Placemaking and Rebuilding Collective Identity, the case of Belmonte Calabro, Italy

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CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Belmonte Calabro - Italy
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Destination Analysis
Understanding the concept and philosophy of Placemaking led us to define a process and a series of activities that engage the community in an active manner and can provide an environment of inclusion and acceptance where the public space becomes home to everyone from different gender, age group, race and cultural background.

“Within each of the places, there should be at least 10 things to do. Cumulatively, these activities, places and destinations are what make a great city.”
PROJECT FOCUS

- **SOCIABILITY**
  - Diverse, Welcoming, Friendly, Pride, Neighborhood, Cooperative

- **USES AND ACTIVITIES**
  - Fun, Active, Special

- **COMFORT AND IMAGE**
  - Safe, Clean, Walkable, Historic, Atmospheric, Charming

- **ACCESS AND LINKAGES**
  - Proximity, Walkable, Accessible, Connected, Convenient

Diagram:
- Ephemeral community
- Local community
- Immigrant community
Porta a Terra
The proposal for this public space aims to regain the lost connection with the surrounding mountain landscape to make people aware of the natural characteristics present on site.

Timeless
This intervention represents the intersection between nature and dense urban fabric. History plays a key role in identifying a trajectory of new experiences that connects pre-existence and natural landscape.

Porta a Mare
The regeneration of Belvedere Principe Ravaschieri which is a node that has a vital historical and social role as it is the entrance point to Belmonte from the sea.
“Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. It is centered around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole.”  
[Placemaking, 2018]
BROADER PROJECT IMPACT

LEGEND

Real physical limit
Scope of activities

Cosenza

San Lucido

Fiumefreddo

Longobardi

Paola

Belmonte Calabro

Festa del vino
Madonna di Belmonte
La Rivoluzione delle Soppe

Festa di San Nicola
Festa della Taurina

Amantea

Festa di Sant'Antonio

56th ISOCARP
Virtual World Planning Congress
Post-Oil City
Planning for Urban Green Deals
November 2020 - February 2021
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

POWER OF 10+

Every place needs an amount of ten things to do in order to be an active one. Taking this into account, we understand the historical center of Belmonte Calabro as a whole place itself, hence the main idea is to create a network of public and semi-public areas for people from different cultures and backgrounds to gather and learn.

As part of this network is included the interventions already present in the area, and the regeneration of three selected underused public spaces.

LIGHTER QUICKER CHEAPER

Based on the principles of Placemaking, and together with the collective La Rivoluzione Delle Seppie, movable furniture were constructed during summer and winter workshops, where with the involvement of local people, immigrants, teachers and students the public spaces were reactivated as momentaneous scenarios for public participation.
CONCLUSIONS

1. The principles of placemaking understood through the work developed by the movement ‘Project for Public Space’ (PPS) are of extreme value for the preparation and planning for interventions in public spaces.

2. For a public space to be inclusive, it should respond to the changing needs of its users. Hence, adaptability plays a key role to be considered while designing such spaces. The more people feel accepted in a public space, the stronger the collective identity will be.

3. The best way to understand whether placemaking methods work is through a trial and error process, where observation and direct interaction with the people involved can shape more assertive decisions.

4. The global pandemic of COVID-19 we are living now in 2020 has shown that public spaces should not be considered as a luxury, but as a vital element that ensures our mental and physical health. Therefore, we strongly believe current and future efforts should focus and guarantee access to quality public spaces that welcome and reach everybody.

OBSERVATIONS

1. It is important to denote that the principles cited by PPS should be considered as general guidelines, which can adapt within time to the changes and needs of specific communities. From here arises the essential value of ‘Learning by doing’ process.

2. Think globally and act locally.

3. For the specific case of the community of Belmonte Calabro, while working with the organization ‘La Rivoluzione delle Seppie’ in application of ‘Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper’ methods, it was denoted a series of challenges with the senior age group. The outcomes were not as expected after the workshop ended, highlighting the need of a more permanent approach to regenerate the village.

4. The outcomes from this thesis project should be presented to the community and adapt to the outcomes. Due to the pandemic COVID-19, it is not possible to expose the results directly. Nonetheless, it will be presented soon.

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