



De- arhitectura in my school [de-a arhitectura în școala mea] Romania

De-a Arhitectura Association project

Location: 5 secondary schools* from Bucharest, Romania

Time frame: 1 school year, September 2106- June 2017, inauguration of finished works - October 2017

Students age: 12-16 years old

Number of participants: 110 students, 6 teachers, 14 architects.

Learning objectives: use of design thinking in a real project, responsibility for the school community, team work.

Team: 5 teams architects + teachers (8 architects+ 6 teachers), 6 architects + 1 psychologist for the project team

Team leader: arch. Mina Sava- De-a Arhitectura Association [DAA].

Financing: Bucharest Community Foundation by the mobilizamexcelenta.com program of Porsche Romania, Romanian Chamber of Architects.

Budget: 17 000 euro financing (direct project costs), 6 000 euro Association contribution and other sponsors (teachers and architects training, administrative and communication expenses).

Context

The school is the main socializing place for children, the place that builds communities. In Romania more than 90% of the schools were built before 1989, in communist times, and the schools spaces and curriculum are outdated. Students involved in the project pointed out that their main need is for social and relaxation places, but also attractive places for individual or small group learning in the school.

Aims:

- to test a participative design approach for schools, able to generate schools social places;
- to make students use design thinking on a real project and to make them improve their team working capabilities;
- to stimulate, through its outcomes, an advocacy campaign for the development of education infrastructure to the standards of the 21st century.

Program development

A beta version of the program was tested in 2015-2016 in 3 schools, mostly the theoretical approach, the feedback collected suggested that it should be very useful for the learning process to have the project materialized in a built form. The program of 2016-2017 include this practical phase, it was developed in 5 schools in Bucharest at the same time and the challenge was also to find out which was the favorite intervention by the students:

- social and relaxation areas in the courtyard, 3 schools
- informal learning areas in the library and classroom, 2 schools
- mobile classroom- a mobile toolbox for the out of the classroom lessons, 1 school
- toilets redesign, in a more cheerful spirit, 1 school

In the pictures are presented 3 of the projects, where construction is finished to this date.

The process

Is not linear, the accent is on team work, students have different tasks that were done in parallel.

- A. **The Team:** the purpose of the project and formation of the team, establish everybody role/ roles in the team according to abilities and preferences (the architects, the IT, the models makers, the writer, the friend raiser, the fundraiser, the graphical artists, the account, the speaker, etc...).
- B. **Communication, friend raising and fundraising:** Facebook page, poster in school, flyers, concert to raise money and bring friends in the project, board or box of ideas in school, a basic fundraising lesson, presentations for the sponsors' on line competition on mobilizamexcelenta.com platform, search for other sponsors – relatives, friends.
- C. **The project**
 1. **The big picture** (research)
 - 1.1. Exploration of the existing school premises, guided tour of the school by the students for the architects.
 - 1.2. Documentation:
 - a. about the school: document about the history of the building and neighborhood context, search for building architectural drawings, building of a scale model, interviews with the school users;
 - b. about how a XXIth century school should be: DAA architects presentation, students research on internet, resulting in *Pinterest* boards and physical mood boards;
 - 1.3. Analysis of the present situation by SWOT diagram, finalized with a presentation of the school opportunities and weakness to the school principals.
 2. **The question** (formulation): what small intervention will improve the *big picture*. This was translated in all 5 schools in an intervention on public social places, in and outside. --> **defining the project subject (theme).**
 3. **Zoom in** (execution)
 - 3.1. generation and selection of ideas for the intervention;
 - 3.2. prototypes: drawings, models, 1/1 objects;
 - 3.3. testing of maximum 3 different prototyped ideas with the users and authorities (schools principals);
 - 3.4. choosing the most feasible one: great impact in school life, many beneficiaries, costs within the sponsorship, little construction effort, can be an example for other schools, etc;
 - 3.5. technical project: they assist the architect to technical drawings, materials choosing and specifications, quantities, costs and providers, calendar, etc.
 4. **Construction (execution)** : with the volunteer help of adults from school and parents, also hired professionals for specific works, DAA team.
 5. **Inauguration festivities:** event in each school, with the other participants in the project invited.

Program follow up

- I. **A participative design platform** (on www.de-a-arhitectura.ro) that present the technical projects and presentations of the projects proposals carried out in schools. As most of the schools are similar, being constructed according to the communist standard school projects, these proposals will fit most Romanian schools, urban or rural. Thus, the platform will have examples and projects that can be implemented / adapted in other schools, and the resources will be free. In the first phase we will

publish this 5 projects. Each year, more resource projects, done in the *de-a arhitectura in my school program*, will be added. The platform will show also the statistics of the data collected in this program, on the pupils ideas for their schools.

- II. Implementation of the programe in more schools**, in 2017-2018 it continues with 5 schools in different cities in the country, only one will be financed for building, at the end of the school year they sent an application for funding. The students will also learn how to pitch their project to a sponsor.

** The program was tested in the following schools in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017:*

- *Liceul Teoretic „Miguel de Cervantes”, Bucharest, 2016-2017*
- *Liceul Pedagogic „Anastasia Popescu”, Bucharest, 2016-2017*
- *Școala Gimnazială „Ionel Teodoreanu”, Bucharest, 2016-2017*
- *Școala Gimnazială „Pia Brătianu”, Bucharest, 2016-2017*
- *Școala Gimnazială Nr. 92, Bucharest, 2016-2017*
- *Școala Superioară Comercială „Nicolae Kretzulescu Bucharest, 2015-2016*
- *Liceul de Arte Plastice din Timișoara, 2015-2016*
- *Colegiul Național „Emil Racoviță” Cluj-Napoca, 2015-2016*