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VISIONING FOR SPATIAL PLANNING

URBANITY & WELLBEING: CO DESIGNING AN AUTHENTIC TEACHING APPROACH

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Professors

Università di Firenze, Dipartimento di Architettura: Valeria Lingua, Carlo Pisano (Coordinatori), Giuseppe De Luca, Elisa Caruso

University of Birmingham: Dr Irina Kuznetsova (coord.), Dr John Round, Dr Jessica Pykkt

University of Leiden: Dr. Alistair Kefford, Prof. Andre Gerrits

Context

Urbanity and well-being: co-designing an authentic teaching approach is a pilot project in the frame of the new “European University of Wellbeing – EUNIWELL”. The European University for Well-Being – EUniWell – has come together in response to the Council of the European Union’s invitation for member states to pursue a horizontal, cross-sectoral, knowledge-based approach to advance the ‘Economy of Wellbeing’ (24 October 2019).

EUniWell unites 7 diverse universities and 102 associate partners drawn from 7 distinct regions of Europe. It presents an action-oriented response to well-being, grounded in research expertise, educational leadership and civic engagement to meet the challenge set out by the Council of the European Union and the OECD.

EUniWell will take an integrated system-thinking approach to deliver a meaningful and sustainable step-change to the well-being of our institutions, staff, students, and societies. In partnership with societal stakeholders, and working across the knowledge-education-innovation axis, EUniWell will play a critical, intermediary role in shaping research-based policy and

pedagogy to inform decision-making, underpin skills development, and realize a measurable impact on European citizens' quality of life.

The EUNIWELL mission is:

- ✓ to empower cutting-edge research, education and training and interact closely with society to enhance global and regional well-being in social, environmental, economic, and cultural terms. This mission covers the traditional missions of universities but places them under the overarching framework of global well-being. It requires us to explicitly analyze and measure the multi-level impact of each action.
- ✓ to promote internal well-being for each student and member of staff, for each educational programme, for each disciplinary field and department, for each campus and for the university as a whole. This mission underlines the importance of ensuring that the way we work is aligned with our vision, that the vision we carry is also one we live on a daily basis.

Within this frame, Urbanity & Wellbeing is a pilot project intended to open the way toward shared modules and courses in the frame of the European University of Wellbeing.

Project objectives. The project will develop and deliver a module on 'Urbanity and well-being' for final year undergraduate students at the Universities of Birmingham (Geography, Planning and Environmental Science), Leiden (Urban Studies) and Florence (Architecture and Regional Design). While the module will be launched in the 2022-2023 academic year, UniWell seed-funding will enable elaborating the module via virtual workshops and person meetings (early 2022) and purchasing the equipment needed to complete authentic assignments. The core principles of the project – co-design, creativity and interdisciplinarity- form its main objectives:

1. To co-design between students, academics and professional services (such as careers network and student project officers) the main themes and assessment methods for a module on Urbanity and Well-being.
2. From the ground up to have innovative transferable skills built into every stage of the module – such as working in cross-Europe interdisciplinary teams and assessment via visual methods.
3. To create a network of research-led academics for exchange ideas for research informed teaching in areas of geographies of well-being, urban design and planning.
4. Using a blended teaching approach and based on UniWell values, make the module accessible for all consortium partners.

While the concept of well-being is theoretically broad, the module will focus on its social and spatial components. Within the partner network, there is a world-leading research and teaching in Planning, Environmental Health, Geography, Environmental Science, Architecture and Regional design, which brought together will provide a truly interdisciplinary module. Within these disciplines, there is particular expertise in mental and social well-being, and migration, critical perspectives on the psychological and bodily dynamics of situated human behaviour, affective forms of urban governance, urban air pollution (University of Birmingham) Leiden University will bring themes as environmental sciences, migration, multiculturalism and criminology and social psychology. Within these disciplines there is particular expertise in governance of sustainability, multiculturalism and use of language, fear of crime and criminality, policing and health behaviour change. The Regional Design Lab of the Department of Architecture, University of Florence will explore the relationship among urbanity and well-being from multiple points of view, concerning governance rescaling, strategic planning, participation at the regional and local scale, approaching the analysis and practices of Euniwell Universities in the extended interaction with social and institutional actors within their cities and regions.

The project's participants will benefit greatly from the networking and collaboration within the consortium as a new team will be formed, enabling the launch of an innovative module which, due to its blended learning approach, will be available not only for the partners' departments/schools but for other schools within the consortium.

Project program:

Month 1-3 'Ideas and inventory' On-line workshop 1 for project participants, including professional services and students' representatives, to lay out the project's milestones, key responsibilities of the participants and communication strategy.

Focus groups with students for the creation of a “Bank of Well-being” for ideas regarding topics which they would like to be included into the module.

A survey among the alumni to reveal which topics of urban well-being they would find useful in their current employment and which skills they wish they could develop while at the university. Lecturers at partners’ universities conduct an ‘inventory’ of current and recent modules on urbanity and well-being and select ‘best practices.’ Another inventory includes the mapping of research within the departments of partners’ universities which can contribute the research-lead teaching.

Months 4-6. ‘Pitching up’ On-line workshop 2 “Urbanity and well-being” for the presentation of the findings from the surveys and ‘inventory’ of best practices in teaching topics related to urbanity and well-being. The elaboration of the three key themes of the module and their main components. Co-designing with the students and professional services the ideas for authentic assessment strategy. Creating an intermediate project’s report.

Months 7-9. ‘Let’s go!’ (Poyekhali!) On-line workshop 3 ‘Urbanity and well-being: research methodologies for the students’ will aim to discuss both traditional and non-representative methodologies of well-being research in urban space, and discussion on public engagement. The draft of a guideline for the creation of podcast and video-blogs will be presented. Focus-groups for the students in each partner university with the support of students engagement officers (three in total). A draft of the module design and key short lectures will be recorded and uploaded for the students.

Months 10-12. Walk and talk. Post-pandemic meeting up. Organisation of a two-day workshop in Birmingham for the project’s participants including academics, professional services (Career officers and Student Engagement officers) and at least six student representatives from each university. Day 1 of the workshop will involve discussions on the current issues of urban well-being in the EU and the UK with stakeholders from city councils, NGOs and international organisations. During day 2, the project’s participants will focus on the module’s design, including authentic assignments and discussions on making the module efficient in terms of career opportunities and transferable skills. Study visits between partners’ universities for the students and lecturers. Experiencing an elaborated during the project guidance on creating video-blogs and podcasts. Final project’s report.

The seminar answer to the last phase: after the construction of the module and the realization of Focus Groups with the students, they are asked to participate to the Walk and Talk activity in presence in Birmingham.

Educational objectives

- ✓ To co-design among students, academics and professional services (such as careers network and student project officers) the main themes and assessment methods for a module on Urbanity and Well-being.
- ✓ To create a network of students for exchange ideas for teaching/learning in areas of geographies of well-being, urban design and planning.
- ✓ Ability to apply knowledge, giving feedbacks and understanding design in the frame of teaching.
- ✓ Definition of a course in an educational environment that fosters the integration of different knowledge and expertise.
- ✓ Using a blended teaching approach and based on UniWell values, make the module accessible for all consortium students.

Language

The thematic seminar will be in English.

Dates

The thematic seminar provides the attribution of **2 CFU** through on-site activities carried out independently between study, research and processing in Birmingham.

The seminar will be held in the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022, **from the 20th to the 22nd of April.**

Three days of site visits, lectures and workshops are expected to be organized by the University of Birmingham.

The seminar will be concluded with the presentation of the course in a public event at the beginning of June 2020, organized by the University of Florence.

Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the project with a maximum budget of € 500.

The presentation of the seminar will be held online on the 15th of December at 11.30.

Registration

The thematic seminar is open to Italian and foreign students enrolled in an architecture school. To participate, students must send their application to valeria.lingua@unifi.it **no later than 12th of December 2021.**

Students must indicate in the subject line "EUNIWELL THEMATIC SEMINAR" and must provide in the email text:

- ✓ Name, surname
- ✓ degree course and year of study
- ✓ motivation to participate to the project

The seminar will be activated with a minimum number of 5 and a maximum of 8 participants. Participants will be selected according to the order of registration, year and motivation.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on the final feedbacks of the course project.