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The impact of architectural education on children

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Abstract

Architectural education as a design education always encourages the creativity. The case studies realized with children shows that facing architecture in early ages when their brain has not formatted has a great potential both for architectural milieu and for consciousness of the children related to their surroundings. Being conscious in early age might bring an opportunity to shape more meaningful environments. For example, there is no need to be an architect to behave responsible with their environment; such as ecological problems, sustainability, traffic problems which are the tools for educating more responsible generations with their environment. They can perceive the world in different ways and constitute a conscious understanding of built environment. These meetings have double sided effect both on their mind and the milieu of architecture. This article will discuss mentioned thoughts above by means of workshops held abroad.

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1. Introduction

Architectural education as a design education always encourages the creativity. To meet with the concept of creativity in early ages makes the people more conscious with their living environment. Guilford (1950) stated that “a creative act is an instance of learning” and “a comprehensive learning theory must take into account both insight and creative activity.” (p:446)

The built environment could get shaped by the responsible people. If every person could get chance to meet with architectural education in his/her childhood, he or she could easily take position when producing a decision related with his/her built environment. Architectural education which contains the creativity could be given to child to make the world more liveable place. This kind of attempt has a potential to juxtapose both culture of child and culture of architecture. Thus, this attempt could provide new approaches which are useful and could be innovative for both sides; for culture of child and of architecture. It has opportunities to feed both sides.

With the help of creativity education;

Every child improves his (her) personal perception with built environment. It is witnessed that **way of seeing** is radically changed. Children become open to new kind of perceptions. They develop **ecological consciousness** easily in architectural education. They become aware what is happening in their environment.

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Children learn to define the world with their own bodies. They improve the concepts of scale and proportion. To conceptualize **scale and proportion** is useful for mathematical conceptualization.

Learning by playing and acting in the fields of art and crafts are the main aim during the process. While playing, children always feel themselves in fun. Architectural education is formed by the postulate of **children participation**. Creativity education takes its power from the child; it is a kind of process sourced by child. That's why teacher loose his power over children. Participation of children is the basic principle at creativity education; it is not one sided from teacher to children, it works bidirectional; both from children to teacher and from teacher to children.

Ability to be creative in every situation brings to be **innovative** in the future. Children improve their **problem solving ability**. Creativity improves their entrepreneurship, and makes them quickly give response against hard situations.

2. Case Studies

Three cases will be shared to open the discussion and to show different methods. First Workshop is Soundings for Architecture 5, made on August 2004, in Finland. Second Workshop is Liliput versus Brobdingnag, made on May 2005, in North Cyprus. Third Workshop is Dialogue with Surroundings, made on September 2006, in Poland. The first and the third workshops organized by Playce International Association. (www.playce.org) Second workshop was organized and constructed by me in the context of a festival.

2.1. First Workshop: Soundings for Architecture 5, August 2004, Finland

The first workshop was held in the context of "Soundings for Architecture" at Jyvaskyla in Finland on August 2004. Twenty adults from different countries, twenty children, aged at twelve to fifteen, from Finland and a professor from UK were participated. The workshop and the methods which were used during the process were not planned before; each group made discussions about the methods and strategies the day before the workshop starts and during the workshop. It is a kind of interactive process which was fed from the behaviours of children.

The aim of the workshop was to design street furniture. The objectives were to reveal the differences both in humans and in environment, to make discussions on the qualities of both urban environment and the natural environment, and to make the children more aware with nature.

On the first day, after name game, children showed the sites on a walk tour and told their opinion related with city. A nearby hill gave views of the whole town and the surrounding lakes. After taking photos, every participant chose a photo to discuss on about. Secondly an image game was played: Image Game- could a rock be a seat? It is asked to the children to be creative what street furniture to be in natural environment. Instead of using well-known street furniture; they searched for natural-street furniture.

For building up the city on children's eyes; a mapping game was constructed. A city tour guided by children was arranged for discovering the places which needed improvement and the chosen places marked on the map. This game is a team work; children's voices were heard, their own thoughts about their city were listened. Their critical skills were exercised. The place which had the most negative auras was chosen to make new suggestions to improve it.

The second day passed with analysing of the site. Building a collective sculpture: a sculpture was made collectively to reflect the genius loci of the site. This activity is also very creative to see how the children perceive their environment and acknowledge on it. After the decision on river site as final site, a new tour made in river site for adding new qualities by sketching. At this activity whole the children and adults made sketch for constructing a new liveable environment; more peaceful space, more clean space etc.

Third day is the final day to make a design for a site. For finding the final design a quick generation was made; every participant suggests 5 ideas by drawing them in five minutes and then three designs were chosen by voting; they were a swing, a swinging light and a pier. For fulfilling the design in a short amount of time, a child and an adult began to work in pairs. Four groups were formed; one is focused on the design itself, one modelled the site, the other is worked on materials and the last group let the people know about the last installation. As a last design,

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