

Ravello Lab 2011

Panel 1

“Cities and culture: Strategic planning on cultural basis in urban area”

Background paper

INTRODUCTION:

In the actual world context, characterized by accelerated changes, globalization of the processes, technologic revolutions and financial crisis, cities are subject to paradoxes, conflicts and contradictions. Nevertheless, the city represents the starting point for ensuring a more desirable future for all. It is in the city, indeed, that processes of economic regeneration, social cohesion, environmental sustainability and democratic participation can grow up. The basis of this perspective lies on the creativity of the cities, because creativity represents the most important form of immaterial asset, the most powerful energy of a city. Without creativity a city is doomed to decline. Creativity can arise and be effective only thanks to knowledge and culture.

The model of Creative City has been elaborated by UNESCO in 2004, with the project “Creative Cities Network” which is a network builder to promote local development in the frame of society, economy and culture, all over the world.

At the present time more than half of the world population lives in urban areas, and the idea of “Creative Cities” is that culture can play an important role in the evolution and regeneration of the cities and creativity becomes a key element for economic planning carried on by public institutions.

2. Cities, culture and great events

The perspective of considering culture as a key factor for creative development is more and more spread in the cities worldwide, and a lot of cities represent themselves as “creative cities”.

This is because culture is becoming the centre of several different strategies, concerning with spaces, environment, economy, etc... with the aim of putting again in life historical places of the city and its cultural landscape, in a perspective of new cultural production.

One of the more relevant issues in the processes of urban regeneration is the promotion of great events (among which the most important experience is the model of the European Capital of Culture) of celebrative, commercial, sporting or artistic kind.

These events attract not only visitors but also investments for the development of local economy, accelerating processes of changing, especially if the events are directly in connection with the identity of the place in which they are realized, so they can enhance local identity in global dimension.

1. Which are the conditions for the success of cultural based development strategies?

The real success of a great event is more relevant if it is able to improve the material and immaterial infrastructural system, producing not only more incomes, but more employment, local development, social and human capability, and relationships between public and private players. It is necessary to avoid a mere process of urban “embellishment” that makes the city only a famous brand, without real effects on citizens and their society.

Therefore, the evaluation of the experiences already realized can be useful to produce new knowledge that can be efficiently applied in general contexts.

The approach of this workshop starts from specific experiences and aims at creating a debate on them, showing how to operate in order to obtain successful strategies, avoiding mistakes and failures.

Some possible issues of the debate are:

Placemaking

- How to make public spaces and “location” the starting point for new strategies of regeneration?
- How to promote shared process linked to the relevant places of a city, in order to obtain self-organization, self-management and self-governance for the citizens?
- Which are the mechanism that can realize co-desing processes, involving the inhabitants of the city

Strategy

- How to promote events that can make *sense* for the community, bringing new identity?
- How to promote lasting multiplicative effects and synergies?

Measurability

- Which are the markers for the evaluation of direct, indirect, and induced effects caused by these experiences of urban regeneration?
- How to evaluate the faculty of stimulating a creative milieu for the wellness of all the inhabitants?
- Which tools and actions permit the acquisition of the data for the implementation of the learning system towards the institutions?

Applicability

- How to reduce the gap between theoretical models of urban regeneration and practices?
- How to transfer the best practices into the context of a less developed areas?