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Warm Up!

An Experimental Project on Design for
Social Innovation and Urban Regeneration

TATIANA ALEKSANDROVA, MARIIA ZOLOTOVA, AND GIANNI DENARO

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Warm Up! An Experimental Project on Design for Social Innovation and Urban Regeneration

Tatiana Aleksandrova,[1] St. Petersburg University, Russia
Mariia Zolotova, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China
Gianni Denaro, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Abstract: The research aims to share the results from the "Warm Up" Workshop—an experimental project held by PhD Product Design students from Sapienza University of Rome in collaboration with St. Petersburg University (SPbU)—involving students from SPbU's Graphic Design Master Degree Program. The objective is to apply the topics of Design for Social Innovation and Design for Public Space to investigate the opportunities for new sociability in the social context of Vasilyevsky Island in St. Petersburg. The experimental aspect of the workshop is due to the fusion of methods and approaches typical of Product Design, such as human-centered design (HCD), and the Avant-Garde heritage of the Russian School. By illustrating their concepts of products/services, the students have developed a new practice within the fields of Product Design and User Experience. The final result is to serve a hypothetical urban regeneration in terms of Social Innovation, designing the user experiences as storyboards with the classical structure of "before and after" that would narrate the final change in users' behaviors.

Keywords: Design for Social Innovation, Design for Public Space, User Experience, Sociability, Human Centered Design, Storytelling

Introduction

This article shares the results of a workshop conducted in the field of Design for Social Innovation and Design for Public Spaces. The workshop itself was organized according to the research that aimed at understanding the challenges and opportunities for design in these fields. Specifically, the research has formulated a question that consisted of discovering the potentiality of design in creating new forms of sociability. Therefore, when applied to the education, this question has led to an organization of the didactic activities in such way that the students had to immerse into the specific social context in order to conduct a field research, shadowing the users, observing how they live these contexts now, and what the opportunities would be to improve their user experience with the tools of design. As a context of the application, the interest represents the places that are lacking infrastructure but, however, deliver value for people who live there. Vasilyevsky Island of St. Petersburg was chosen as a case study, as for many years and even now it maintains its isolation and particular lifestyle even though it is a part of the historical center of the city. Within a framework of social innovation, such areas are sources for new economies and sociability.

The present research has put into practice methodologies related to human-centered design using the specific approach of "research through design" (Frayling 1993). The aim was to investigate which fields of design could respond to the needs of a social nature and which were intended to be investigated by combining the typical tools of product and graphics design disciplines. In particular, the question was whether these tools could be combined to pursue the resolution or the improvement of a possible human and social problem into specific public spaces within the city of St. Petersburg.

This investigation was realized through the modality of a workshop that has seen the involvement of graphic design students of Saint Petersburg State University as participant designers. The workshop was organized by Full Professor Loredana Di Lucchio from the laboratory of "Sapienza Design Research" in collaboration with St. Petersburg University.

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[1] Corresponding Author: Tatiana Aleksandrova, 199004 17, 6th Line, V.O., Department of Design, St. Petersburg University, St. Petersburg, 199004, Russia. email: address@email.edu

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GROUND

The authors—affiliated with the Planning, Design and Technology of Architecture (PDTA) Department of Sapienza University of Rome—were involved in carrying out the workshop, together with Tatiana Alexandrova, Senior Lecturer of SPbU Design Department. This is because PDTA Department has a particular focus on the subject of urban regeneration; the spatial context of St. Petersburg also presented a challenge for investigating new perspectives into the research of design for social innovation in public spaces. In addition, the Department of Design at SPbU is managing the Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESIS) Lab, which has a specific focus on socially sustainable design, whose principal aim is to investigate sustainable principles and practices related to social issues using the design discipline as a tool to realize the scope.

Providing Social Value to Public Space with Design for Social Innovation

As a theoretical framework for research and didactic design activities, the design for social innovation approach (Manzini 2015) was chosen as the one able to activate a dialog among researchers, designers, and local communities in order to discover local problems and potentialities for responding to the local social needs.

Social innovation has many definitions and is approached through different points of view and fields of knowledge, such as economy, managing, etc., though it is possible to highlight the key ideas behind the concept of Social Innovation and thus to set generic goals and methods for reaching them According to a very short and synthetic understanding, social innovation is innovation that is social both in its ends and its means (Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan 2010), where "ends" refers to the goals and results, and "means" refers to the tools that make these results happen.

In terms of goals and results, social innovation is seen as an action of meeting social needs (Mulgan et al. 2007; The Young Foundation 2012) aimed at a deep change in daily routines (Westley and Antadze 2010), targeting a bottom-up transformation of the functioning of a social system (MacCallum et al. 2009), discovering new forms of cooperation and collaboration (Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan 2010) that generate value primarily for society instead of for single individuals or organizations (Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008), and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources (The Young Foundation 2012).

In terms of methods and tools for reaching these goals, the same authors mention: innovative activities and services (Mulgan et al. 2007); new products, processes, or programs (Westley and Antadze 2010); new relationships with stakeholders and territories; in other words, new solutions for society that are more effective than existing ones, which enhance society's capacity to act (The Young Foundation 2012). This combined definition opens opportunities for action for the designers, because, firstly, the design discipline is already traditionally seen as synonymous for innovation and possesses the necessary methods and tools for identifying and proposing it; secondly, it focuses on people (e.g., human-centered design approach); and, eventually, it delivers its innovation through products, services, and communication and thus bridges industries, business, and society. Speaking with the words of Ezio Manzini, the leading theorist in design for social Innovation, to design for social innovation means to employ design tools in order to solve human problems by rearranging existing assets (Manzini 2015), and thus to create new economies and new forms of sociability. This goal was set for the students in order to draw their attention to the capacities they possess as designers so they would re-evaluate the tools they use, and to promote a socially oriented, pro-active, bottom-up approach to the way they work as professionals, they see their city, and they act as citizens.

Design for public space was chosen as a context of the application of the design for social innovation framework. Public spaces consist of physical space characterized by the level of accessibility, people, and their actions in this space, and the meaning they give to it. It means that designing for public spaces requires arranging and designing accessibility, people's relations and activities, and their principle meaning. All these elements reflect such components of social

innovation in an interesting way, like responding to human needs, rearranging existing assets and resources, building new relationships through products, services, etc. In particular, as shown in Figure 1, if we split both the concept of public space and social innovation into the three main components of people, space, and outcome, then we could extract the following interrelation between the concepts of public space and social innovation: by observing people's actions (public space), it becomes possible to identify their needs (social innovation); by evaluating the accessibility to the place (public space), it becomes more evident how to re-arrange the existing assets and resources (social innovation) in order to make their use more efficient and available; and, eventually, the outcomes synthesize in recognizing the meaning that people give to their experience lived at the space (public space) and in shaping the new relationships built through new products and services (social innovation). Therefore, the theoretical framework becomes a methodological structure for design activities.
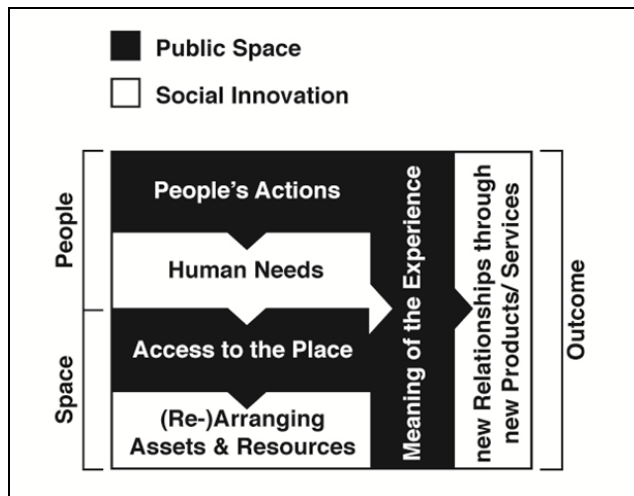
Figure 1: The Scheme by Mariia Zolotova Demonstrates How the Inputs from
Public Spaces Can Be Transformed into Insights for the Proposal of a Social Innovation
Source: Zolotova

Crawford (1995) argued that the concepts of public, space, democracy, and citizenship are being redefined by people through lived experience. People shape their experience at a certain place, and the experiences shape them back, changing the key concepts and rules of society. When designing for social innovation, it is common to start with identifying the local communities, their habits, rules, and laws, their activities and needs. Further design actions could lead either to strengthening the community's habits and traditions or to their complete change and renewal. Sorkin (1992) suggested that political and social needs, and forums for expression, can now be accessed from home. That leads to the disappearance of public space as a political, social, and cultural arena. For that reason, though, it seems particularly interesting for designers to distinguish the needs that can be satisfied specifically in public space. Public space serves to connect private spaces as well as a multitude of overlapping functional and symbolic uses (Müller et al. 2010). The evaluation of the accessibility to these uses and the activities that satisfy specific needs is needed in order to find a way of making the space more inclusive. The eventual result of all these analyses and design actions is a more inclusive, more efficient, re-invented public space that allows bottom-up initiatives to develop smoothly.

Methods

Human-centered Design, Research through Design

Human-centered design (HCD) is the process of ensuring that people's needs are met, that the resulting product is understandable and usable, that it performs the desired tasks, and that the experience of use is positive and pleasant (Norman 2013). A human-centered design approach places a person at the center of the design process. Such techniques, like shadowing, allow observing the user in his/her natural environment; interviewing allows collecting the unique data on the real user needs. The research built around a person serves for the designer and for the manufacturer to design and produce products that are useful and desirable for a real person. The key characteristic of the human-centered design approach is its iterative nature. Traditional HCD consists of four iterative steps: observation, generation, prototyping, and testing (Norman 2013). Another famous model of HCD is called Double Diamond, developed by the British Design Council, which describes the process of divergence and convergence at the stage of research, and divergence and convergence at the stage of design. Both methods presume iterations as a key to success that enables us to detect wrong or inefficient solutions at an early stage. Nonetheless, HCD is broadly implemented. Today design faces a paradigm shift from user-centered design toward a broader paradigm that focuses on humans but also on the community, the ecosystem and, ultimately, the sustainability of life on the planet. Put in another way, a design should shift from the hyper-user-focused approach to a systemic approach that considers the interconnections that occur at different scales. In the context of didactic activities, HCD is presented both as a method connecting the design process with human needs as a user and as an approach that puts a human and his/her habitat before the market.

For a long time, design and research have been regarded as separate endeavors—the former residing in industrial practice and craft, the latter in academic experiments and reflection, though in time design activities along with designed artifacts were established as the chief elements in the process of generating and communicating knowledge. Research through design indicates design activities that play a formative role in the generation of knowledge, such as framing and reframing a complex situation and iteratively developing prototypes that address it (Stappers and Giaccardi n.d.). Applied in didactic activities context, RTD implies that the knowledge related to the specific user needs, the values of a specific place, and the opportunities for socialization in that place are collected, represented, and recognized through design proposals, described through storytelling.

Storytelling as a Tool for a Human-centered Design Approach

The Human-centered design approach was the driving methodology applied in the workshop to investigate whether it is possible to make use of storytelling as a means to valorize and simplify the concept developing process. Due to this, the structure of the workshop was built and performed in three main phases: analysis, development, and design. For every single phase a specific methodology was applied in order to both scientifically investigate the topic of design for social innovation and test the innovation grade derived from the interconnection of HCD tools, storytelling and graphic design skills. These three were in fact connected with the previous phases:

1. Analysis—Human-centered design
2. Development—Storytelling
3. Design—Graphic Design

During the analysis phase (1) students were asked to frame a specific experience into an assigned public space on Vasilyevsky Island. The real observation was conducted approaching

the human factor as a focus of the investigation, detecting all the main features that could be interesting for a possible development or improvement. Specifically, this stage was composed of two steps, as follows:

1a. Investigation: the registration of a specific user(s) experience through the observation of all human elements and relationship essential to detect the experience; space, people, actions, features, objects, and services were investigated through a real interview of the user(s) in the place in order to collect realistic data;

1b. Mapping: the material was collected in photos, videos, interviews, and sketches and then assembled in visual maps that could narrate the whole experience, underlining the connection between all the investigated elements.

As far as the developing phase (2) is concerned, storytelling was first used as a tool to build the experience in terms of narration. Afterward, from a disciplinary point of view, it was used to investigate whether it is a valid means to transfer and communicate innovative settings. This is quite close to the way in which a user-experience designer built a specific storyboard to underline the innovative aspect of a project. In fact, storyboards use a visual language that is common to everyone so that everyone is able to understand the main aspect of the project (Van der Lelie 2006). In order to better highlight the project qualities, a specific structure was built starting from the fairytales structure analyzed and deducted by Russian scholar Vladimir Propp in 1928 (2010), whose principal steps were used to set up the real experience in words. The observation in the field was modelled and written using the main features of Propp's fairytale frames:

2a. Initial setting: description of the real place, of the protagonist(s), and of the general experience, focusing on the human beings and their relationship with objects, products, spaces;

2b. Disruption of the balance: a negative accident occurs and it breaks the initial stability;

2c. Protagonist(s) actions: narration of all the actions the protagonist has to make in order to face the change and maintain a sort of stability;

2d. Conclusion: at this step the conclusion is not positive and it reveals a possibility in terms of product or service design.

In addition, students were asked to illustrate the steps in a fixed number of frames which, according the above structure, were: 1, 2, 2, 4. These constraints were necessary to get the focus on the real necessary elements that were important to tell the whole experience.

At the design phase (3), the Propp structure was adapted in order to implement a design object that could solve the unhappy ending of the previous step. In fact, students have designed a possible product or service in terms of concepts, whose implementation in the story could succeed in subverting or changing the ending.

As for the previous steps, first the students wrote this new story, then they illustrated the narration following this structure:

3a. Problem: this refers to the negative consequence of the second step about an unhappy ending. This will focus on a specific aspect of the experience to be conceptualized in terms of product/service;

3b. Solution: a product or service has been conceptualized to help users face the problem; this design has been implemented into the narration as the magic element in the fairytale;

3c. Benefit: the solution helped the protagonist in terms of social change and behaviors, and generated benefits not only for the users but for the whole community as well.

This whole phase was illustrated using a six-frame model that was divided as follows: two frames for the problem, three frames for the solution, and one frame to illustrate the benefit.

This general structure was based on a research-through-design methodology and it was mostly implemented during a five-day workshop, using the following schedule:

1. Analysis—Human-centered design: day one and two;
2. Development—Storytelling: day three;
3. Design—Graphic design: day four and five.

These three stages aimed to set and start the specification of the design projects, which have been developed during the following five months and it was addressed to these actions: the final writing of the stories, the complete design of the storyboards and the collection/layout of a book collecting the projects.

Heritage of the Russian Avant-Garde School

There is a strong connection between Vladimir Propp's theory (2010) and the experimental approach to children's book formation of El Lissitzky, provided in his *About Two Squares: A Suprematist Tale of Two Squares in Six Constructions* (Lissitzky 2018). If Propp's theory could be taken as a methodological basis for storytelling, El Lissitzky's approach could form the methodological basis for developing a storyboard.

Visual storytelling has a long and deep-rooted tradition in the Russian culture and started with the art of *lubok*. Lubok is an image with a caption, aimed at visualizing the narrative in the most comprehensible way. It is characterized by the simplification of techniques and visual means of expression. Usually lubok contains a detailed visual narrative with short explanatory inscriptions. The text is often embedded in the composition of the picture. For peasants, these pictures were the main source of news and knowledge: they were cheap and served as the equivalent of newspapers. The meaning of these pictures was clear even to the illiterate public. The Russian tradition of lubok was reinvented at the beginning of the twentieth century by the Suprematists. Bright colors, simple geometrical shapes, and a focus on civic education have become inherent in suprematic graphics and posters. Suprematic creative thinking, characterized by rationality and reasonability, was aimed at identifying the ultimate elements of the world and designing the new world. The Suprematists understood visual art and art in general as an ability to create a new world. Thus Suprematism claimed to be much more than just an avant-garde artistic movement. According to Malevich (Goryacheva 1991), Suprematism's potential unfolded in two dimensions: the projection of the concept of a higher reality on empirical reality and the use of suprematic principles in the construction of a new aesthetic environment. The pragmatic focus of the suprematic artistic method is evident and its concentration on deconstruction and reorganization makes it comparable with the Structuralists' work. As Barthes (1963) mentioned, Vladimir Propp launched the structural and typological study of the narrative. The structural way of thinking is evident in the approach of El Lissitzky. El Lissitzky, in his children's books, carries out an analysis similar to Vladimir Propp's theory. His *About Two Squares: A Suprematist Tale of Two Squares in Six Constructions* (Lissitzsky 2018) looks like an accurate illustration of Propp's ideas (although Propp's book was published several years later). When we analyze the illustrations in the *Suprematic Tale about Two Squares*, we can find that the elements are reduced to zero forms, impersonal characters turned into pure symbols of the protagonist and the antagonist (the two squares), and the description of their intentions in Lissitsky's work allows us to see the structure of the traditional visual narrative. Thus, this work by Lissitzky could be used as a toolkit or a template for developing a storyboard.

It is important to note that for Lissitzky his visual language was not only a means of expressing his ideas, but also a method of "design thinking" for innovation. In his essay "Suprematism in World Reconstruction," Lissitzky writes that "suprematism itself has followed

the true oath which defines the creative process. Consequently, our picture has become a creative symbol and the realization of this will be our task in life" (Lissitzky 1920, 134).

Warm Up! Workshop

The investigation of design for social innovation and public space concepts was possible through the application of a workshop format, which facilitated the application of the research through design and the human-centered design methodologies, in order to merge both the theoretical and the applicative aspects of the research. The so-called "Warm Up! Workshop" had the general objective to explore what possibilities and results can be reached in terms of social value in St. Petersburg's specific public spaces, through the implementation of some design tools. The city of St. Petersburg is a novel case study in which we can apply the two main subjects due to the fact that social values and public spaces live in opposition: in fact, public spaces are not helpful in social terms as meeting places.

Paying attention to this peculiar context, the workshop wanted to evaluate the general objective at two stages:

1. The grade of social innovation generated by the impact of design tools and methodologies on public spaces.
2. The terms of the consequential "urban regeneration" in the specific areas.

The authors proposed a five-day workshop dedicated to design for social innovation in the context of St. Petersburg. It is the most populated city in the north of the country, with a big historical center, a huge range of facilities and diverse communicative scenarios, though the opportunities to meet outside—mostly because of the weather—are not frequent, and neither is there valid scientific literature on this issue. The Faculty of Arts, where the workshop was held, is situated on Vasilyevsky Island, which is part of the historical center of the city but feels isolated because of its geographical qualities. These issues offer a scenario to be investigated in terms of design.

First, the students were invited to build a story around the experience on Vasilyevsky Island of a specific users, chosen by students according to what they found interesting during their observations and according the traditional structure of fairytale proposed by Vladimir Propp: a hero, an enemy, the setting, the conflict, the solution, and the emotional experience throughout the story (Propp 2010). Second, by observing and recording every aspect of the experience—so that this narrative was similar to a client's journey—students understood and designed the experience in terms of concept: the design solution was related to an improvement of the analyzed experience in the city; the students were asked to write and illustrate the story of this design experience and to tell how it has changed thanks to the solution. Both the steps were illustrated in terms of storyboards, according to the graphical way of avant-garde designer Lissitzky, in order to visualize and narrate the solution.

Case Study: Vasilyevsky

There were several criteria for choosing locations for the workshop. Firstly, there should be some problem with the location. Secondly, there should be a community that this location could be relevant for, but that somehow is not engaged with it enough. And finally, the location should present some opportunity that is not yet recognized but could benefit the community. Authors suggested six such places on Vasilyevsky Island: the Andreevsky Market; the Spit of the island, which is the meeting point for local dancing and motorcyclists' communities; the Makarova Embankment with its football fans and tourist buses; the Betancourt bridge, the new bridge across the Neva River popular among cyclists; the Lieutenant Schmidt Embankment, popular

among fisherman; and the Blagoveshchensky Garden, where senior citizens and mothers with children walk in the daytime.

Andreevsky Market is a historical place. It used to be one of the most popular markets in St. Petersburg and market trade has been conducted in this location since the first half of the eighteenth century. In 2019 (after the workshop) the market was renovated and became a popular, fashionable food court. It is planned to turn the historical market into a public space where various gastronomic and educational events, including lectures, workshops, festivals ,and public talks, will take place. This fashionable concept, unfortunately, does not take into account the interests of local people, who had been attached to the place before the reconstruction. The locals who used to visit the market before its reconstruction created a community in the social network where they express their reaction to the renovations. They create criticizing, ironic but quite friendly posts containing anthropological observations, descriptions of the newcomers, new visitors to the market, describing the hipster lifestyle and the new product range. According to the locals, the new public space embodies the "Moscow style" due to its commercial orientation and fairground spirit, which does not correspond to the Petersburgers' mentality. All this confirms that the reconstruction project represents an example of disruptive and business-oriented innovation, and not a sustainable social one. Most of the locals feel that they have lost a location that used to be significant for them.

At the time of the workshop, the market was not yet renovated and represented a traditional trade spot. But that place also had its disadvantages, which was the reason for the reconstruction. The main problem was the number of people visiting the market. It used to be a popular place when it was the only shopping area on the island, but with the growth in retail sales, the Andreevsky Market lost its competitive capacity. The market occupied a large area and there was a lack of customers, so it looked deserted during the day; there was no social life typical of a traditional market. However, during the research the students found a significant advantage of the market, which became the starting point and the inspiration for their project. Agricultural markets are the only legal places in Russia were one can sell self-grown products. This feature made the market attractive to a certain community. The market provided special, free-trade places for disabled people and senior citizens, which allowed them to sell the products they had grown in their gardens. For many senior citizens, whose social situation in our country is very precarious, this opportunity is vital. Also, gardening is still a popular activity and even a kind of lifestyle among Russian senior citizens. In the Andreevsky Market, pensioners were provided with a free tray and scales; they only had to go through the process of certifying of their products to get permission to use this opportunity.

Another location is the Lieutenant Schmidt Embankment. This long embankment on the Neva River runs from the Blagoveshchensky Bridge to the 22nd line of Vasilyevsky Island. In the center of the embankment, there is a wide staircase that descends to the river. From the 12th to the 21st line, the embankment is divided into two tiers, with the lower one traditionally serving as a berth. This place is called the Promenade area but, at the moment, it is poorly developed. However, this is one of the few places in the city where you can approach the water because the Lieutenant Schmidt embankment is rather low compared to the other embankments in St. Petersburg. Due to its location and a number of other features, the Lieutenant Schmidt Embankment is attractive to various communities: runners and roller skaters, leisurely strollers, watercolor enthusiasts, families with children, tourists from cruise ships, but mostly fishermen. Street fishing is a popular hobby in St. Petersburg, a way of spending free time, and the community of fishermen is very large. Fans of street fishing have skills and deep knowledge of various subtleties and peculiarities of the craft: the speed of the current, the influence of the weather conditions, etc. In St. Petersburg, fishing festivals and competitions are held annually. During these events, the strongest compete with each other and share their knowledge with beginners, pushing them to improve their skills. For most of the fishermen, street fishing is not only an art and craft, but also a kind of a lifestyle, thus the communicative aspect is at the core of

the process. They report that they like to communicate with tourists and city residents, revel in their excited reaction to the process of fishing, and enjoy having photos taken with the guests of the city.

Design and Didactical Results

"Babushka"

The project "Babushka" (by E. Dauranova, E. Kilinbaeva, and E. Starodumova) is inspired by the special feature of the Andreevsky market—the market has a place where pensioners can sell their goods. This feature has a large potential for development as it provides retirees not only with the opportunity to sell something, but also with the opportunity to communicate with each other and with their customers. This insight led students to the idea that the market could become a meeting point for elder and younger generations. Retirees often feel lonely, redundant, and excluded from social life of the city, as the city does not provide enough variety of events, social activities, or public spaces for this specific target audience. They often become detached from their families not only physically (because their children often live far away), but also spiritually due to the generation gap. The digital divide makes this even worse. At the same time, the elder generation has special skills, especially manual skills, which are lost by the younger generation. For example, they know how to knit or how to cook special traditional foods, etc.

The team of students suggested the idea of a platform that helps elderly people and young people to meet each other in order to exchange their skills. For example, older men/women can arrange a kind of a workshop to which young men/women can enroll. To make the service accessible and understandable for the elder users, it is suggested to provide an analog device that shows a request for a workshop. For example, there is a demand for knitting lessons, and one can confirm that she/he wants and can conduct this lesson on a specified day and time, then she presses a button and receives a piece of paper with a reminder. At the same time, young people get confirmation of the workshop in the application on their smartphone. This means that the lesson will take place. So, at the appointed time, they can meet at the market, in a special place. Elder people can share experiences and young people can develop their skills. The platform helps to establish communication between two different social groups, to unleash the untapped potential of the place, and to create the public space without excluding the community already engaged in the place.

From a didactic standpoint, the group of students understood the potential contained within the place, developing a project that, starting from reassembling the existing and available resources of the place (Mueller 2018), was able to establish a new form of socialization capable of creating a connection between two different targets. This fact is the main issue that has determined a result in terms of urban regeneration in the specific context, not only from a social point of view but also from an economical one, using storytelling as the main tool to build and narrate the concept.

"The Hoop App"

The Lieutenant Schmidt Embankment is a popular place among the city residents and guests of the city. The place attracts different social groups, as it is one of the few embankments in the city that provides direct access to the water. However, there is no reason to stay at the place for long and to spend hours there.

The starting point for creating the "The Hoop App" project (by O. Andrushenko and D. Shelkanogova) was the immersion into the subculture of street fishing. The students found out that the fishermen are eager to communicate and to share their knowledge. The product suggested by the team consists of two key elements—a mobile app and "the hoop device." The aim of the mobile app is to find fishing spots in the city and to connect people to locations. The

hoop is a colored ring-shaped device used as a tool for training special skills of casting the line. It is a kind of an interactive educational game. The hoops are placed in the river and people taking part in the "game" cast the line with an object equivalent to bait. When the "bait" goes into a hoop, the hoop starts to glow. The product is inspired by the communicative spirit of street fishing and it works as a tool for engaging new people into the community. The aesthetic of the device brings something different to the place, as it looks like a light installation. The colored shapes in the water attract attention of the audience, making them interested in the process.

Conclusion

The students were able to realize an urban regeneration through the design of basic products that enhance the usability of the place. Indeed, by acting on a small scale, and not on an urban one, they have developed an improvement in usability without de-structuring the recognizable physiognomy of the place. The project was seen to be a tool for regeneration that, starting from a small scale, was capable of social and economic regeneration that, as also claimed by Matt Weaver (2001), can subvert the decline of an area. In fact, the concept can be extended to all those places with a similar conformation to the one examined; in this way the project can foresee the participation of the municipality and become a new resource in greater economic and social terms.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tatiana Aleksandrova: Lecturer, Department of Design, St. Petersburg University, St. Petersburg, Russia

Mariia Zolotova: Lecturer, Department of Architecture and Design, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China

Gianni Denaro: PhD Candidate, Department of Planning, Design, Technologies of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

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