

Winner of Excellence in Teaching Prize 2007

Faculty of Urban and regional planning, IUAV University of Venice

A participative process of Urban Regeneration. Building an integrated programme aimed at improving the quality of urban and social life in a consolidated periphery of Venice

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The course has been appointed as winner because it fulfils the overall prize criteria to make a critical and constructive contribution of teaching. It will inspire and foster curiosity, rigour, creativity, critical thinking, and the building of lifelong learning.

The course examines the social dimension of sustainable development in the way that students investigate a group of settlements where good quality urban areas are found side by side with zones of urban decay and social distress. In particular, it exposes issues raised by immigration, both domestic and foreign.

The students learn how to create places and situations which promote social inclusion and the involvement of local actors in urban life and urban management; how to support the coexistence of different cultural and ethnic groups in the same urban spaces; and how to produce visions and scenarios arising from the interaction among local actors.

In a context in which top-down physical planning models are normally dominant, students learn how introducing the social practices of local actors can be a constitutive dimension of planning. Communicative and participatory planning is seen as a normal kind of planning, with its own body of technical skills to be learned. The course encourages students to reflect critically on theories of social equity to design proposals for participative processes.

Overall, the course reconstitutes a traditional physical planning process into an innovative socially rooted process which supports interaction among the full range of local actors, thus letting social processes lead to physical proposals.

It is a course that can easily be reproduced and applied.

Congratulations from the prize jury