

CAPA.CITY PhD Winter School - European research program CAPA.CITY

Roskilde / Viby (DK) – 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2018

3 ECTS

# Growing learning collectives

*Designing experimental and participatory methods in urban planning*



**Keywords:** Participation, Location-based experiential learning methods, Collective capabilities, Capacity building, Suburban regeneration

**Abstract:**

The CAPA.CITY PhD Winter School is aimed at PhD students with an interest in urban planning, architecture, participatory design, experimental learning, community development or related fields. Within the framework of the research program CAPA.CITY<sup>1</sup>, this winter school is organized around fostering learning collectives in urban development. The format is that the participants will work hands-on with experimental methods to answer current retrofitting challenges of the town of Viby, Denmark. The workshop will notably question the capabilities that need to be mobilized and associated, or even hybridized, in order to transform existing residential subdivision towns. The originality of this approach lies in the interrogation of creating negotiation spaces between individual, collective and common interests, so that collective capabilities could be built between the different actors (inhabitants, professionals, institutions) implicated in the transformation of residential subdivision towns.

**Fostering collective capabilities through experimental learning:**

When working with the retrofitting of existing urban areas, the successes of projects are most often dependent on a well-functioning collaboration of multiple actors on different scales such as planning authorities, professionals and citizens. Though spatial projects often trigger resistance of the concerned citizens, which can lead to protests and suspension of the project. Active participation of citizens and grassroots organizations has shown to be a powerful way of producing social outcomes that really matter and in this way address urban needs and challenges (Moulaert et al, 2014; Frandsen, 2017). In order for citizens to become full participants in the development of their urban environment particular skills and capabilities are needed. Likewise, it requires a focus on which opportunity structures that needs to be designed or accommodated in order to increase the capacities of multi-actor collaborations. Such debates on learning collectives often invoke notions of empowerment and building of social capital that signifies the capability to act across different groups of actors and interests (Fischer, 2012; Andersen et al 2014). It requires the fusion between the professional expertise and the contextual intelligence of local actors (Corburn, 2003). Despite good intentions these processes are by no means self-fulfilling but necessitate careful considerations in terms of strategies and methodological approaches (Winter, 2015). Experimental and situated learning offer a particularly conducive way of developing these skills

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.capa-city-ensuf.eu/>. This research program is financed by ENSUF (<http://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/calls/ensuf-call/>)

where citizens participate in real-world activities of their urban environment (Frandsen & Petersen, 2014; Fabian & Samson, 2016).

In order to further develop the debate, JPI Urban Europe<sup>2</sup> (through the call for proposals ENSUF<sup>3</sup>) has chosen to finance the research program CAPA.CITY<sup>4</sup>, that focuses on suburban retrofitting. The objective is to identify the conditions of transformation of residential subdivisions, equipping them with services, infrastructures, public spaces, etc. (Masbounji & al., 2008). The hypothesis is that one of the essential conditions for envisaging such transformations rests on the building of collective capacities (Ubels & al., 2010; Elbakidze & al., 2015), shared between institutional, professional and civil actors of the suburban.

Within the framework of this European research, the scientific team proposes a PhD winter school centered on the capabilities that need to be mobilized and associated, or even hybridized, in order to transform existing residential subdivisions. The originality of this approach lies in the interrogation of creating negotiation spaces and of collective learning (Callon & al., 2001) between individual, collective and common interests (Zask, 2011), so that the capabilities of the different actors (inhabitants, professionals, institutions), individual or collective, are identified, recognized and made available to one another (de Certeau, 1980 ; Berry-Chikhaoui & Deboulet, 2000 ; Nez, 2015).

The 4-day CAPA.CITY PhD Winter School brings together international scholars, urban professionals and PhD students to address the questions: How to initiate such a learning collective? How to support it? How to make this collective focus on spatial issues? How to keep this collective open? How to link this collective to the wider urban community? Through a location-based experimental learning approach the participants of the winter school are invited to work on the residential subdivision town of Viby, Denmark. During the winter school the PhD students will get the chance to work with a team of urban professionals from the CAPA.CITY project with an expertise in participatory design, community development and urban planning.

<sup>2</sup> <http://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/calls/ensuf-call/>

<sup>3</sup> "ENSUF is supported by the European Commission and funded under the Horizon 2020 ERA-NET Cofund scheme.", *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Coordinated by Hasselt University (Be) and in cooperation with two other universities – Roskilde University (Dk) and the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Marseille (Fr) – and three professional structures – Infrastructures (Be), Givrum (Dk) and In Vivo (Fr) – this project puts three contexts into perspective with one another (Belgium, Denmark, France) : <https://www.capa-city-ensuf.eu/>

## Urban and community development in Viby (DK) as an experimental base

The development plans for the Danish provincial town Viby provides an interesting context of exploring the creation of possible learning collectives in order to produce greater quality in planning outcomes. Viby is a town approximately 4650 inhabitants that is located in the southern part of Roskilde Municipality, 50 km from Copenhagen. The town is facing challenges such as a decline in businesses and commercial life. Similarly, the population is slowly aging. A trend, that has raised a special planning concern to attract more young families to settle down in Viby. Due to Vibys favourable location and good infrastructural connections to the capital region the municipality of Roskilde has in its municipal plan identified that Viby holds a considerable potential for growth. In this, it is envisioned that Viby over the long term should be expanded to contain up to 15.000 inhabitants – thereby tripling the current population. The administration and urban government are working with plans for new residential areas as well as revitalization strategies for the urban center.

Until 2007 Viby formed the political and administrative centre of its own municipality. But due to a nationwide local government reform this municipality were merged to become part of the now bigger Roskilde municipality. The concentration of administrative and political functions to the city of Roskilde has led to a more professionalized municipal organization. But it has also created a longer distance between the level of planning and political decision-making and the local neighbourhood scale. This echoes a widespread national concern and planning debate on how to ensure local democracy and participation as the municipalities have grown bigger - the idea of public participation has been a leading principle of local government since the 1970ties. Leading actors on national level – planning authorities, professional organizations - have pointed to that new forms of engagement and dialogue with as well as knowledge of the local community are needed. This concern with expanding processes of participation to go beyond formal bureaucratic arenas of local planning processes is also motivated from a belief that this can lead to more relevant and efficient solutions on local problems (Groth & Fertner 2013; Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2015).

In the CAPACITY PhD Winter School the participants are invited to work on three concrete planning challenges that is currently leading the urban development strategies and spatial projects in Viby – (1) accommodating population growth through new housing projects, (2) Revitalizing the urban center, (3) Building a shared library and community center. Each of the planning challenges trigger other issues, assembles other actors and therefore may require the reinforcement of other collective capabilities.

## Three planning challenges

The population of Viby will change drastically in the coming then years as the existing population ages and a large number of newcomers will arrive. The question is how to prepare for these changes to make sure that both the living condition of the existing population and of the new population improves.

In the CAPA.CITY PhD Winter School this question is approached from three perspectives:

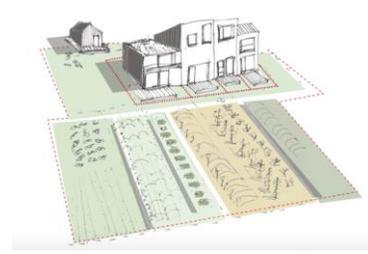
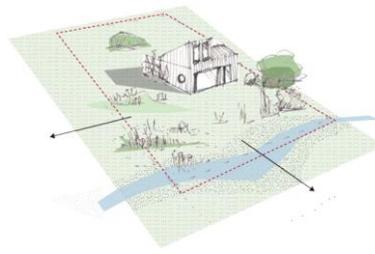
- 1° from the **perspectives of the residents** (existing and new) (see suggested situation 1)
- 2° from the **perspectives of (local) entrepreneurs and users of the urban center** (existing and new) (see suggested situation 2)
- 3° from the **perspectives of civic organizations** (library, youth club and formal associations) (see suggested situation 3)

How can we assemble learning collectives around these actors and how can we improve the capabilities of these collectives to deal with the expected changes?

### 1. Accommodating a significant population growth – attracting new residents

New areas for residential development have been pointed out. The new neighbourhood currently being developed – Skousbo – is when fully established planned to accommodate 950 new residential units. The aim is to establish a new kind of residential area that through a close integration with the landscape will offer different housing options – town houses, co-housing, terrace houses, rental housing and more traditional residential subdivisions. Thereby the housing project aims to add greater diversity to the current housing stock that primarily consists of residential subdivisions and by this attract residents with different life style preferences or life phases. Special challenges arising for creating learning collectives concerns:

- How to accommodate this more diverse housing development to the needs of future inhabitants? Ex how to attract younger families?
- How to accommodate to the housing needs of the elderly (so the young families can move into the existing residential subdivisions?)



<http://skousbo.dk/skousbo-en-ny-bydel>

## (2) Revitalizing the urban center - which functions and amenities?

As much of the urban functions and amenities that used to define the town center has declined considerably over the last decades the current urban space can be characterized as underused. Roskilde Municipality has recognized that the revitalization of the town center is important in order to making the town more attractive for current and future residents. A new urban revitalization plan is currently going through public consultation. Likewise, many residents consider the urban center as a vital meeting place and space for forming community. This raises the question on how it may be re-appropriated for new uses to cater for current everyday needs of the inhabitants.

- How to accommodate for different users in the enactment of the revitalization plan?  
How should they be involved?
- How can the notion of the urban center be maintained as a place for social meetings and community building when local retail life cannot fill out all the retail square metres any more?



**(3) Building a shared library and community center in order to revitalize the urban center of Viby**

As part of the urban development strategy of building new housing the municipality of Roskilde are putting a particular emphasis on revitalizing the urban center. One of the major initiatives is concentrate more of the urban functions by projecting a new combined library and community center Kulturcosmos in connection to a central square. In this new building, that is envisioned to form a symbolic entrance to the community, new uses of the library and the community center and their interaction is to be designated. The new building is not only a place to seek information and knowledge but will also be a place for socializing, engaging in different activities, gaining new cultural experiences, etc. A political and administrative steering group has been established to run the project. Local stakeholders such as the community center and librarians are consulted.

- How can the design of the facilities open up for a greater diversity of inhabitants – fx focusing more on youth.
- How can the operation of the new house open up for different options for meaningful participation and engagement of a diversity of users in the local community?
- Organizationally and day-to-day use: How to balance how publicly employed and volunteers are using and want to influence the decision making on the activities of the house. Balancing rationalities of effective operation with spontaneous activity and need for creative outlet? How to develop a shared co-housing culture?



## Goal: Defining learning protocols to foster learning collectives

People learn continuously, be it as an individual or as a collective. Whenever they come across a challenge that forces them to leave their routines, they try out something new and learn. Most of the time this learning remains implicit and under the radar. Our hypothesis is that, in order to make collective learning productive, we have to make it explicit and make the participants aware of the learning process they are going through.

The CAPA.CITY PhD Winter School will introduce the PhD students with a range of collective learning theories and participatory planning methods. During the winter school, the students will experience these methods and develop a series of collective learning protocols. More specifically, the goal of the winter school is that the PhD students define learning protocols that should help the community of Viby to address the three planning challenges.

A team of professionals from the CAPA.CITY project with long-term experience in building learning collectives will be supervising the development of the protocols. The professionals will give inspirational talks on their approaches and operational tools and work as tutors in exploring and developing methods suitable for the Viby context. The urban professionals are:

- **GivRum (Dk)**, with **Jesper Koefoed-Melson** (communication studies) has expertise in facilitating user-driven urban development, by organizing public events. GivRum is a non-profit organization committed to democratic and participatory processes for user driven development of urban life. We facilitate sustainable developing processes by connecting the public and private sectors with civil society. Our first project (started in 2010) was transforming an old paint factory in Copenhagen into a shared office space where 17 different companies and organizations established themselves throughout the first year. Since we have been involved in projects revitalizing empty buildings and urban spaces all over Denmark. We have cooperated with various Danish ministries and municipalities, created the renowned conference Think Space and established the annual international festival City Link. [www.givrum.nu](http://www.givrum.nu)
- **In Vivo (F)**, with **Dr. David Miet** (architect), **Denis Caraire** (spatial planner) and **Remy Vigneron** has expertise in engaging residents of residential subdivisions in envisioning future scenarios. “**In Vivo**” is the department for Research & Development of “Villes Vivantes” (“Living Cities”), a start-up with special status (“jeune entreprise universitaire” – “young academic enterprise”) under partnership agreement with ENSA –Marseille architecture academy. Created in January 2014, it develops, designs and tests innovative public policies, carrying a systemic vision in strategic and collaborative planning. It focuses on the needs and intentions of individual people to develop and implement collective actions and urban planning projects. It experiments sustainable and

collaborative solutions to counter urban sprawl by redefining housing production processes. It develops the “BIMBY” (Build In My BackYard) concept, creating condition for a short supply chain of buildable land producing, from inhabitant to inhabitants, relying on private initiative, but with a supporting and engineered public framework designed with local authorities. <http://www.lab-invivo.eu/index.html>

- **Intrastructures** (B), with **Thomas Lommée** (designer) has expertise in the act of prototyping as a method to initiate a transition towards a more sustainable use of materials. Intrastructures is a pragmatic, utopian design-studio, that applies product-, service- and system design as tools for change (or better: social and environmental restoration). In 2007 Intrastructures initiated the OpenStructures project, a hands-on design experiment that explores the possibility of a modular construction model where everyone designs for everyone on the basis of one shared geometrical grid ([www.openstructures.net](http://www.openstructures.net)).

### Result: what do you take home

- the participants get introduced to theories on participatory spatial planning (with a focus on experimental methods), collective learning and spatial planning trends in Denmark (in relation to the rest of Europe)
- the participants will visit a series of Danish sub-urban developments (both old and recent ones)
- the participants will experience a series of participatory spatial planning methods
- the participants will gain insight in the development of collective learning protocols
- the participants will get feedback on the participatory methods that they use in their own fieldwork

## Programme:

### Monday 10 December 2018:

- morning: participants present the participatory methods that they use in their own research (based on their visualisations)
- afternoon: presentation of Viby-challenges / site visit / defining assignments

### Tuesday 11 December 2018:

- participants design learning protocols that help to address these challenges. Supervised by spatial professionals

### Wednesday 12 December 2018:

- morning: excursion to the Danish suburbs
- afternoon: continue the design of learning protocols

### Thursday 13 December 2018:

- morning: prepare public presentation
- afternoon: event / public presentation

## Sign up

Please send a short motivation for participating in the course (1) explain how your research, research methodologies / practice is linked to the theme of the Ph.D. winter school, (2) introduce a case in which you have been involved that was focusing on collective learning over spatial issues and (3) specify what you expect to learn from the winter school (maximum 300 words). This should be send to Majken Toftager Larsen [matola@ruc.dk](mailto:matola@ruc.dk) by November 1st the latest.

Participants that are accepted to the winter school must before it starts submit a presentation of a case description related to their research. In order to maximize the exchange of knowledge, each participant has to visualize his/her case with posters, which must be presented on the first day of the winter school. There are minimum two posters: poster 1 illustrates the context of the case: images, a map, the involved actors, the spatial project, the issues Poster 2 illustrates the learning process: which activities were organized, which actors were involved in each activity, what was the goal of each activity, and the result.

**Dates:**

- 1 November 2018: Deadline submission motivation
- 7 November 2018: Notification of acceptance
- 7 December 2018: Deadline submission of a case.

**Scientific committee**

**Oswald Devisch**, Hoofddocent - Associate Professor, Faculteit Architectuur & Kunst - Faculty of Architecture & Arts  
 Oswald Devisch is Associate Professor in Urban Design at Hasselt University, Belgium. He is coordinator of the research cluster Spatial Capacity Building and explores themes such as collective learning, casual participation, autonomous urbanisation and the gamification of participation.

**Teresa Palmieri** – PhD student, Faculteit Architectuur & Kunst - Faculty of Architecture & Arts

**John Andersen**, Professor. PhD in Sociology and Planning, Planning Studies (Plan, By & Proces), Department of Humans and Technology  
 John Andersen is professor in urban planning and sociology at Roskilde University, Denmark. He works with community empowerment, action research and social innovation.

**Majken Toftager Larsen**, Urbanist and action researcher, Planning Studies (Plan, By & Proces), Department of Humans and Technology  
 Majken is currently teaching at the Department of Humans and Technology, Roskilde University. In her research she focuses on community development, experimental learning and participatory methods in urban planning.

**Marion Serre**, Architect, researcher in architecture, Project[s] research laboratory – ENSA-Marseille  
 Marion Serre is currently teaching at the school of architecture of Marseille and is part of the Project[s] Laboratory, as a researcher. Her research focuses on housing and, more specifically, in the involvement of citizen in urban transformation