university, where participants from different cultures work towards a common aim, and the involvement of consecutive student groups enables all to become collaborators while they learn.

During this process, the students contribute to the production of diverse outputs, experience the positive outcomes of their actions, and become part of various collaborations that often extend beyond their designated involvement, as the nature of the project facilitates continuing collaborations. For instance, since the 2017 summer workshop, the Italian Architecture Collective Orizzontale has joined the project as an expert in working with

Figure 15:
Collaborators 2018
(Zeshan Mazhar 2018).

communities on hands-on constructions. The project has also attracted involvement by numerous other disciplines besides architecture, for example setting up an ongoing collaboration with animation students. Generating dialogues and thinking outside of their own *tribe*, has not only challenged students' existing beliefs, but also deepened the architecture students' understanding of their own discipline (Fig. 14). These collaborations and interconnections continue to grow over time, as the 2019 summer workshop was joined by a researcher of mental health, opening up new fields of inter-disciplinary research, involving community psychiatry and two other UK universities into the project. Students who revisit Belmonte at a later date, acknowledge that change takes a long time: 'It is good to see this project grow from the last year to (next) year, (…) knowing it carries on, developing (and) creating a positive change over time'.[33] Certainly, this observation reflects an optimistic viewpoint onto the world and understanding of the importance of continuing collaboration amongst our students.

The outputs of the project produced over several years – from tables, benches, canopies and towers to exhibitions and events – provide useful contexts for the learning of design and detailing (Fig. 13), where students learn from the hands-on making experience 'how something really works for the contractor or construction worker'.[34] Most importantly, however, students observe how their outputs also work for the community of Belmonte, providing it with a gift of positive change and lasting memories that result in powerful positive outcomes – enthusiasm, excitement, a confidant attitude towards difference, feeling part of an overall whole – and thereby create a culture which develops global citizenship. The scheduled framework of Crossing Cultures is important, too, as it enables the project to happen as part of the academic curriculum and brings students to the site in Italy. By composing the exchange between normative learning activities and working

on site, our students can further accumulate the multiple roles of an architect.

For the university, initiating and supporting projects such as Crossing Cultures goes beyond simply enhancing its reputation within a specific subject area. Students become active citizens, acquiring knowledge, skills and forming values during their work. At the same time, students are actively contributing to positive change in society and nurturing a wider culture of participation that expands beyond the conventional scope of architectural practice into an architectural citizenship. As it has been demonstrated, those 'students who have taken part in (such projects) are more likely to take part in pro-social activities after graduating'.[35] The project has also taught students to value rather than fear differences:

> I learned to appreciate that other people have much more to contribute... The more I do this (work), the more I appreciate that people can contribute to things that, at first, I didn't recognize.[36]

This experience provides students with skills to work and communicate effectively in an increasingly connected world, where individual actions have great influence on international as well as local communities. If more students can have such an experience during their studies, we can certainly expect a snowball effect and spur the development of similar projects, 'signalling a shift in the role and purpose of education to that of forging more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies'.[37]

The 21st century is characterised by globalisation, unpredictability and oversensitivity to risk, demanding to prepare students for times of uncertainty and to become architects who practice global citizenship. Today's students will be 'the employees, employers, parents, carers, leaders and citizens of tomorrow'.[38] Working on projects such as Crossing Cultures, will help them gain first-hand experience of the benefits of being team-players (Fig. 15). Students who engage in society and understand community issues, who are globally aware and politically literate, are also capable to self-reflect and explore new forms of practice. With the fading image of the single 'starchitect', this type of generous team-building can begin to create learning environments, which have the capacity to empower the next generation of architects to find a sense of fulfilment in their subject area, which will allow them to work towards changing their profession and society as a whole.

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