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EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
CONVENTION EUROPÉENNE DU PAYSAGE



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

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“The implementation of the European Landscape Convention at local level: local democracy”

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Additional contribution

Identity, Community and Rebuilding

**The experience of a Charrette with the Observatory of the Landscape of the Eastern Lands
of Modena**

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Abstract

If the identity of a Landscape is the result of knowledge so the Community is the main contributor to it: it's thanks to its representation that a community acquires in identity.

When the identity of the Landscape falls, the Community suffers from the lack of a place populated by symbolic elements, the place of its own well-being and its own history.

This is the case of the Landscape of the City of Cavezzo, devastated within the 2012 earthquake in Emilia Romagna, and its inhabitants trying to reconstruct through the experience of the project Charrette dedicated to the reconstruction of their symbol site with the instrument of the Observatory of the Landscape of the Eastern Lands of Modena.

Foreword

The strategic vision contained in the articulation of the European Landscape Convention contains a vision so innovative to be epochal: by enhancing the perception that citizens have their own places of living, one can achieve a profound expression of local identities and diversity.

The process of enhancing the historical, cultural, ecological, social and economic components contained in the Landscape is a necessary tool for the well-being of citizens. And this affirmation is in itself a revolution.

Article 5

The European Landscape Convention supports the need for active participation of the population in the various policies of protection, management and planning, since “each individual influences the character of the landscape to which he belongs.”

Article. 5 states at the letter c) that it’s necessary to “initiate public participation procedures, local and regional authorities and other stakeholders involved in the definition and implementation of landscape policies”.

Any decision concerning the form and nature of the territory must be taken into account of the aspirations expressed by the populations as they are the very first users of the population.

The convention is clear in imposing a real duty to promote the widest participation for every citizen who represents an interest in bringing together the relationship between Landscape and Community. Community participation has the advantage of responding to a socially-quality social demand, which public authorities will not be able to escape.

This question has the strength to generate economic and financial growth, but also to awaken a public consciousness that is increasingly aware of the degradation and the banalisation of their living places, often a result of globalisation.

So, more local and less global.

For all these reasons, there is a need to provide training, information and education opportunities that seek to provide a greater number of people with all the tools they need to be involved and successfully participate in participatory processes.

Article 6, Specific measures

With these five specific measures, Awareness, Training and Education. Identification and Qualification, Objectives of landscape quality and Application, the first step to developing a “Landscape Project” is to locate it with the population that benefits it: only citizens have this power and that is to help create their own cultural and aesthetic identity in their own territory. By promoting and collaborating in the creation of their identifying characteristics develops a deep sense of belonging to a given community.

The decisions on a Landscape project, though taken by over-municipal entities for obvious allocative needs, if taken by common agreement with the first users, reduce the nimby effect in favour of yimby – yes in my backyard!

The “Landscape Project” is a complex process; scientific knowledge and methodology must be able to combine with the “common knowledge” to achieve the goal of designing the identity and the predominant characters of a given territory, the aspirations of the peoples who live the landscapes daily, and finally to give the people a high level of participation.

Article. 6.c) introduces landscape identification and qualification activities: objectively identify them and highlight their most significant and valuable values is the challenge proposed by the Treaty in accordance with the principles established by the Council of Europe.

Modus Operandi

With the Green Design Lab Plus Research Team, we have carried out an intense planning activity aimed at the creation and development of the Observatory of the Landscape of the Eastern Lands of Modena, in conjunction with the Association Uniamoci, a promoter of the Observatory in question.

Per poter utilizzare il glossario comune durante gli incontri pubblici con la Comunità è stato elaborato un documento che, in sette passi, illustra in sostanza le attività da intraprendere per la creazione di un Osservatorio paesaggistico locale.

The Modus Operandi consists of the following steps:

Step One - The Community recognises, *keywords; Community, Interest Group, Dialogue, Communication*

Step Two – Identifying of the Limit, *keywords; Character, Boundary*

Step Three – Programming Activities, *keywords Goals, Actions, Times, Resources*

Step Four – Participation Process Organisation, *keywords: Participation, Clarity, Accessibility*

Step Five – The Way to the Participation Process, *keywords Activating Participating Shares*

Step Six – Update of the activity planning, *keyword Review, Action, Goal, Resource, Timing*

Step Seven – The creation of the Observatory of Local Landscape

The project Charrette in Cavezzo

In May 2012, the laborious Emilia Romagna has been hit by a terrible earthquake: it has not been for over five hundred years.

Populations, administrations, and communities all went to work the next day, and also in Cavezzo, one of the municipalities that is part of the territory of the Observatory of the Landscape of the Eastern Lands of Modena. Over time, a number of solutions for the renovation of the houses were proposed and a considerable amount of economic and financial resources

were made available by the Emilia Romagna Region, although using somewhat complex administrative methods, reconstruction had been initiated under the best auspices.

The damage caused by the earthquake involved, in the same measure, both the built environment, the agricultural and the natural environment. In the framework of these intense activities we have felt the need to propose to the community of Cavezzo, within the framework of the activities of the Observatory, the development of a Charrette with the theme, the reconstruction and the use of a public building, in the heart of the urban landscape, almost completely destroyed by the earthquake.

The aim was to involve the Community in an active participation process that would bring the public the use of a public building to represent their community. Three days of intense work were held with the constant collaboration of several members of the Observatory who saw their Community aspirations so concrete. The public function which, in their view, shone for lack of, in that town so proved by natural events, was a Theatre!

What better ethical, political and common response.

The continuation of the events will tell us whether or not the Public Administration will have to consider this aspiration. It is certain that with this exercise of democracy the inhabitants of Cavezzo felt supported in their deepest aspirations and it seems that they have come up with this method, the pleasure of communicating publicly with both the institutions and the rest of the Community of the Observatory.

Charrette, a public consultation model

The Charrette is a technique used to define a participatory urban design process with strong eco-sustainable goals.

The procedure associated with the Charrette start-up involves three phases:

1 Phase / Pre Charrette

- 1.1 Clear definition of Project theme
- 1.2 Description of possible impacts on the Community
- 1.3 Identifying problems and opportunities
- 1.4 Identification of interested parties and their degree of involvement

2 Phase / Charrette

- 2.1 Meetings with all parties involved, both public and with stakeholders in which they are explored, discuss and define all positions related to the topics explored in Phase 1
- 2.2 Intermediate Pin-Up with the presentation of the first results obtained from the workshops of the participating laboratory. This meeting is open to all participants in the meetings to submit them in plenary to the first results achieved to collect more feedback
- 2.3 Second session of meetings with other subjects involved.

3 Step / Post Charrette

3.1 Implementation plan: The plan is refined, communication with all interested parties continues via email, social media, blogs, websites etc.

3.2 Public meeting to be held no later than 6 weeks after the Charrette, where the full plan of all the results of the participatory process is presented with a final project report useful for the continuation of the project.

The Charrette participatory process is recognised by the community and all promoters as the first step in sharing the future development of the redevelopment project: the final report is the basis for starting the urban regeneration work of the site, The Charrette is a brief and intense activity of all involved in future pronouncements in order to reduce time, cost and keep commitments with the community.

Participants in the Charrette participatory process are invited to openly and honestly examine all issues raised by the Team regarding the urban regeneration project in a limited time and urged to work for a shared solution that is acceptable to all. This working method helps to strengthen the sense of community and in order to streamline decision-making time of the actuators reducing misjudgment margins and increases awareness of the need for strong support for sustainable community development.