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LANSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING IN THE TRILATERAL REGION OF HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA AND AUSTRIA

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PREFACE

The political transformation in 1989 offered the chance to facilitate the growing of a common multicultural identity, which includes the protection of nature and natural bases of life within a sustainable economic development. The Declaration on a sustainable development of the Central Danube Region was already signed April 8th 1990 in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg. The signatory organisations and individuals agreed in detail about a trans-frontier national park, interdisciplinary research programs and promotion but also about appropriate technologies.

Hans-Peter Dürr and Hanns Langer presented in February 1990 the vision to rescue the last vestiges of natural landscapes around the former “iron curtain”, to construct “bricks” for a common house of Europe. In concrete terms this means to build a model along the borderlines, symbolically as an ecological backbone of Europe. Since this time many projects in the Trilateral region of Hungary, Slovakia and Austria were already realized by students from the University of Agriculturual Sciences in Vienna.

Landscape planning and landscape management was established as the fifth full course of study at the University of Agriculturual Sciences in Vienna in 1991, joining agriculture, forestry and forest products, agricultural engineering and water management, and food and biotechnology. In 1993, the board of the University decided to establish four institutes in the core area of landscape planning. Two of the five have since been set up, namely the Institute for Open Space Design and Landscape Management and the Institute for Landscape Planning and Biological Engineering.

Open space planning and design are steadily increasing in importance because open spaces themselves have become an ever scarcer commodity, especially in urban areas. However, open spaces can also be a shaping force in urban development. The belt of forests and meadows in Vienna were an essential component of the green space created around Vienna even at the turn of the century. Since many years our Institute of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Management initiates also the launching of a cooperative spatial planning process for Sustainable Development and Open Space Design along the Danube.

THE DIDACTICAL CONCEPT OF THE BRIDGE PROJECT

Architectural design is generally not taught as a collaborative process. Almost unchanged the culture of the studio system is the dominant force in education today. To learn design as a cooperative and interdisciplinary activity, the students need real problems, real people and real information. We believe that most of the outstanding problems in our time are problems caused out of our thinking. This leads us to the central question of what learning really is ? It is not only gaining knowledge, much more important is obtaining a better quality to use this knowledge. The creation of knowledge certainly involves interaction between two kinds of learning.

- The first kind of learning is obtaining “know how” in order to solve specific problems based upon existing premises. This kind of learning was helping us to survive.
- The second kind of learning is establishing new premises (paradigms, schemata, mental models, or perspectives) to override the existing ones. Of course its a necessity to know about both kinds of knowledge.

This includes the process of constant communication, learning together with others, developing key qualities like, systems approach and project management and especially to create optimistic visions of the future in a constant team dialog. Therefore we implemented our design course as a community workshop to involve the public in community design issues. Sim van der Ryn and Cowan laid the basis for a new philosophy and practice of design. To enrich the nexus of human and natural systems we Applied these five design principles to our work:

- First, we need to ask, What is here? What will nature permit us to do here? What will nature help us to do here?
- The second principle provides criteria for evaluating the ecological impacts of a given design.
- The third principle suggests that these impacts can be minimized by working in partnership with nature
- The fourth principle implies that ecological design is the work not just of experts, but of entire communities.
- The fifth principle tells us that effective design transforms awareness by providing ongoing possibilities for learning and participation [1]

THE “BRIDGE”- BRUCK PROJECT – 1998 IN BRUCK AN DER LEITHA

Bruck is geografically located in the center of Europe. For centuries the city has been a tie between Hungary and Austria. The special location of this region gave the reason for using it as a theme for our international and interdisciplinary university project. The title of this project is therefore BRIDGE and expresses the tie between the university and the community.

[1] VAN DER RYN p. 51

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
IN THE TRILATERAL REGION OF HUNGARY SLOVAKIA AND AUSTRIA

In the summer semester of ´98 at the Institute of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Management we started a project in Bruck an der Leitha in Lower Austria with students from the universities of Barcelona, Budapest, Brno - Lednice, Lisboa and Vienna. The idea was to develope various seminaries, thesis and design projects which were realized between different universities. In February ´98 we started with a project management seminar to organize the various time schedules, issues and goals.

The main idea of the BRIDGE project was to create potential development possibilities for the region and the community. This means to protect qualities of life within the possibilities of nature and respecting biodiversity. Further on we need to develop cooperate forms of organisation and networks for communication. To reach this goal we worked from historical gardens up to new land usage and open space design ideas. The main theme ´BRIDGE´ combines two essential aspects:

- the international approach to bring together students from various countries. We realized the importance of the international aspect and worked with students from Lisboa, Barcelona, Budapest, Lednice and Vienna.
- from the interdisciplinary point of view we brought together professions like: regional planning, architecture, landscape- and city planning, landscape design etc.

The main purpose of the project was to consider visions and perspectives in relation to the development of the region and the town considering the EU enlargement towards Eastern Europe. We must take responsibility for creating an urban lifestyle that is compatible with sustaining an intact biosphere and all its living species.

THEMES OF THE “BRIDGE” - BRUCK PROJECT

Politicians of Bruck an der Leitha made suggestions for the possible subjects to be worked on during this project. Some of the subjects that were proposed were urban open space design for the centre of Bruck, development project for the Harrach barroque garden, landscape planning within the regional context of the trilateral area of Slowakia, Hungary and Austria.

The students then picked five subjects to work on

1. The project started of with a project management seminar in February to learn about the various stages and planning necessities which are involved in a project of this kind.
2. The land art group installed potential points for bridges between the community of Bruck and Bruckneudorf across the river Leitha. They used red and white strings to mark the point where the bridges could possibly be installed.
3. The open space design group was working on different places within the city to create new ideas for a better quality of open space.
4. A completely new approach within our education was public relation, to work together with the media, the politicians and the population. One of the

students played the role of the projects´ own public relations manager, who was responsible for giving information to the radio station, the TV station in Bruck and the newspaper. The result of his work will be published in a thesis.

5. The workshop group organized a special seminar which took place in June in Bruck. 25 students from all over Europe invited by the workshop group worked on regional planning and local design subjects. One group, for instance studied ecological design issues, to work out examples of sustainable landuse and traffic solutions. Another group was involved on a regional level, to make future biocorridors possible, between the little carpathian mountains and the national park along lake Neusiedl.

Beside the obviously very interesting contents of the project I would also like to describe the fascinating process my students went through to make all this possible. From this point of view the project can be devided into three phases.

- The preparation phase which involved fund raising, time and resource management.
- The working phase itself included seven days of intensive seminary action.
- The third phase will be to publish the results of the contents and the process.

The BRIDGE project tried to apply a complementary aspect of planning where classical forms of teaching were drastically reduced and instead the teachers worked behind the scenes as mediators and tutors. >From a psychological point of view the students were given only the help they needed to help themselves. Senge calls this form of leadership the learning organisation.

PRESENTATION AT ECLAS CONFERENCE

The results of the BRIDGE project were presented September 98 during the European congress of landscape architecture schools (ECLAS). The project is a practical example for the three main subjects of this conference.

- open spaces in the regional context
- the design of public open spaces
- Planning and managing the urban space resource

At the final presentation during this conference one of the students described his experiences of the project as follows:

- the idea of this form of a project is to learn how to organize things
- personally I learned how to work together with politicians
- projects which involve students in this manner are not yet being applied at universities.

THE DONAURAUM PROJECT

This year (1999/2000) we are continuing the **idea** of the BRIDGE project. The main objective of the project DONAURAUM is, to work interdisciplinary on landscape planning, engeneering and architectural issues in the trilateral region of Slovakia, Hungary and Austria. The faculty of Architecture of the Technical University in

Bratislava and the Institute of Landscape architecture and landscape management of the University of Agricultural sciences in Vienna (BOKU) will join a common project.

The intended **activities** of this project are to arrange excursion, workshops and seminars to manage transnational cooperation. We will start September 99 in Bratislava to work on an open space design project at river Morava. First landscape planning concepts will be created by the students from BOKU. The task of the design group from the architectural students from Bratislava is to develop ideas for a new bridge across river Morava. Finally BOKU students will work on engeneering construction models for the new bridge.

As a **result** of the DONAURAUM project we expect new ideas of crossborder measures. The creation of transnational tourism routes between Austria and Slovakia needs the implementation of new bridges and biking paths. Also appropriate projects implemented to protect nature as well as the use of open space for recreation and tourism in cautious relation with other public needs will be planned. From planning to realisation it takes financial and political support from both sides.

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