Biblio HUB

**UNCOVERING THE POTENTIAL
OF BUCHAREST'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Abstract

BiblioHUB emerged out of a fascination with the potential of the library to be an essential cultural compass of society, having the ability to adapt to new societal paradigms, and thus, to become a model of alternative public space. BiblioHUB is a self-initiated project by **Collective East** that aims to explore the potential of Bucharest's public libraries network to become community-oriented knowledge hubs by using the Dutch model for integrated strategic library-design. BiblioHUB wants to reinforce the library as material entity, beyond concept or institution, by acknowledging its physical presence and impact on the city and society.

The three-part project was initiated in January 2015 and it was kick-started in September 2015 when it secured a grant from the **Creative Industries Fund NL** for the exploration of collaborative opportunities between the Netherlands and Romania. This grant offered the possibility to open up a dialogue with stakeholders in Romania, and to make a first hand analysis of the public library system of Bucharest.

Out of the desire to create a coherent and comprehensive image of the subject matter, we brought together our findings in this booklet as well as on the project's website, corroborating statistical data with spatial information, foto surveys, qualitative evaluations, as well as relevant models of Romanian and international initiatives. To our knowledge this is currently the only source bringing together this type of information over the entire network of the **Bucharest Metropolitan Library (BMB)** and is available for public online access on the project's website.

Contents

5 Quotes on the Idea of Library

"This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women."

UNESCO Public Library Manifesto

"The library is a place where time's habitual ironies come home to roost - books lining shelves like shabby carrier pigeons, resting and ruffled, ready to deliver their dispatches from futures past and histories to come."

Matthew Battles - Library: An Unquiet History

"The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries."

Jorge Luis Borges - The Library of Babel

"A library is an ever-growing entity; it multiplies seemingly unaided, it reproduces itself by purchase, theft, borrowings, gifts, by suggesting gaps through associations, by demanding completion of sorts."

Alberto Manguel - The Library at Night

"Like the myth of the Tower, the myth of the Library is about the condition of man in an endlessly confusing universe. (...) the Library is by all means a reference to the Tower of Babel, and in a way its inversion. As the narrative goes, the Library is an eternal and endless interior, whereas the ultimate Tower is known as an endless exterior, meant to reach the heavens. This is the endlessness in which both these and other icons of utopian ambition are connected. (...)"

Frank den Oudsten Associates - Alphabet City, an (inverse) archeology of narrative space

The Library

The Dutch Library

One key driving point of the project is the Dutch library model. Dutch libraries are known to be more than just containers and disseminators of information; they are places of social innovation and interaction, as they promote knowledge exchange, culture and education by addressing local communities using a hybrid format that allows for various associations of tangential functions. Essentially, they represent an integral and strategic design model that comprises components of urbanism, architecture, design, services, staff, PR and branding, in one coherent concept that is constantly evolving and, thus, it surpasses the dated notion of the library (from typology and services, to its administrative independence).

In the following material we chose to feature several examples of Dutch Library that showcase different elements of either design, services or administrative framework that we consider are relevant for the Dutch Library as a model of strategic integrated design.

Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam

Amsterdam, NL

O: ontwikkeling & educatie
B: bibliotheek- en informatiediensten
A: activiteiten, ontmoeting en debat

Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam, 2007 © Ceinturion

The Amsterdam Public Library (OBA) is a cultural organisation, whose aim is the promotion of the free flow of information within the community of Amsterdam. In addition the OBA provides a centre for meeting and education for all sections of the population. This generates many cultural and promotional activities which are organised to stimulate and propagate an interest in reading, education and the transfer of knowledge and culture.

OBA provides library services for Amsterdam, Diemen and Ouder Amstel through the central library and other 25 branch libraries.

With an annual operating budget of 20 million euros (2006) and having over 4 million visitors, the library is the most visited cultural institution in amsterdam. the central library in Oosterdokseiland attracts around 5,000 visitors daily.

Given the changes undergone by the new information driven society, the OBA has drawn up a new vision for 2015-2018 which they intend to implement in order to meet the increasing demands of the community. The driving force behind this vision is a deep understanding of how the needs of their users are changing and how the library must surpass its identity as a lending organisation into one that facilitates lifelong learning, meeting, debating, sharing & exchanging knowledge and include all these into a constant personal development within the digital age.

OBA VISION 2015-2018

Focus 1: OBA online
Nowadays the issue is not shortage of information, but access to the right information. OBA would like to follow suit with Amsterdam - one of the leading creative and digital media innovators by expanding its online resources beyond its own collection to offer structured access to as many resources from the digital world.

This is not limited to the current e-book collection but it's about the much wider digital world collection. Because the balance between digital and paper is going to change, OBA will research the possibility of a digital connection with Collection Amsterdam and the libraries of the universities of Amsterdam.

OBA will continue to improve online services and support groups with specific needs by helping them at service desks.

OBA will research and, if needed, develop digital possibilities for OBA members to gather and share knowledge with other OBA members. This includes a digital version of reading clubs.

Focus 2: OBA incubator of the metropolis
OBA wants to create a maker space for the development of audiovisual content, digital media and games. With OBA live (TV) and Amsterdam FM, it wants to share the developments with a wide public. By creating a maker space within the library, direct interaction can be made possible with any developed tool which can be tested by consumers on the spot. OBA wants to create a space where the creative industry can meet the consumers.

Focus 3: OBA as neighborhood meeting point & educational partner

An average local library takes care of around 30.000 inhabitants and it is the gateway for information, knowledge, literature and culture. The local libraries use 48% of the budget, yet 67% of all borrowed books come from these libraries. This is due to the fact that the local libraries are very accessible.

For children, elderly people and people with special needs it is often the only knowledge hub and public meeting venue they have access to. Through its local libraries, OBA is also able to cater to local needs at a neighborhood level. They also enable the organization of local events and are part of the local social structure and cohesion. To consolidate its function of meeting point, OBA plans to extend opening hours by using volunteers. In this way a local library becomes a meeting point for and by the locals.

Pop-up libraries

OBA commits to provide local and flexible services via POP-UP libraries in community centers, schools and elderly care homes. Here books can be delivered closer to their home. Further OBA is thinking of starting 24/7 deposit boxes to borrow or return books.

Education

OBA is developing and creating a continuous education program for increasing language- and reading ability and media knowledge. The program is carried out by teachers of the local schools and by employees of the local libraries and is an important promotion for the libraries.

Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam, 2008 © Jorge Royan
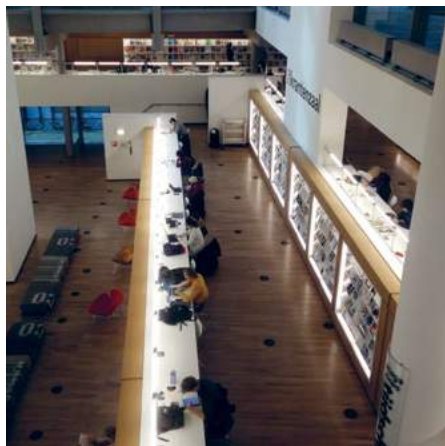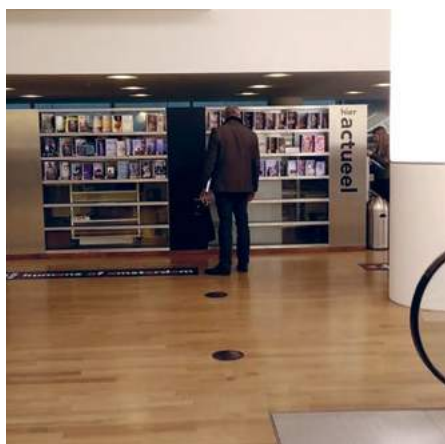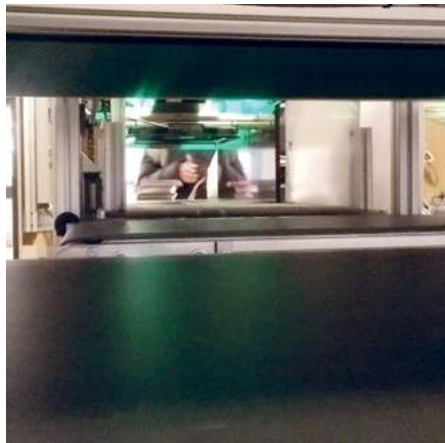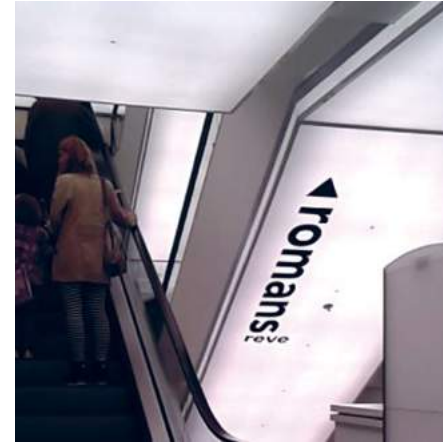
DOK

Delft, NL

DOK is the place to be in Delft when it comes to books, films, music, art and magazines. For a small fee you get access to a world of information, inspiration and entertainment. a better friend than Google is at hand when you need information or advice.

DOK consists of two locations, DOK Centrum and DOK Voorhof. Each of which has its own youth department. Here kids can borrow books, read comics, play games on the computer or the PlayStation, listen to music, participate to workshops, or just create freely.

Besides newspapers and magazines in different languages DOK also provides a rapid internet connection at low cost, which can also be used wireless.

DOK consists of three main departments: DOK Art, DOK Music & Film and DOK Library.

DOK ART provides the opportunity to borrow art, visit expositions, or to find more information about artists and art. Within the department there is a special service for companies that want to borrow art to create a better atmosphere at work. Professionals help in making a selection of works, in transportation and in placing the pieces at the location.

DOK MUSIC & FILM has a beautiful collection of cd's, lp's, dvd's and books of sheet music.

DOK LIBRARY speaks for itself: numerous books for everyone to read. From thrillers to fairytales and from science fiction to novels.

DOK is on a mission to become the world's most modern library. In order to do this we believe we need to have the best communication with our users possible.

Therefore they are working very hard on innovations. Not the usual run-of-the-mill stuff, but suggestions that broaden one's horizon and get the user in touch with all the beautiful things the library has to offer.

DOK PROGRAMS (SELECTION)

• **DOK LAB** wants people to connect with stories. By developing innovative and interactive "storytelling tools" people and stories are linked in an accessible way. In DOK LAB Centre there is a place set aside, where the latest techniques and set-ups are demonstrated. One example is the Heritage Browser, an image table on which you can consult the full image archive of Delft.

• **ART GALLERY + ART PLAYGROUND:** DOK offers a new way of borrowing art. All DOK members can take home right away art from a selection of works by various Dutch national and / or local artists. A large part of the art is for sale. The DOK Art Gallery shares the space with the Art Playground.

• **NEW TENDENCIES:** DOK is on a mission to become the world's most modern library. One of the new features of the library is trying to support this continuous development of the library program. The new rental program is being promoted in the center of the open space, a highly visible spot within the library and it offers for rental various devices that catch the eye of a diverse clientele.

Rotterdam Central Library

Rotterdam, NL

In 1604 it is founded the first public library in Rotterdam - 'Bibliotheca Laurentiana' in the Laurens Church. Still, it was not until 1869 that archivist J. H. Scheffer lays the foundation for the current library. In the late 19th century, the library moves in the building of Museum Boijmans and is open for public twice a week. Until 1984, the "Municipal Library" changes its location three times. In 1983 Rotterdam Library obtains its present location at Blaak. After spending 409 years as a town library, in 2013 it transforms in The Library Foundation Rotterdam and becomes independent.

Today, the library with 2.4 million visitors, 830.000 materials, 2.9 million items, hundreds of cultural activities and 100.000 members is one of the most visited cultural institution in Rotterdam.
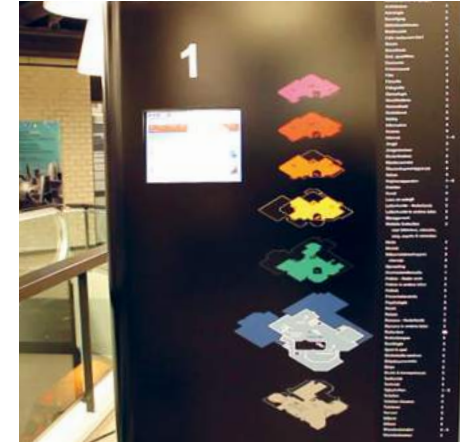
The vision of the Rotterdam Central Library is to become highly visible both in the city, as well as on-line. RCL provides free access to information, knowledge and culture for the residents of Rotterdam and from the surrounding area.

As such, they become aware, critical and energetic participators in the society. The access is provided in a number of ways.

Scattered throughout the city there are (13) neighborhood libraries accessible for borrowing and returning books. Besides the 13 branch libraries, RCL has 3 additional services: a Web-Music Plaza (found in the Central Library) , the Plug-in Library and the Biblio Bus. The Plug-in Library is a compact, no-staff library facility that is literally a plug in the space of another program. Due to its modular and flexible design, it allows you to adjust the Plug-in Library to very specific requirements.

In primary schools the library program is offered directly at school. The Rotterdam Library will develop more new services to respond to the needs of their stakeholders.

RCL's goal is to expand cooperation with cultural partners and commercial parties.

De centrale bibliotheek van Rotterdam, 2014 © Timelezz

De Biblotheek Delfshaven

Delfshaven | Rotterdam, NL

The Delfshaven Library is one of the 13 neighbourhood branches of Rotterdam Central Library. From October 31st 2016 until December 25th, the library undergoes a re-design phase in order to upgrade its spaces, and better organize them for the activities they have to host.

The library is located in Delfshaven, one of the areas of Rotterdam which is highly active, having several clusters of public interest. In the vicinity of the library, a public market is organized 2 days/week and next door there is a sports centre. This neighbourhood is not very rich and the population is ethnically very diverse.

The library is highly oriented on activities for children. From the discussions with the librarian we learned that many parents drop the kids at the library and take them back after some hours. As such, the library disposes of a generous area dedicated to children - from a computer room, to a workshop area, storytelling place and a small living-room. Besides these spaces, there is an area addressing the adults, with shelves, intimate lecture places as well as shared desks.

# Leeszaal West Rotterdam

Rotterdam, NL

"(...)the Reading Room is a place where everything is organized or where you can organize everything. (...)Through the Reading Room we share something in common: the desire to create a place that we all agree that is necessary in our neighborhood, in our city."


The Leeszaal is a private bottom-up initiative in Rotterdam West. Following the decision to close a number of neighborhood libraries of the Rotterdam Central Library, under new plans for restructuring, a group of neighborhood volunteers decided to reopen their closed branch under own administration. The Reading Room, as it is called, functions as a community center and informal library with a collection of 25.000 books. It is completely run by volunteers with the help of the local residents and businesses.

The approx. 80 volunteers include the 82-year old Heleen Flier, former administrator of the closed branch library. The space is opened 9 hours a day, 5 days a week and it accommodates a range of different activities involving the community. It is an open free space, with minimal rules and almost no administration. The initiators of this neighborhood living-room see its value mostly in its capacity to bring people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and interests together.

The Context
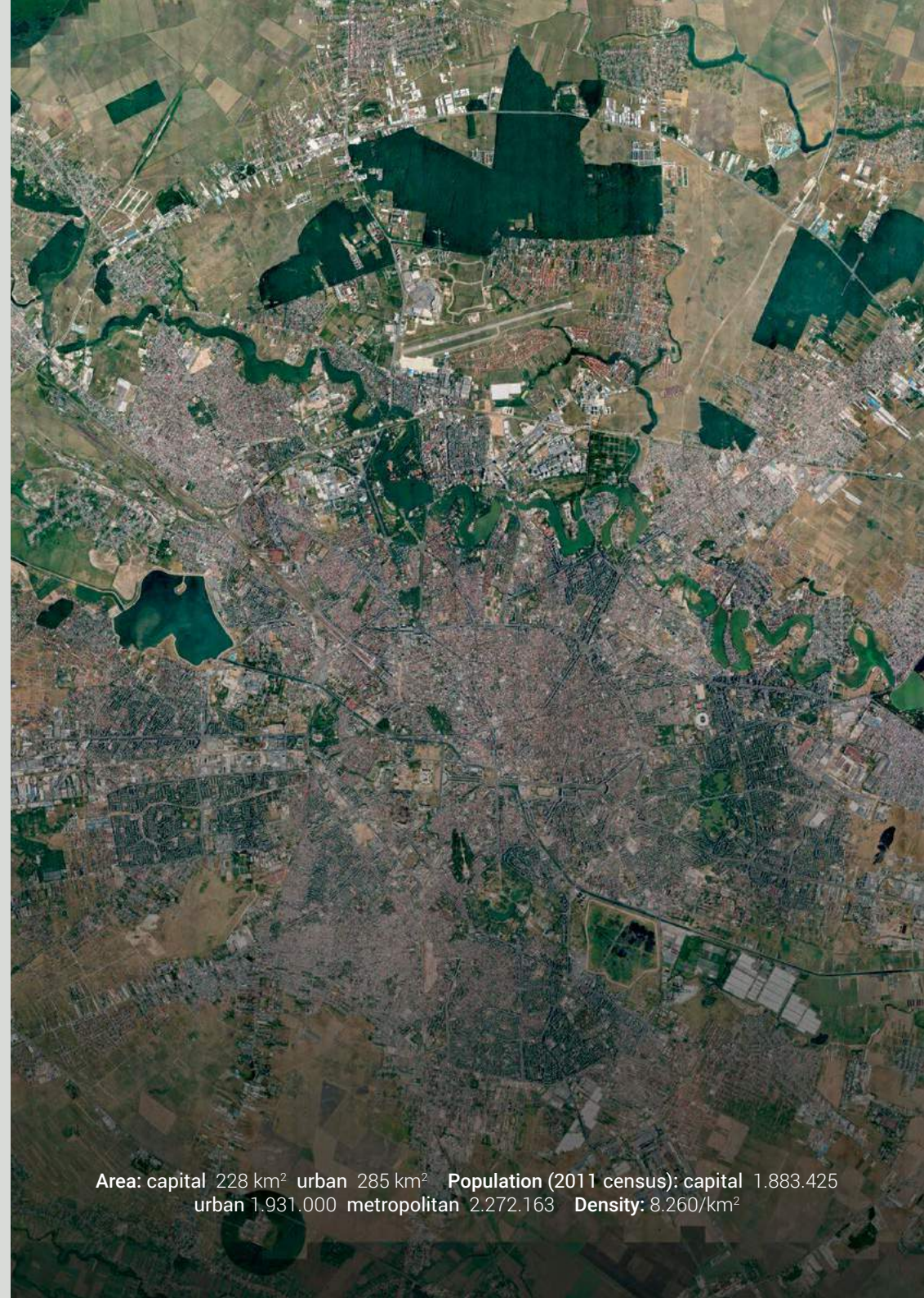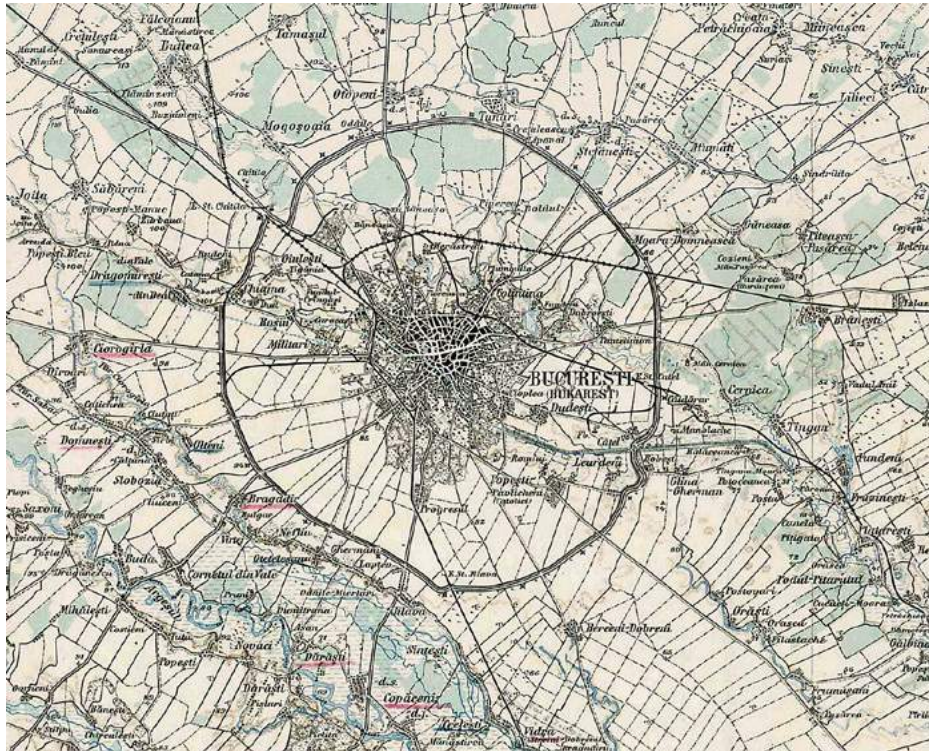
Bucharest at the beginning of the XX century.

(...)**Hilariopolis**, a name which was given in the 18th century to Bucharest. Affined to "bukur" ("beautiful" in Albanian), the name was probably an approximate translation of Bucuresti (Bucharest), with a term from Latin and Greek: hilare / hilaris / hilarus + polis, at a time when the non-Latin Romanian names were avoided or replaced. One could say that it carries a double meaning - the city enlightened by the joy and happiness of life, on one side, and the hilarious, derisory, even absurd place, on the other side. However, we find it less a negative emblem, but rather an appropriate social and cultural reading, useful for better understanding of a city still filled today with extreme, unsuspected contrasts, the same it was two hundred years ago. As in a tale of Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities, Hilariopolis emerges for us as a border place, somewhere at the margins of both Orient and Occident, where the amalgam of buildings, streets, courtyards and people's lives and traces is continuously redrawn by relations of overlapping, layering, in-between or vis-à-vis. They all become more important than the buildings themselves.

Hilariopolis, Biennale di Venezia 2016 | ADNBA

Bucharest as an unfinished project*

Claudiu Forgaci

Text extracted from "Bucharest: Between North and South" by Claudiu Forgaci, published in June 2013 as the master thesis for the EMU program at TU Delft Faculty of Architecture.

Bucharest is a big city trying to find its place between Europe and the Balkans, between capitalism and post-communism. It is a city in transition. Given this condition, it is difficult to prioritize among the numerous problems and fast changes that the city is dealing with. Good or bad, each historic moment had an ideology, a cultural direction, a guiding principle visible in its contribution to the city's form. This is not (yet) so clear for the last twenty-four years. After 1989, totalitarian decision has been gradually replaced by unleashed freedom, allowing individuals to make choices, to participate in a self-organized society. However, as a response to the previous period's oppression, today's society goes to the other extreme and totally rejects the common. What's more, regardless of the scale of any urban intervention, the "long-term" is hardly involved. The result is a city where chaotic development happens on a daily basis and adds up to an even more uncertain future.

In this context, I believe that structural/structuring strategies are still urgent. Our task is not the endless blaming and avoiding of the 'top-down', but finding its right balance with actions emerging in a bottom-up manner. (...)

(Forgaci, 2013, pp.9-10/Introduction Chapter/Bucharest: between North and South)

The city as unfinished project

Of course, every city is an open system, meaning that it is 'unfinished' by definition. So by using this subtitle I do not imply that the city 'should be finished'. Instead, my aim is to point out the fast pace with which the unfinished projects succeeded each other in the case of Bucharest and, most of all, the fact that its incompleteness is one of its main distinctive features. Augustin Ioan recognizes this pattern in Bucharest's development:

"The capital of Romania is a city where competing development projects violently replace each other. Every fifty years or so, a new layer of the "palimpsest" (as an expert in the architecture of Bucharest, architect Alexandru Beldiman, uses to call the city's structure) or "an unfinished project" *(Ioan, 1996)* re-emerges in the city with the intention of turning it monumental, in step with the pretences of one regime or another." *(Ioan, 2007, p. 305)*

The historical sequence shown in this chapter is an illustration of how the city is built up of successive steps of fast change. The selection of the snapshots is based on the key moments in time when considerable change has occurred and has been accordingly recorded.

With the exception of the last period, these snapshots and their titles are based on the historical inventory of "Bucharest as palimpsest" built up by Matei Bogoescu in his master thesis. *(Bogoescu, 2010, pp. 45–87)*.

The Ottoman city [1700-1859]
The spatial configuration of the ottoman city is the result of a very specific historical context. As commanded by the ottoman rulers of that period, the city of Bucharest was not allowed to be protected by walls. As a result, the city developed a spatial structure that was very different from many other European cities of that time. Instead of having a sole centre commanding a fortified town, the city has grown in a polycentric structure around parishes. The public space was shaped in a similar manner: 'maidans', spontaneously formed spaces of gathering resulted from the loosening of the street network in the vicinity of the Orthodox churches.

Paris of the East [1859-1918]
This is the period of systematization and structuring the city. Called Paris of the East, Bucharest of that time was built after the model of the French capital. All the boulevards, the canalization of Dâmbovița, and the first comprehensive industrial developments happened in this period. That structure is still the backbone of the city.

European Modernity [1918-1947]
During the interwar period the bourgeois city continued to grow towards the North, facilitated by the new tram structures. Colonies of workers and rural areas started to grow both in the North and the South but in a disconnected manner.

Progressive Communism [1947-1974]
Mainly in the 1960's, autonomous large housing estates appear in all four cardinal points, clustered around large public transport routes. Industry continues to grow around rail routes, completely isolating the centre from the periphery.

Urbicide [1974-1989]
The years of communism under the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu left the city with very large oppressive and unfinished structures. The demolition of 400 hectares of historical urban fabric and other 'systematization' operations disrupted the urban fabric of the centre. The scale of the interventions make the Civic Centre the largest structural barrier from the whole history of Bucharest.

The post-communist city [1989-2013]
Post-communism didn't manage to handle the problems inherited by other periods, nor to use the leftover spaces effectively. In contrary, the socio-economic processes of the years of transition went out of control and can be best characterized as opportunistic, privately-driven development, which had the power to influence urban regulations.

(Forgaci, 2013, pp.16-17/The city as unfinished project Chapter/Bucharest: between North and South)

Bus 178

Ioana Vîrgolici

It would be very nice if instead of this introduction you could take the readers on a round tour with the 178 bus. Perhaps there are other relevant routes. But this one you can take from the Wild West of Militari neighborhood and with a little patience (55min) you will reach the city center, at the National Museum of Art. This way you could draw a graphic and epic section through several social strata of Bucharest (perhaps all?). You start with the "Rezervelor" neighbourhood (completed in 2016 - google search) and finish at the Royal Palace (rebuilt in the '30s). A relevant pitstop would be The North Train Station, a place of high energetic discharge. The idea: here, the public space is different than what we were taught in school. There are many heated debates on the topic of its absence. But I think it is ultimately a matter of perspective. Travelling with this sample of public space (178 bus) you will notice, both outside and inside, a jungle of public spaces to which people give different meaning. Wild ones, it's true, and in the absence of a planned one. That is what you are talking about, right?

city

CITIZEN
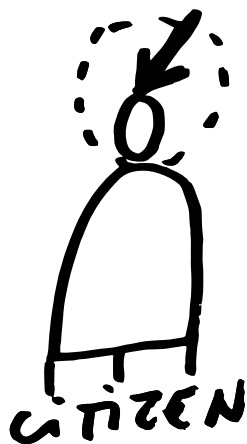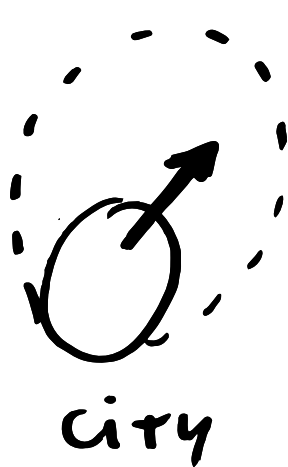
What is my Bucharest?

Ștefan Vianu

I grew up in Bucharest, the city I've been living in since 2001 and where I teach philosophy at the 'Ion Mincu' Architecture University. For me, as a teacher and researcher of philosophy, Bucharest is the city of historical buildings, of derelict neighborhoods, of cultural events, but also the University Square. These all seem and are different faces of the city, but together they create a unit: the atmosphere of this place. Although it is felt in every moment, it is difficult to express. Perhaps the idea of "cultural event" in itself expresses it partially. In a traditional understanding, event and culture are two nearly opposing notions. The nature of the first is related to the "transitional", to the "fugitive"/ "fleeting", whereas the other one - classical culture - strives for eternity (Baudelaire). In my city these notions intertwine. At the dawning of their modernity, people of this city longed for grandeur. Bucharest is not necessarily a monumental city, but one that bears the traces of aspiring for monumentality. In a novel about Bucharest, conceived before and written after the First World War, the lovers of The Distance - in time and space - and of The Dream are dragged into the mire of the now (of those times), into the places of perdition. Described in this novel, "The Kings of Old Court", the contradiction - the formal will and the renouncing indifference - has its echoes in today's Bucharest: a city severely wounded by the recent past, trying to raise from the ashes. What is there left of Bucharest after 41 years of destructions and another 27 of mayors' neglect? – The consciousness itself that something did survive and the search for continuity. Moreover, the consciousness that the citizens themselves have to do something for their city. (Cultural) Life also offers some answers. New forms of life and culture appear. Theater, dance, music, cinema – arts and art discourses. Art that seems to be today/nowadays more and more involved with politics. Therefore, culture itself becomes an event. It is part of the atmosphere of Bucharest and it is charged with waiting. A state of waiting fed by promises of change, as a possible answer to all the destruction. The transformation process has already begun; I don't believe to be the victim of an illusion when saying this. With hope in their hearts, not only anger, memories and regret, the dwellers of the citadel meet in the University Square. They rediscover "politics" without getting hooked in the speeches of politicians. As a researcher in philosophy and a teacher at the Architecture University, this is important for me. I don't need to stress the inevitable political dimension of both philosophy and architecture. Philosophy is the art of prolonged waiting, of exercising patience, and also the art of being at ease with the other. Bucharest is the city to which I return to and from which I return into myself only to get back out in it, and towards it again. For I am finding myself in the city's atmosphere charged by the waiting.

The Hectic City

Marina Neagu

Bucharest is a hectic city in all its aspects. Cultural buzz, traffic jam, corporate workers filling in subways on their way to glassy offices, forests of grey communist blocks of flats crowding in peripheral neighborhoods, rich sub-urban housing and contrasting ghettos of poverty, criminality and garbage. The city floats in inertia – it develops as it agglomerates industry, it generates jobs, it attracts people in search of opportunities. Joys and comforts of urban life happen despite these, not as a consequence of these. There are pockets of people bursting of initiative and self-determination – seeking novelty, asking for change, fostering places of interaction applied to their needs and aspirations.
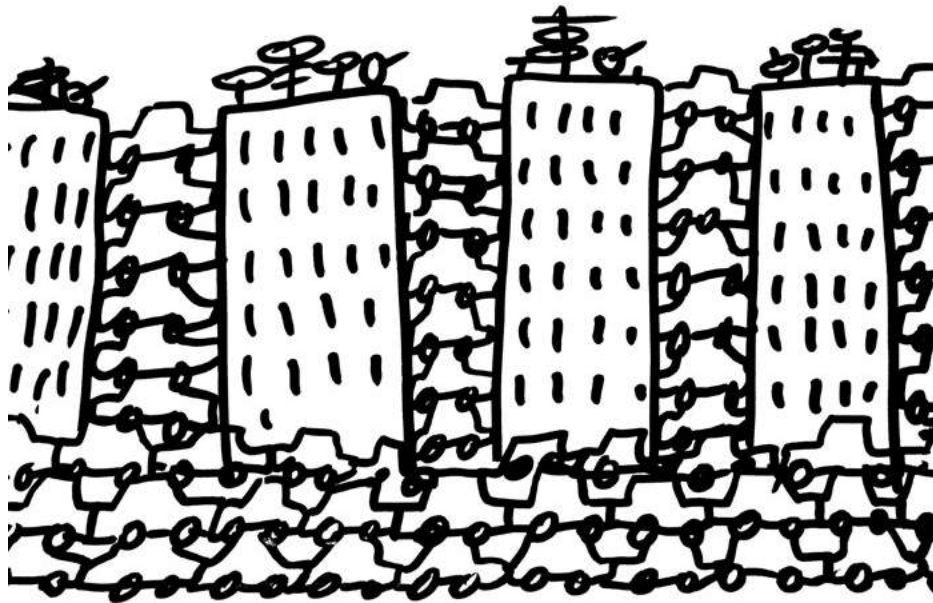
Where Networks Intersect

Vera Marin

Bucharest is the city where I have many friends sharing the same professional interests. More than 15 years ago, I discovered that I really like working with friends on objectives that are based on shared values. And the reverse is true as well: I made friends with people with whom I happened to work with and continued to work with after the end of the projects that brought us together. In what follows, I will try to show, with elements of curriculum vitae, that, to me, the city of Bucharest is the place where networks can intersect.

Although it is not the first thing that comes to someone's mind about Bucharest, it really is a university city where you can make connections between academic research and civil society. Based on this principle, for a while, the Atu - Association for Urban Transition, established in 2001, was quite unique in the landscape of associations not only in Bucharest, but also in the country: promoting of participatory planning and urban design, of dialogue among urban actors, of integrated approach to space at various scales, of urban pedagogy for all ages, of continuous training for professionals. Among the members, many were and still are involved in the higher education of architecture and urbanism (colleagues at the University of Architecture and Urbanism - from various departments), but also from the Faculty of Sociology and Faculty of Geography of the University of Bucharest, from the Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest, etc. For 10 years Ion Mincu's Faculty of Urbanism has alumni who form every year new organization in this area or work with existing groups.

From 2007 to 2012, through the "Platform for Bucharest" the goal was to build trust between non-governmental organizations, to create a network of people concerned with the quality of life in a city heavily marked by corruption, by the lack of planning, by the traumas of the recent past, by ignorance, by the lack of cooperation between institutions or between the government and the civil society. Although this network has received very little of the things that we wanted from the decision makers, and although there is still no urban policy, so necessary in many areas to Bucharest, I think that we're on the right track and that there is an increasing number of people who want more from this city.

Since 2011, I have been working with a network of people concerned with education of the built environment - the Association "De-a Architectura" (Playing Architecture) - so now, I have friends from both architecture and urban planning, as well as from pedagogy and education.

It is a network that started up in Bucharest, but then extended to the rest of the country. The project "Support Culture in Education", for which I was a trainer last year, has allowed me to join a new network, bearing the same name, that brings together people from the domain of culture and people from the domain of education.

Therefore, today, in this city, I really feel professionally integrated in operative networks that are working, that are growing, that are changing. Proof of this is having managed on a very short notice to bring together members of an international network that gathers scholars/researchers of urban phenomena with urban activists and artists interested in the city (INURA - International Network for Urban Research and Action); many professionals-friends gave presentations or hosted pro-bono study visits showing interesting projects. BiblioHUB was among them.

Fantasized Positions

Cristina Bogdan

I had always wanted to flee Bucharest, ever since I started to have will and imagination and understood I couldn't satisfy any of them in my city of birth. Like in that bad film, Baccalaureate, my parents also had raised me to leave and find success elsewhere. When I started to experience corruption as a young schoolchild, in some of the most unbelievable contexts, I fully endorsed my parents' view and decided I wanted to live in the "civilized" world.

I am listing these utterly common positions to highlight just how much my current experience of Bucharest has gained depth and transformed my own position in regard to the local context. Growing up in the Bucharest of the 90s was perhaps not rewarding, so the shock of a professional coming of age in Paris and then London is easy to understand. However, these 10 years of self-consciousness coupled with a gradual deciphering of ultra-liberalism (especially in London) led me to fantasizing a professional path back in Bucharest, which from the vantage point of high capitalism shines with possibility.

From December 2014, when I returned in order to create my curatorial & educational platform ODD, and subsequently develop the online version of Revista ARTA, I spent 2 years sustaining and growing this fantasy, which again is just another com-

mon place. Bucharest as a free land, as a theatre of opportunities, a place which needs the normalization & illumination of young educated minds. I have lived in this city and then slowly outgrew it – because nothing is more potent than the escape from all fantasy.

This escape meant conceptualizing the trap I was now living in, as a young cultural agitator who preached resistance against colonization and self-colonization. To put it perhaps too simply, I had become the fantasized Eastern artist, a politically engaged "clown of catastrophe". My daily working environment was, and still is, highly protected, bubble-like, yet affording for some panoramic views reinforced by frequent travels across the country. In 2 years time, I also became increasingly cut off from cutting edge theory, and my advance on the local scene (gained in London, where I bathed in object-oriented ontology and the like) seems to lie less in information, that in my ability to compare and connect. Personal assessment at this point led me to the conclusion that I will ride the wave of this isolation and work towards developing the notion of privacy.

Romania, km 0 – The End of a System

Claudia Postelnicescu

> The sequence of events of the past month unfolding fast in our restless country have a deep symbolism which I've been thinking for some time now.

- A little over 25 years have past since our emergence from Communism, through the Revolution of 1989;

- The files of the infamous Mineriade of 1990 are being reopened and those who instrumented the Jiu Valley miners' violent descent to Bucharest with the defined scope of "cleaning up the mess" in University Square occupied by so-called hooligans are being called to court for crimes against humanity, namely Ion Iliescu, Petre Roman, Gelu Voican Voiculescu etc.;

- The file on the Romanian Revolution was closed for lack of evidence, i.e. the dead of those days have abruptly committed suicide by shooting themselves or have died in car or airplane accidents, no one is to blame;

- Details about the level of rottenness, the imposture and corruption of so-called post-revolutionary political elite haphazardly surface; people interconnected in an old system of family ties, collusion and complicity, people so bound together in a real omerta system that has quietly taken over the state;

- At the same time an emerging critical mass of Romanians is starting to display the courage to inquire, investigate, ask, protest and attack the System from the sidelines. For now, there is no one to do it from within the System.

In vain we have laws and "cover ourselves with papers" if, in fact, in practice, on the ground, what prevails is the dubious intertwining of bar and club owners with municipal inspectors and the police that superficially check the conditions for approval and operation of facilities reaching an "agreement". The infamous Romanians saying "good enough" [...] is reflected in the state of the roads, of the public buildings, the state of people.

We are in a moment of total exhaustion, that moves quickly, though, from the infinite native resignation of the Romanian towards an explosion of gigantic proportions.The death of innocents and the repeated inability of the System to quickly react and save or to show minimal empathy for the fate of innocents (except for the people who, despite the System, do what they are meant to), in addition to the uninterrupted sequence of exhibitionist narcissism of political statements, have struck a nerve in the nation from which there is no turning back: it is here the km 0 of Romanian's tolerance of mischief, imposture, incompetence and contempt.

(...)

The System is now being reset; we all feel it, we talk amongst ourselves, us, the excluded, the marginalized, those who have tried to change bit by bit, who wrote, fought, protested, made projects, who have tried to do something in this country. However, until those like us, of the critical mass of change, are able to access positions of power and be part of the decision-making process, the current system will not change. What we can do for now though is to inhibit, to put pressure, to establish a mechanism of fear ourselves, where those responsible can always be thrown from power, despite their escorts and sirens, where if they don't assume the dignity of their positions and the responsibilities that come with it, they can be obligated to do so. Good enough is not good enough anymore.

Work in Progress

Anca Fronescu

BORDERS
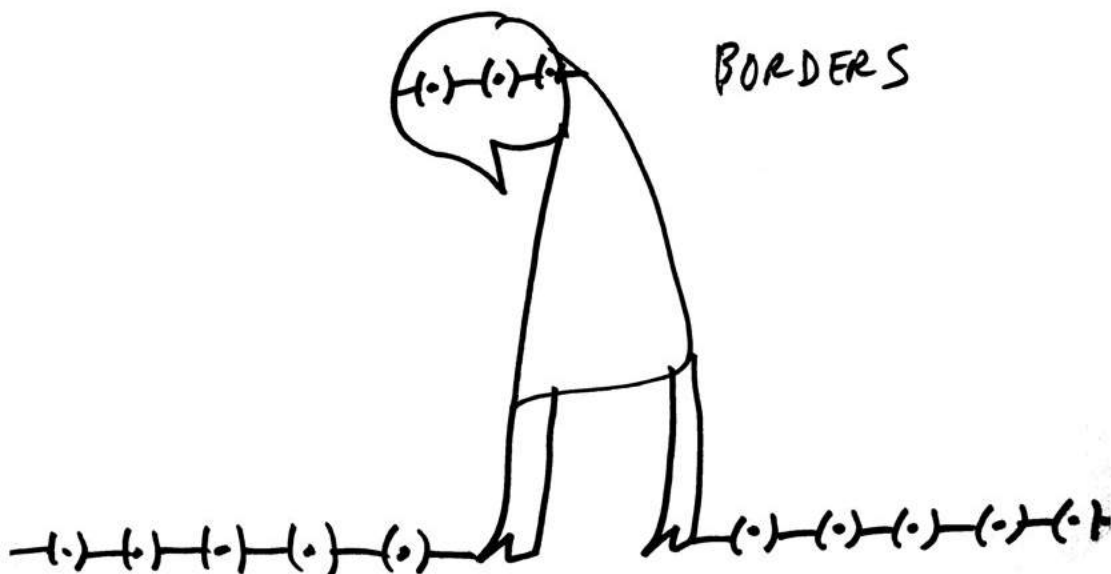
The day I sit and write these lines is the day Trump was elected president of the US. I am in Bucharest, my hometown that I have left 20 years ago; a place that I have been coming back to on a regular basis these past two decades. Bucharest is also the place that I have decided to come back to and work in possibly for the coming months and hopefully years.

Bucharest for me is a city of contrasts. My Bucharest is full of poetry and nostalgia, love and endearing memories as much as a place of despair, noise and dust, at the same time as being a conglomerate of

brilliant new ideas and initiatives clashing with old systems, both political and cultural. My Bucharest is pushed and pulled forward by the people I resonate with, those who inspire me, whom I have so much to learn from. These people are those that have helped shape and make Bucharest the vibrant place it is today. They are the pioneers of these last 25 years, but not only. They are of different generations, born in very different eras, with very varied backgrounds. They are the main reason that I believe this place is worth coming back to and doing things in. They are the ones that I think I can also work with and

try to change the dynamics of this place even more. Bucharest feels young at the same time that it feels it's been through so much. History has marked it and it still needs to come to terms with that.

While in Bucharest, I sit and work in cafes, surrounded by hip and trendy thirty -forty plus urbanites. I don't know the Bucharest of offices and high towers, of old crumbling buildings or crowded boulevards and no parking zones. I walk in Bucharest. And if I need to go little further I use Uber and no taxis; hardly any public transport. Sometime the subway and on a rainy afternoon some old tram or trolleybus I love taking photos from. I live small and rent rather cheap in the heart of the old town and I work from home when I can't afford a rather expensive yet very delicious hipster coffee. Bucharest inspires me and keeps me awake. Bucharest gives me reasons to dream and find ways to make dreams reality. Bucharest is many worlds in one. It's fresh and forthcoming, ambitious and moving fast forward, but it can also be conservative, stuck, stubborn, dirty, corrupt, filthy, boring and old fashioned. There is still a lot of space and need for new perspectives, new visions and views, fresh, off the beaten track approaches, transparent, articulate, contradictory angles, new policies that help the administration reach and stay on modern ground. There is an urgent necessity for dissonant and opposing viewpoints to be brought together and let clash and find ways to hear one another. The public arena needs to meet the private corporate stage probably (even)more in depth, these various environments need to find a more engaged common discourse. And that can be tough.

Bucharest is also a city of danger. Many old beautiful buildings may crumble to pieces any moment. The tragedy of an earthquake looms on many corners and on many people's' minds. We hardly dare talk about it. I even feared typing out these exact words. Bucharest is also the place that most of us dread having to go to hospitals and even private clinics. Safety regulations and common sense functional practicalities may not be met and lives again can be endangered. There are also far too many cars in Bucharest and hardly any fines to those not respecting a large array of rules and laws. And all this and much more impacts us all, in both our working and public lives as our very private individual lives. And talking about this is quite hard and may seem senseless. At times I fear we live on islands and hardly interact with one another. However there is change. And you can see and feel it. Possibly somehow more in the virtual and slightly safer realms of social media, yet nevertheless in the real fields of urban action as well. There are strong civic voices around and they need to be heard I think even more.

Bucharest is work in progress – hard, exciting work in progress. And it's the kind of place that you may feel you do something in that may make a difference. Your input can matter and that is quite rewarding, in a larger context as well. Bucharest is a messy jungle with many light hearted soft spots. It's elegant and sophisticated as much as it can be provincial (and there's nothing wrong with that) and downright suburban with a touch of upend anything you can come up with and that all is quite charming.

A Solidary Bucharest

Mihaela Michailov

A Bucharest-deadline.

A Bucharest-slalom between the spaces where I work.
A Bucharest of distances which, most often, turn upside down any chronometer.

A Bucharest where, when I chose to come to college, I felt terribly lost. As if no street was meant for me. As if the places already had their people. A Bucharest I felt I was losing every time I clinged to a piece of a building. A Bucharest that hasn't yet been swallowed for good by the invasive and predatory businesses.

A Bucharest I try to touch with my gaze and which I learned to see in time, through its relational extensions.

A Bucharest fragmented into pieces of initiatives forming a puzzle of expectations. Are we going to get financing for this project? Will we manage to define a line of thought able to individualize what we propose to do? Will we squander our efforts, aiming too high? Is bureaucracy eroding our imagination too often? Are we define a voice for ourselves?

A Bucharest of the people with whom I share wonderful projects.

A Bucharest melted in a wonderful space - Replika Educational Theatre Center - that we were able to build with artists we love.

A Bucharest of the emphatic pedagogy where we learn along with the children we work with at the Center to build spaces of solidarity. To develop a participatory education where every child contributes with a line, a sound, an image, a gesture, to the stor that belongs to them.

A Bucharest where I cross a park to get to a place very dear to me-The "Amalia" Home for the Elderly and Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen - where I work alongside a community of creation made up of residents aged 50 to 100 years, of dedicated artists. A community-living history, where the subjective stories have a deeply emancipating role, constructing narratives of belonging to the significant political and cultural transformations.

A Bucharest where together with groups of teenagers we have organised workshops of "emotional geography". Where we documented the city and subjectively resonated to the places we passed by.

A Bucharest where all major groups who seek change, are struggling with a provisional persistence, trying to stabilize their presence and to fight for fundamental rights: social justice, access to housing, access to education etc.

A Bucharest where the hardest thing is to go on with what you started, in a constant frailty of continuities.

A Bucharest where I believe that only if we unite our forces, we can educate each other less alone.

ARTIST

CITIZEN

Non-label

Collective East

If we were to label it, Bucharest, a post-communist eastern european capital city, is a city in transition, fragmented and full of contrast, both in form and content. It is a vibrant place filled with good people, good initiatives, yet it lacks a structural backbone that can nurture all that goodness. Things do happen at a very small and unplanned scale. The good grows organically whilst the bad seems to be imposed. Yet both directions lack continuity and most of the times funding, in fact all of the times.

Bucharest seems to be the land of all possibilities and of all possible traps at the same time. It is like a chessboard where only the pawns are moving, randomly, interacting in fragmented and disconnected dialogues.

Whilst the kings and queens are playing a different game, maybe the entire board, rotating it as they wish, sometimes at the price of having pawns falling off the board. The American dream of Europe where everybody is welcome to nurture their own project as long as they do not cross the sometimes invisible boundaries (from political to societal).

Sometimes it is a city of drama and of self-pity and sometimes it is a city of blind ambition, naivety and optimism. It is a slightly schizophrenic city. It is a city that has a peculiar dynamic. Once you understand its patterns, you can successfully insert your bubble, containing yourself and your project.

But we are not labeling Bucharest.
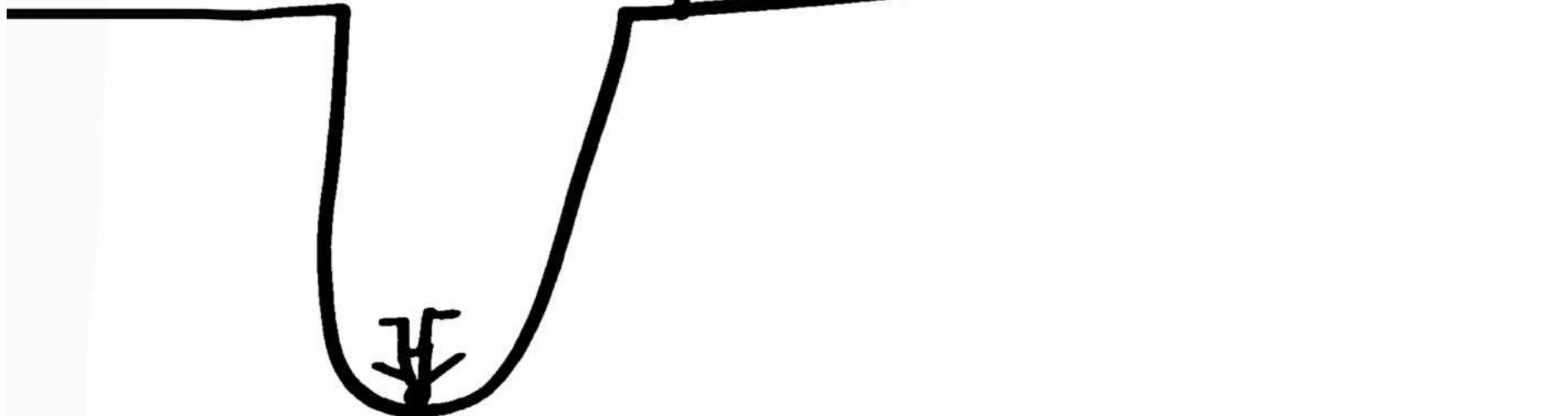
The Romanian Library

While the number of public libraries in Romania is above the European average (with 1.4 libraries/10 000 Romanians, compared with an average of 1.3 libraries/10 000 people in the rest of eu), according to local statistics, their usage is very low. A 2013 study conducted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation showed that only 16% adults have used the services of a public library in the previous 12 months, whilst the European average was of approx. 23%. The study is based on national statistic that average both rural and urban usage. However, while in rural areas libraries remain crucial communication and educational facilities and are therefore accessed more frequently, the usage in urban areas is significantly lower, with Bucharest in a particularly dire situation with a mere 2.75%.

We believe that this stems from a three-fold issue: firstly, the lack of visibility of branch libraries in their respective local communities, secondly, the inadequacy of the spaces where these libraries operate, from the ambiguous status of the space, to the insufficient square meters which limit their ability to cater for the needs of their users, lastly, a lack of a curatorial framework which allows a more customized delivery of services to the local community.

Given the current international drive for the restructuring of public libraries into essential community centers, promoters of well curated information, culture, education, innovation and knowledge exchange, we want to showcase 3 relevant national and local initiatives that have actively engaged in the past years in raising awareness of some of these issues, contributing to the evolution of the public library systems - EduCaB, Biblionet and studioBASAR's Public Works.

EduCaB

text by Mihai Lupu

EduCaB is an institutional capacity building mechanism aiming to enhance the educational and community development opportunities within local communities through maximizing the organizational & educational potential of public libraries.

The concept was piloted in Romania, starting March 2013, and was officially launched in central Nepal, in January 2014, being designed by the Romanian Centre for Innovation in Local Development, and implemented in collaboration with strategic partners in Nepal, Romania, Indonesia and Bangladesh, with pipeline initiatives in Senegal, Uganda, Vietnam and Malaysia, and with an extended network of support organizations in Romania, United States, The Netherlands and UK.*

Through EduCaB, the members are passionate to continue innovating an agile organizational construct for: nurturing learning ecosystems, investing in public libraries, catalyzing community development, wiring the energies and resources within the society, approaching our initiatives in a systemic, interdisciplinary and inter-institutional way.

The project started by assessing the educational needs while activating library capacity & capabilities in 800+ local communities in Europe, Asia and Africa, as a mean of starting self-sustainable community development initiatives, cultural & educational projects, while providing learning & best practices opportunities for those joining the EduCaB framework.

Our approach has as an organic outcome the expansion of the traditional role of libraries, being interested in curating the process of getting the libraries to the point of functioning as resource centers & hubs for the local communities, providing the institutional framework for various organizations and informal groups to implement recurrent projects on their fields of expertise, through expanding their target audience.

We envision libraries as noisy places, maximizing their institutional potential through catalyzing relevant direct & indirect educational infrastructure and ergonomics, including direct networking with other libraries and organizations that are part of the EduCaB international framework.

*see the full story at:*http://cridl.org/povestea-educab-pana-acum/*

Biblionet

text by Paul Baran

Biblionet was a six-year $26.9 million program that facilitated free access to information for Romanian citizens by fostering the development of a modern public library system in Romania. Biblionet assisted librarians, through their public libraries, to better serve their communities by providing training and technology through partnerships established amongst local partners including the National Association of Public Libraries and Librarians (anbpr), local and national governments, and libraries through the country. To achieve this goal, Biblionet concentrated on four core program components.

Established a network of library public access computer (pac) facilities: Biblionet supported libraries that prioritized public access to information and demonstrated a willingness to share the costs of providing new public computing and Internet facilities. Local governments provided $14.000.000 in program cost share through renovations, internet subscriptions, and professional development activities for librarians. By equipping 2,280 libraries out of the 2,800 total, across Romania with new computers through a competitive application process, Biblionet facilitated free access to information throughout Romania. Romanian public libraries provided first time internet access to over 600,000 Romanians,

nationally. Likewise, 58.500 farmers applied online through public libraries for agricultural subsidies and received over $103 million in agricultural subsidies obtained through public libraries

Providing library service training for librarians. Biblionet partners designed training materials and created training facilities to help librarians adapt new services and foster innovation in the public library system. Training assists librarians in becoming experts in adapting new technologies to community's needs. Established an it training infrastructure for Romanian librarians. By establishing 41 county library training centers, Biblionet offers the Romanian public library system a training infrastructure and corresponding courses in technology skills that help librarians provide better computer and Internet guidance to library patrons. Librarians quickly adopted new patron services, examples include Bani IQ, an online financial literacy training program developed together with Visa Romania. Te Iubeste Mama (Mommy Loves You) was developed in an effort to connect children left in Romania with their parents working abroad in Italy. Digitales provides senior members of the community with the skillset to develop digital stories.

Partnering with the National Association of Public Libraries and Librarians (ANBPR)

for long-term sustainability. Biblionet worked to strengthen the anbpr, helping the professional association build sustainable administrative structures that respond to the new and changing needs of modern libraries and provide valuable services to librarians throughout the country. Currently, the anbpr assists librarians in developing and organizing locally-relevant content that serves all library users. Through a needs assessment, IREX and its partners have identified specific information content needs in the areas of education, labor markets, healthcare, economic and rural development, and culture that are not currently being sufficiently addressed.

Engagement with the government to adapt policies that better serve libraries and their patrons. To match the investment of new resources into libraries, Biblionet partners work to promote the increased relevance and importance of libraries to today's Romanian society and the need for the commitment of resources to match libraries' new role. Discussions have resulted with the inclusion of public libraries in key funding directions covered through eu funding schemes.

Upon inception of the program, the vast majority of people stated that the implementation of the Biblionet program would be met with maximum resistance, we found that we were able to exceed all of our proposed KPIs. Local governments contributed far more than we ever imagined, but most importantly I learned of the overwhelming kindness and passion of librarians all of whom immensely contribute to the social fabric of their communities. Without their drive and commitment Biblionet would not have been the success it was.

Public Works

Alex Axinte, Cristi Borcan | studioBASAR

The majority of urban population in Romania lives in collective housing neighborhoods built during the Communist period, where the public and community spaces are almost extinct. The network of public libraries is one of the few remaining institutions and spatial resources that through the distribution of culture and education still have a potential for neighborhood activation and community crystallizing. In the last years of our practice, we started to map and engage this potential through research by design and participative actions.

Gârleanu Sitting Room

'Timpuri Noi in Action' tested a model of activating the public space within the proximity of the 'Emil Gârleanu' library from Timpuri Noi neighborhood. Developed in the framework of 'Urban Spaces in Action' project, coordinated by the Komunitas Association between 2014-2015, the action was managed by a team of architects and sociologists, which opened for two weeks a research studio inside the library. The team's research instruments were an open-ended questionnaire and a model that collected proposals from the users. During the research, other events, like exhibitions and workshops, proposed alternative uses for a public library. After the evaluation of the questionnaires, the domestic qualities and the function-

al signaling were the main priorities for the users and librarians. The 'Gârleanu Sitting Room' was partly built on-site in a self-constructed workshop that aimed to extend the library's functions on the sidewalk. Since then, the furniture-signal structure was taken over both by library actions and by everyday users, who turned the sidewalk from parking space into a public space, a playground and a meeting place.

City School: The Library from Militari

The majority of urban population in Romania lives in collective housing neighborhoods built in socialism, where the public and community spaces are almost extinct. The network of public libraries is one of the few remaining institutions and spatial resources that through the distribution of culture and education still have potential for neighborhood activation and community crystallizing.

After 5 years of hibernation and 6 months of 'City School' program, the 'Gheorghe Lazăr' library from Militari neighborhood in Bucharest was reopened. 'City School' was an applied education program, where a multidisciplinary team of students engaged an authentic situation: the transformation of a public library.

Placed at the ground floor of a block with one room apartments, the library used to function as the 'family reunion' space for the inhabitants. The project team entered the library, and temporary opened as a 'living room in the neighborhood'. Here we talked with the neighbors, the users and the librarians, making interviews and organizing ideas workshop, testing several actions and collecting opinions about how a neighborhood library could be improved. All this accumulated information was transformed during an ideas workshop into layout scenarios for the interior and the exterior space of the library.

At the end of the process, the partner Bucharest Metropolitan Library manage to make a huge institutional step, unplanned from the beginning, but now expected by the users of the library: the official re-opening, with a librarian, opening

hours, books and subscriptions. Partially built during a construction workshop, the interior layout stressed the main resource of the library identified by the users: the space, left open, with flexible furniture, freed of excessive book shelves. Thus, the library could work as a cultural exchange space, a convivial and social space, where the book is a catalyst, without commanding the spatial organization. The inauguration took place with a public event, where workshops, games and public lectures showed to the users possible scenarios for the library.

In the same time with the re-opening event, we took the library out in the street through a mobile equipment: The Trailer for Research and Activation. The Trailer is a versatile tool prepared for the production of public space that can quickly be transformed into a pavilion. The Trailer works as a mobile device, easy adaptable to the suffocating condition of contemporary Bucharest's public spaces, supporting the organizations that are active in the production of public space. After the inauguration event of the library, the Trailer became a mobile branch of the Metropolitan Library and went for 3 months in a tour of Bucharest's public parks, hosting 'The Stories Caravan'. Not only the library trailed the culture, but other cultural organizations and civic groups used the Trailer in Bucharest, reaching almost 20 events in 6 months of use.

Furthermore, we are preparing the City School 2nd edition for 2017, where a new multidisciplinary team of students will engage the exterior space of the 'Gheorge Lazăr' library and the surroundings of Militari's neighborhood.

Gârleanu Sitting Room, 2016 © studioBASAR

City School: The Library from Militari, 2016 © studioBASAR

City School: The Library from Militari, 2016 © studioBASAR

The Trailer for Research and Activation, 2016 © studioBASAR

The Bucharest Metropolitan Library (BMB)

The Bucharest Metropolitan Library (BMB) is a public cultural institution under the administration of the General Council of Bucharest. It facilitate free and non-discriminatory access to basic cultural rights, serving as a community center that actively supports information, research, education and recreation for the inhabitants of Bucharest and Ilfov county.

Organization

BMB is an institution of local interest and is therefore under the administration of the General Municipal Council of Bucharest. At the moment the institution's budget is financed solely by the Council. The budget is approved on a yearly basis by the Council, a system which has proven to be highly problematic in the development of long term strategies or projects that exceed this limited timeframe.

BMB currently has 33 active subsidiaries spread out in 27 locations across Bucharest. The locations where BMB operates are owned by the Municipality and under BMB administration. This largely means that the spaces are allocated by the Municipality and in some cases are spaces with little interest or potential that could not be assigned a different use.

This distribution, as well as most of the locations themselves, are inherited from the Communist system which required the implementation of a public library in every micro-rayon. While some of the newly built neighborhoods were provided with more appropriate facilities for this program, many of the branches were inserted into nationalized private houses. In recent years there has been some effort to improve the conditions of the library facilities and newly built structures have been added to the Municipality's patrimonium specifically for the library's use. However these buildings fail to meet the requirements of the library, not having been designed for the purpose, but merely assigned the task.

BMB currently has 174 staff positions, but is currently seeking to supplement that due to an initiative of extending opening hours in a number of subsidiaries in order to cater to the working segment of users. Of the 174, 122 are employed as librarians, five as scientists, three research assistants, the rest occupy administrative positions or technical support.

Programs and services

The BMB network currently offers free access to its full collection ranging from books to audio recordings, video material, DVDs and CDs, press articles and journals as well as on-line documents accessible via the Digital Library of Bucharest (www.digibuc.ro). Its services include free loan of books and access to reading facilities/rooms, free access to internet and Wifi, database of up-to-date romanian legislation as well as providing diverse cultural and educational programs for all ages: financial education course BanIQ, basic course in it, workshops for developing manual skills, puppetry, language courses, literary circles and book clubs. For 2015 the BMB increased its services by adding interactive on-line consultancy, a service which will help on-line users refine their searches and provide specialized bibliographical references via email upon request.

Besides the services provided the BMB contributes to the constant development of the local communities via a number of programs and activities developed either internally or through collaborations with an array of national and international organizations. In 2015 the BMB had 7 running programs in the branch libraries (School Differently @ the BMB; The Living Library; My First Day at the Library; The Reading Garden; Thursday Readings; ubuntu; IT Courses for Senior Citizens) and collaborated or took part in an additional 105 programs involving public libraries in Bucharest.

As of 2012 the portrait of the typical/ common library user is female, aged under 14, ethnic Romanian. The next most populous user group is the 24-25 age group. The most accessed/ used library service is book lending, most of the traffic generated within the library being related to the school curricula.

Ambition / Scope

The ambition is that in ten years time, the Metropolitan Library will become the preferred library destination for Bucharest. An easily accessible cultural venue, where creativity is manifested in full, a comfortable space where over 20% of the residents of Bucharest choose to spend their free time. A place where they can continually develop their skills, gain new skills and acquire knowledge in the spirit of lifelong learning. An institution where the cultural heritage of old Bucharest is harmoniously intertwined with the stories of contemporary Bucharest.

BMB aims to become a contemporary institution and is currently working towards strengthening the online presence and services offered in the digital domain, providing access to information to a wider and more diverse audience. The strategic objectives of the library for 2014-2017 thus deal with broadening the range of services offered to the public to benefit the community as well as internal/ organizational changes leading to an enhanced performance able to fulfill its referential societal role:

• Continuous diversification and adaptation of the cultural, educational and recreational offer of the BMB in accordance with community needs;

• Constant update, enhancement and increase of accessibility of collections of documents in both traditional and electronic media;

• Professional integration of new information and communication technologies to optimize internal processes and facilitating access to information and culture;

• Permanent increase of organizational capacity. The BMB's core values are accessibility, usability, transparency, participation, partnership, performance.

Interview with the BMB Director Anca Rapeanu

What is your ideal library?

My ideal library is a full library, as popular as a shopping center, where I can learn by myself or in a pre-established or ah-hoc group, where I can hang out, where I can read, or just borrow books or other objects, where I feel "at home" but also I don't have to do the cleaning.

What would be an ideal library in Bucharest? In your opinion, how achievable is this ideal library at this point?

That's a difficult question, as Bucharest's library infrastructure is still so poor. For now, I think that a good library would be generous enough spaces for people to meet the collections and the new services (I'm thinking of different programs with an educational purpose, and non-formal/informal formats).

Name one strong point & one weak point of the BMB.

One strong point is the network of 35 neighborhood branches, with all their collections (books, movies, music, board-games). As a matter of fact, it's the only encyclopedic collection which is available for lending for free to all Bucharest residents. As for weak points, to chose just one it'd have to be our poor visibility – people don't know about our basic services (our collections mean more than 1.000.000 books that you can lend for free!), not to mention the novelties (lost of workshops for all ages and a variety of interests, starting from it-basics to personal development, parenting, cooking or yoga for children).

You are familiar with the Dutch library model. What are in your opinion the most attractive features / interesting aspects that could be implemented in the Bucharest context?

What I like about the Dutch model is their care for the patron – you can see how human-centered the library is in the small things: the design for the study-desks, the way they express and advertise the library's rules. And, most of all, I love the smiling librarians. You really feel welcomed in such a library, and having such a positive experience brings you back. I think we can do more in this direction in Bucharest, also, no matter how poor the funding.

During your tenure as the director of BMB, what would you like to achieve? Has this been a difficult process? If so, why? If not, why? :)

I wanted to make the library relevant again for all people, to change the current per-ception that the library is just for reading books you teacher make you read while in school. It is a huge challenge, as most Bucharest people don't even imagine what their public library could do for their every-day lives. Actually, what the public library their fund by paying taxes has to do for their every-day lives. It's a struggle and it's not done. But I didn't give up, yet.

What has it been done so far towards achieving that goal?

Well, we try to diversify our programs, so that people get accustomed with the huge variety of practical learning they can achieve in the library. We try to make the spaces a little bit more friendly – it's not easy to find the space to have a colorful area for kids, but we tried to play a little with the typical 60mp, add a few pillows and a good storyteller and make the library magical. We also try to become more connected with colleagues from the country and from abroad, to get inspired and make a better city through our library.

What is something that made you happy and proud during your time as a director so far?

I've seen some of my colleagues blossom – they took the lead in new projects and programs and they were excellent! For example, our most recent project – Caravana Povestilor – was the first project the library implemented which was not funded by the city council. Also, it was the first project written by the library's team. And it was the best propos-al in more than 100. And then, the implementing was excellent – the Library got our of it's typical spaces and routines and went to meet the people in 12 parks during 12 Sundays this summer. It was fabulous, it made me so so happy and proud. Also, the story-time program we started this year (Ora de povesti) is a success – the kids love it, the parents start to consider the library as the place to go to spend quality time with their children. As for the elderly, it's the second year we organize it-courses especially for them, and they are really popular – right now we have reservation until net June.

What got you excited/interested/curious about the BiblioHUB project?

I'm always curious about what other libraries, successful ones, do in order to be the heart of their community. I saw an opportunity to learn from a great system – the Dutch one. And yes, I also liked the energy of the BiblioHUB team. Good people :)

Name one strong point & one weak point of the BiblioHUB initiative.

As said before, I think the team is a very special one – let's call them practical-dreamers, who can understand the potential value of a good library. And I liked the integrated approach, modular one. The weak point, as always, is the lack of funding for the entire project, or at least for the first two steps – assessing and pilot. I just wish we have the opportunity to prove what a good library can be and what it can mean for Bucharest's development.

Why do you think the physical space of the library is important in order to fulfill its purpose?

I would say that the physical space is a way to express the library's attitude and values. Of course, it's not only about the space, but the space matters so much – people would never consider the library their "third space" if the physical space is not inviting for them, if they don't like it, if they don't consider it mirrors them in a way or another.

What is the most radical change you would want to implement in BMB if there wouldn't be any constraints?

I'd like to have – at least for a while – a library with no rules. We have too many rules in Romania, especially in public institutions we are obsessed with rules. And sometimes they don't even make sense anymore. So, if we'd have a library without rules, we could shape the new order together with our patrons. They could make the rules that make sense for them.

The BMB is under the administration of the Bucharest Municipality. How dependent is BMB on the local authorities? How would you define the relationship? What should change in order to better support the implementation of the BMB vision statement?

I'd say that BMB depends on the local authorities financially, as our yearly budget needs to be approved by the local council. We don't have a good or bad relationship with the local authorities, and

I'm not sure they understand what a public library can be – most of the time we are seen as a repository of culture, which is not our main role in the city. I wish we were more present in their agenda, and be acknowledged as the place where new generations can become familiar with culture.

The BMB consists of 35 libraries in 27 locations. Do you see the BMB as an integrated network or as a collection of assets?

I see it as a network, but we are not a functional network just yet – many years the branches functioned separated from another, and coming back together as a coherent whole is challenging. But we're getting there, step by step.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of either option? What do you think the BMB should aim for?

I think that being such a big network is a huge advantage – we are one of the very few cultural spots functioning in Bucharest beyond the downtown area, so if we strive and make ourselves more and more present in the neighborhoods we could help community building.

What book would you like to be?

That's a tough one. I think I am a little bit of any book I ever read, even the ones I hated or the ones I forgot about. But if I'm to choose one right now … Going postal by Terry Pratchett.

Bucharest Metropolitan Library Headquarters
Image © 2015 Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune

The Project

BiblioHUB is an action-oriented initiative based on an international inter-disciplinary collaboration with the end goal of implementing an integrated design strategy for (re)activating the library network of The Metropolitan Library of Bucharest.

In this scenario, we aim to broaden the sphere of knowledge exchange, extend the Dutch-Romanian network of library-related experts, stimulate a pro-active interest in the Dutch values of innovation, quality oriented design and management of libraries within the Romanian context.

BiblioHUB has been developed as a multiple-staged project currently consisting of an initiation phase, a research and development phase, and an implementation phase. The structure of the project is set to be flexible in order to accommodate the dynamics of an intrinsically unstable political and social environment as well as the constant informing process of the interdisciplinary and international setup of the project.

The initiation phase, wrapped up in December 2016 and revealed in the following pages, was an exciting venture aimed at (1) establishing a network of partners and stakeholders, (2) compiling an initial evaluation of Bucharest's public libraries' current status and (3) engaging the interest of creative professionals in the field of library (re)design in the Netherlands and Romania. One scope of this stage was to also provide a research framework and methodology for the second phase.

Consequently, one component of the research methodology of the second phase took the form of BiblioHUB PILOT

The research and development phase has as a goal the formulation of a feasible reactivation strategy for the BMB network, based on the Dutch integrated library-design model. This second stage consists of an applied interdisciplinary research, led by Collective East in close collaboration with leading Dutch library experts and other international professionals. We envision the in-depth research to simultaneously integrate two approaches:

• a theoretical study crossing all library related disciplines, relevant for the initiative (urbanism, architecture, design, furniture, services, staff, pr, branding, administration/management, sociology, law, PPP, etc)

• a practical study involving an applied research tool under the form of the BiblioHUB pilot. This interdisciplinary research will be the cornerstone of developing the tools enabling key participants of the project to create the (re)activation strategy for BMB's network.

The implementation phase, the third and last stage of BiblioHUB refers to the implementation of the developed strategy in the BMB network. The ultimate goal is to work towards deploying the strategy at a larger scale, involving all of the branch libraries in Bucharest.

The BMB Network

1.1 Dimitrie Bolintineanu
1.2 Ion Creangă
1.3 Petre Ispirescu
1.6 Ioan Slavici
2.1 Sound Library
2.2 Lucian Blaga
2.3 Dimitrie Cantemir
2.4 Costache Negruzzi
2.5 Alexandru Odobescu
2.6 George Enescu
3.1 Emil Gârleanu
3.2 Pantelimon Halippa
3.3 B.P. Haşdeu
3.4 Liviu Rebreanu
3.5 Ion Neculce
4.1 Nicolae Balcescu
4.2 Otilia Cazimir
4.3 George Coşbuc
4.4 A. Macedonski
4.5 Ienăciţiă Văcărescu
5.0 Octavian Goga*
5.5 Ion Luca Caragiale
5.8 Gheorghe Şincai
6.1 Mihai Eminescu
6.2 Nicolae Labiş
6.4 Nichita Stănescu
6.5 George Topârceanu

* Multiple branches
in one location

1.1 1.2 1.3 1.6

2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5

3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5

See page 156.

4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5

5.0 5.5 5.8

6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4
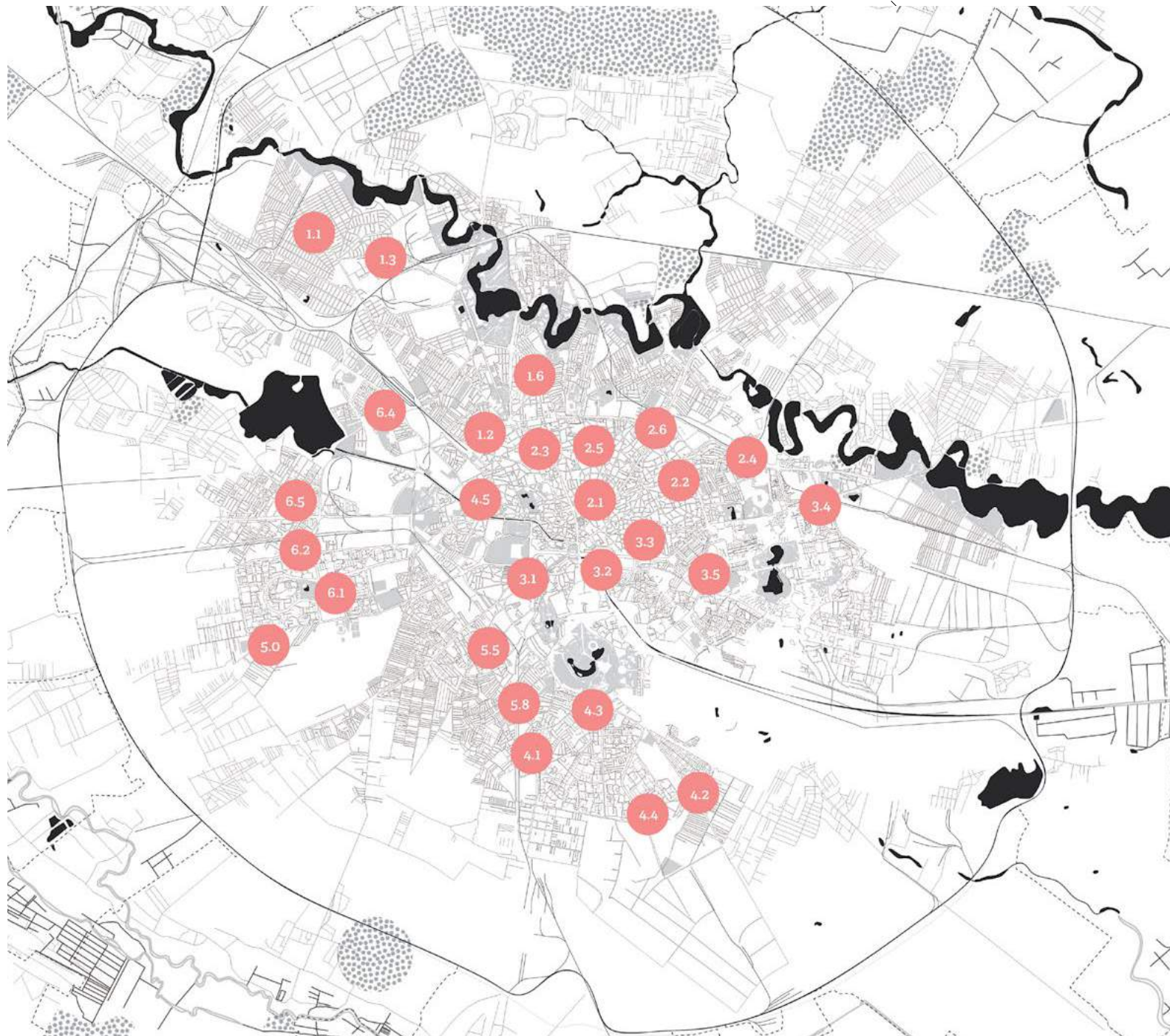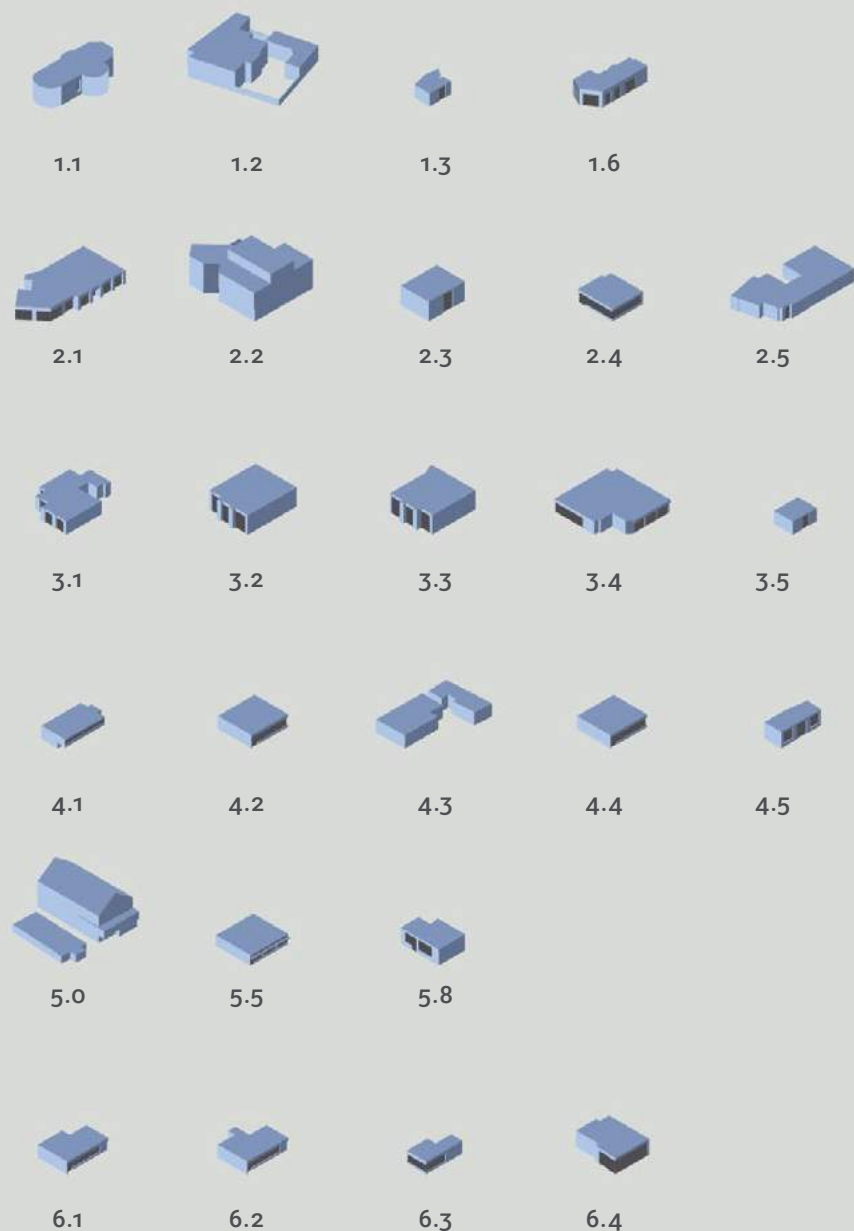
Index Research

Index Cards

The index cards represent a brief evaluation of the active branch libraries of the Bucharest Metropolitan Library. The information was gathered during on-site visits and interviews by team members, information gathered from the on-line presence of these libraries, as well as materials which were kindly provided by the BMB administration. For each location, an index card provides a summary of relevant data, as well as images which can inform on atmosphere, materials, spatial quality and organization. *See page 156.*

The data included in the index card refers to physical qualities (floor area, height, accessibility for people with reduced mobility), library service capacity (personnel, number of books, users, reading places), presence of related services/facilities (computers, printing/scanning facilities) and online presence. A scale has been introduced for each criterion, where the maximum is the highest value encountered among all branches and that represents 100%. All other branches are illustrated as a percentage of this highest value. For some of the criteria, like accessibility or online presence, where there was no need for a scale, only a true or false value has been assigned.

The purely objective nature of this material allows for an initial unbiased view on the topic and a neutral starting position of the research. The aim is to evaluate and compare the branch libraries on objective criteria in order to select potential candidates for a pilot project.

Toolbox

Area:
Total surface of the whole library. This includes storage, restrooms, basements etc.

Height:
Ceiling height measured at the highest point. It might be that you encounter different heights within the same library

Books:
The book collection kept in the library. This includes books which are in storage and are not directly available to the public.

Users:
The amount of people who hold a register cards.

Personnel:
Number of people who work in the library branch. Volunteers are not counted.

Computers:
Number of computers available for public use.

Multiprinter:
Is the library equipped with a printer which can copy and scan for public use?

Reading places:
Number of places for the public to sit down and read or study.

Accessibility:
Is the library accessible for users with disabilities?

Online:
Does the library have a website, a social media pro le (facebook, twitter etc). Is it present online.

Area	
Height	
Number of Books	
Users	
Personnel	
Computers	
Multiprinter	
Reading Places	

Accessibility ☑ Yes
Online ☒ No
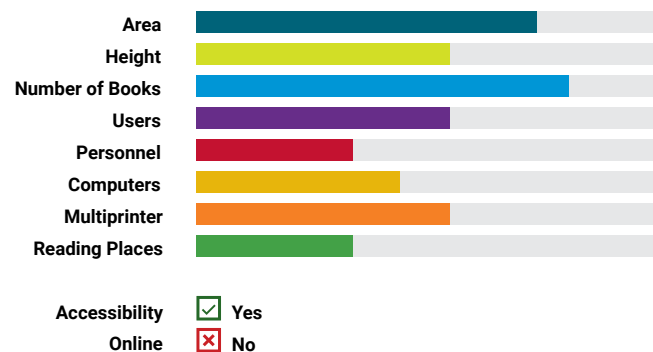
The Maps

The maps overlap spatial information with the collected factual data. These are correlated in a series of visual representations which relate the entire library network to its urban environment. This reveals the degree of over or under performance of these libraries in their respective areas. These maps provide an overview of the system as well as giving insight into which locations are critical and possible approaches for the strategic redevelopment of the branches.

1 km 2 km 3 km 4 km 5 km

Area

Height

Books

Users

Computers

Reading places

Coverage Area

1.1 1.2 1.3 1.6 2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5 5.0 5.5 5.8 6.1 6.2 6.4 6.5

Area
max 1586 m²
min 40 m²

Height
max 6 m
min 2.6 m

Books
max 81060
min 0
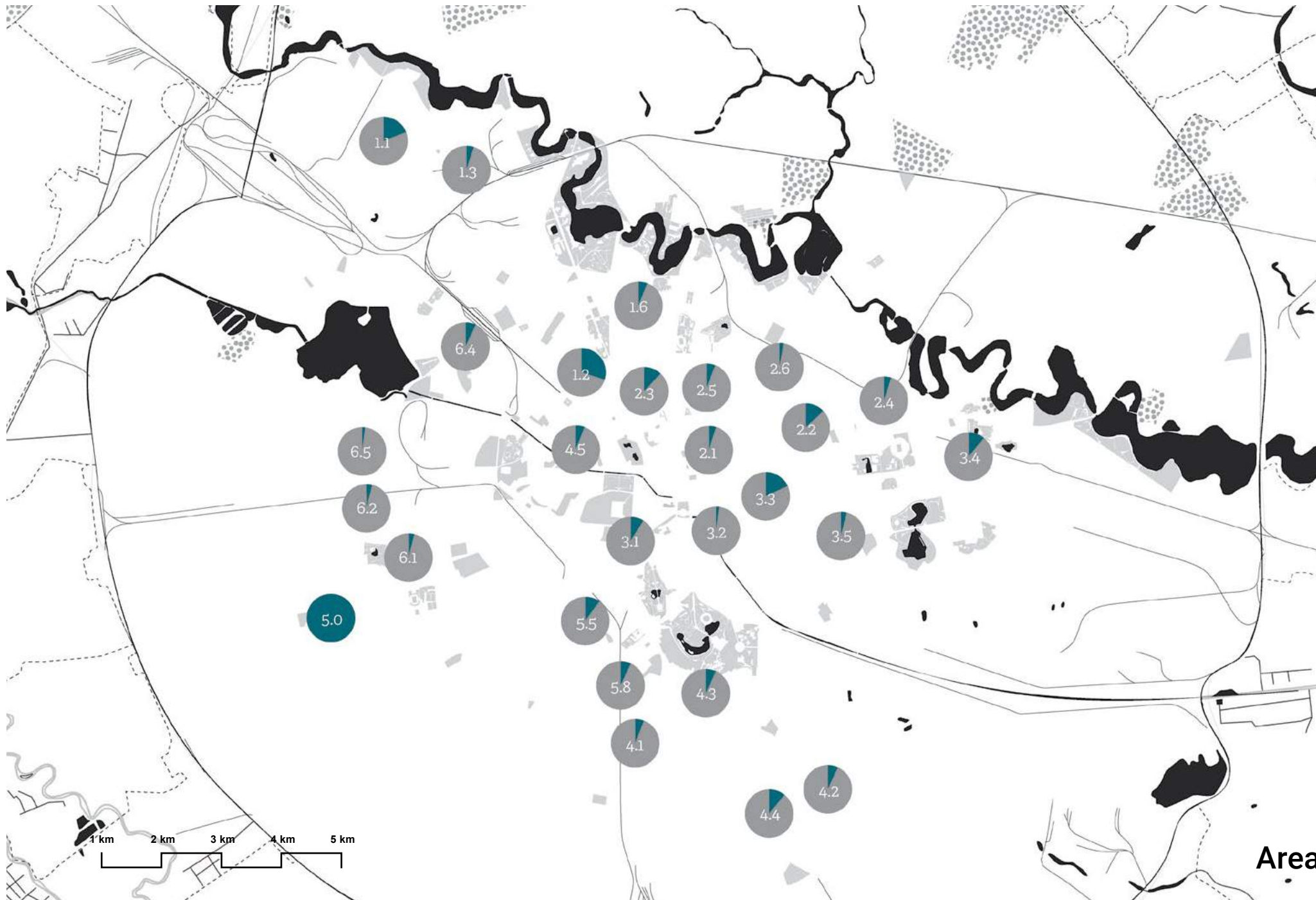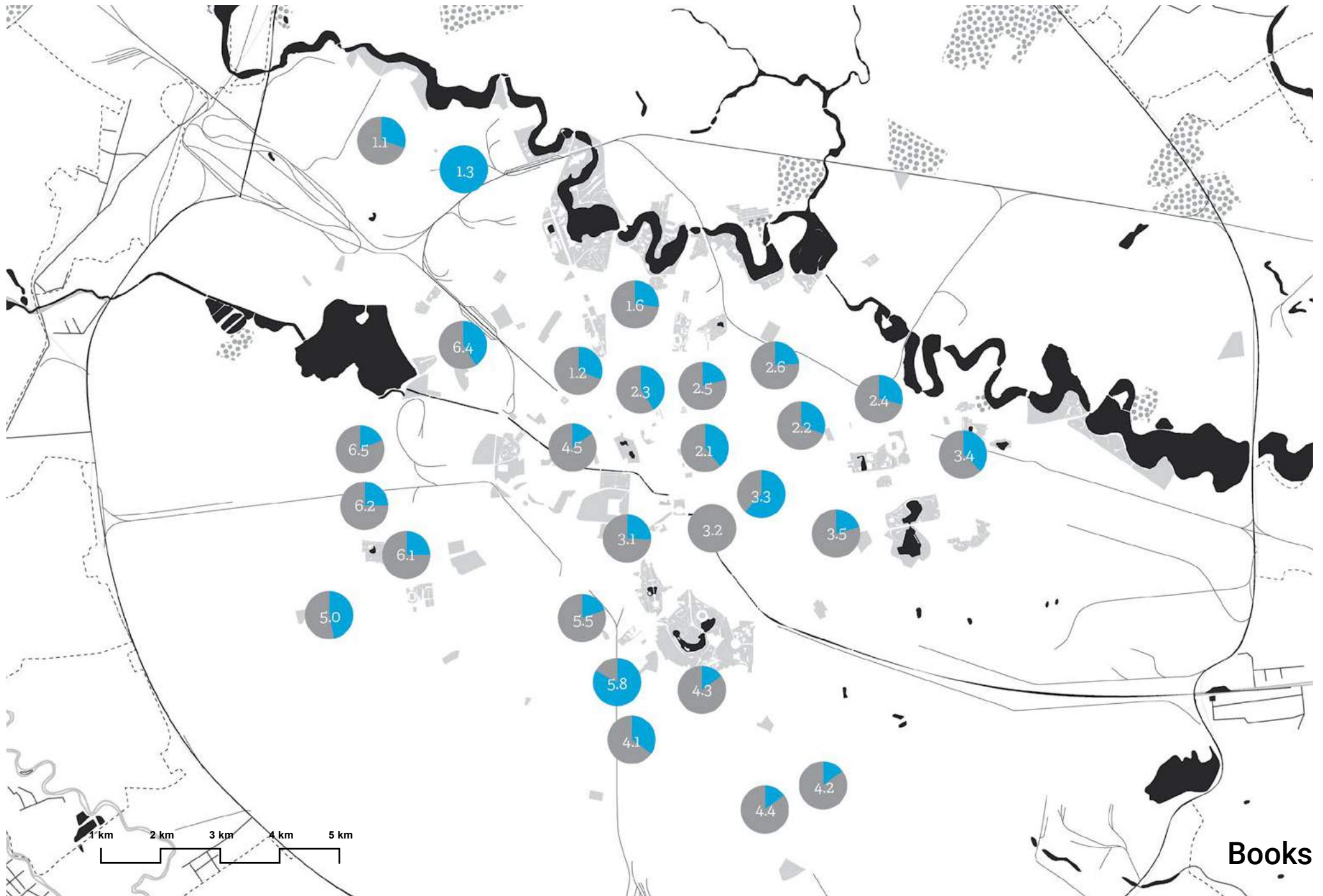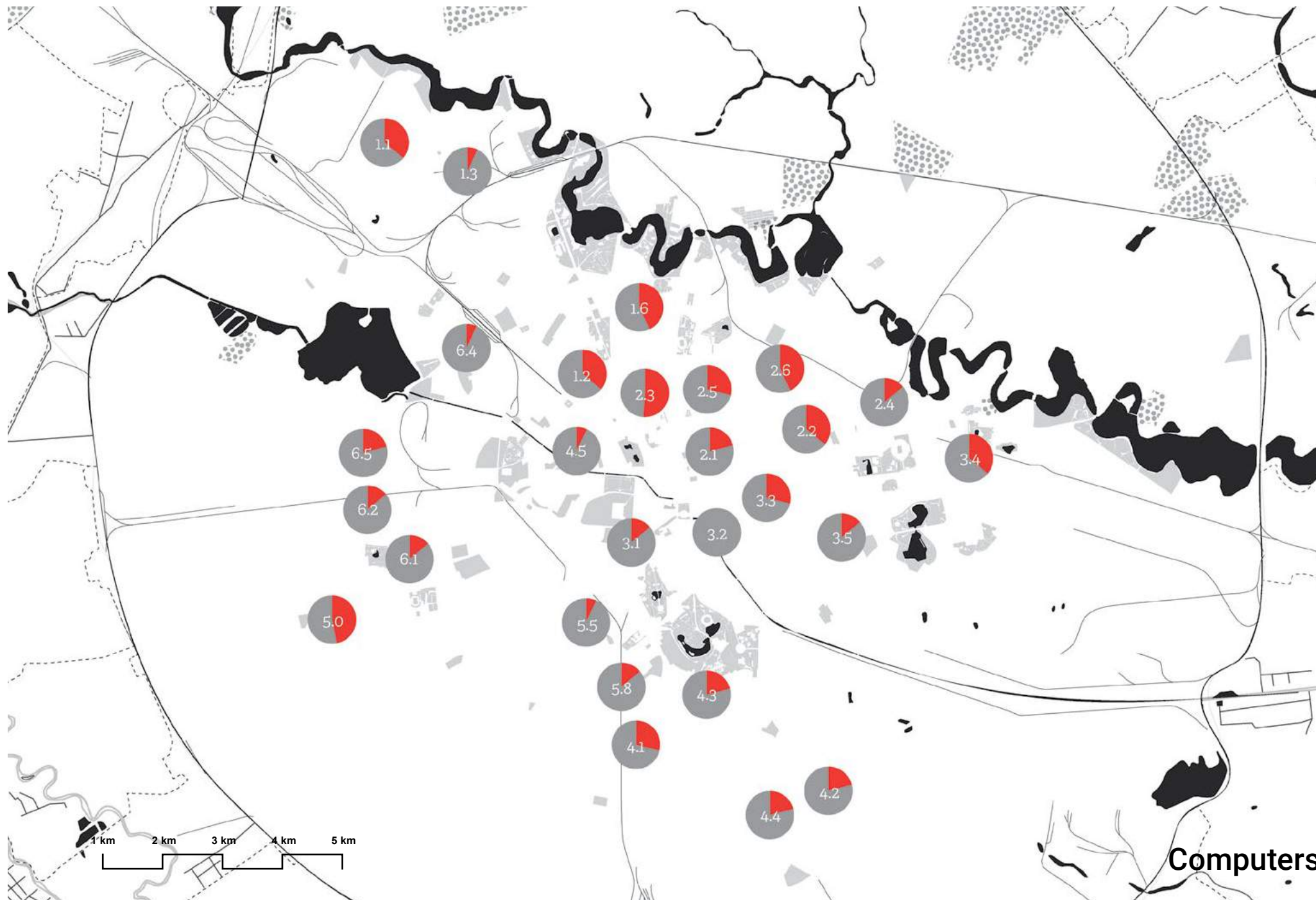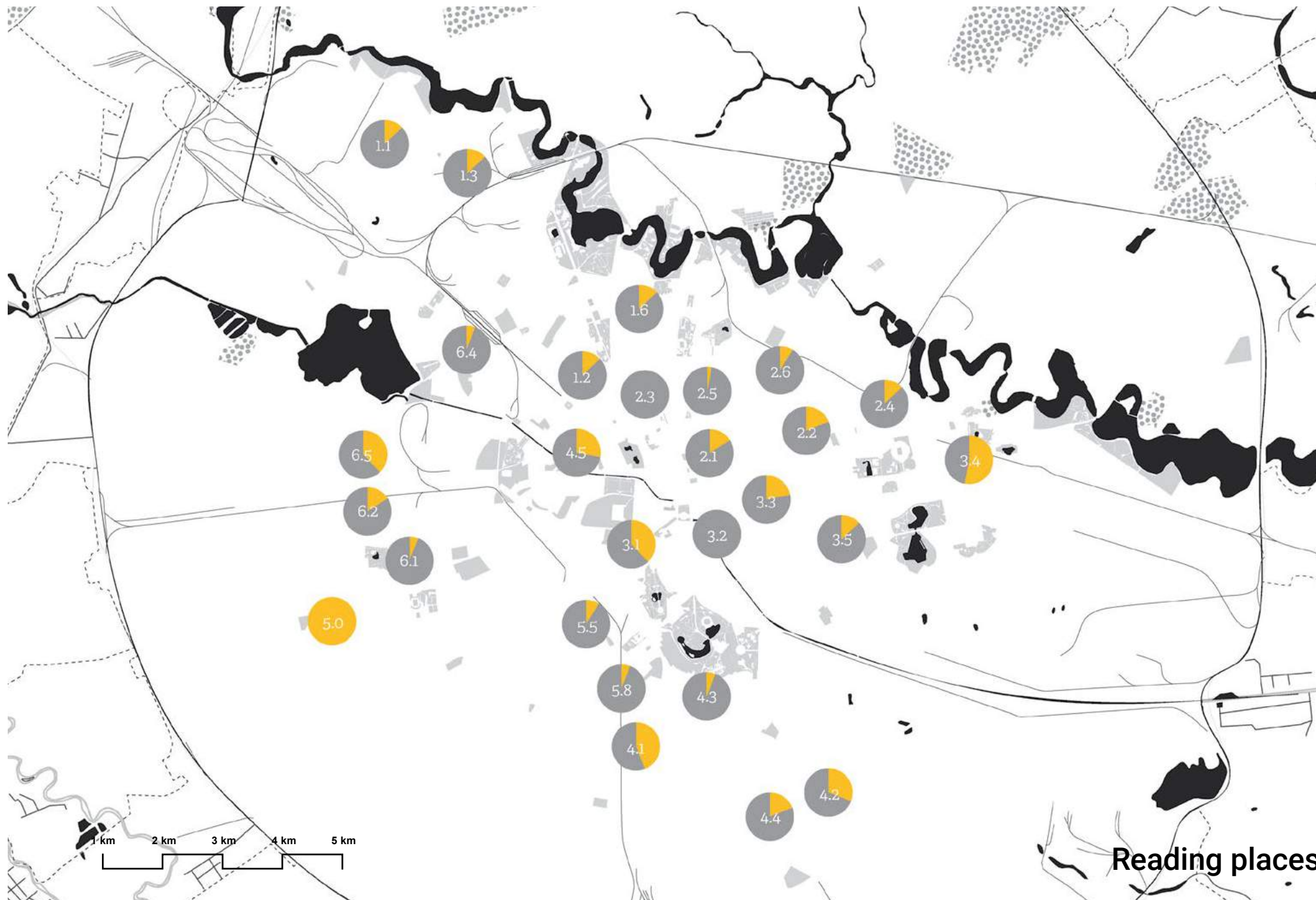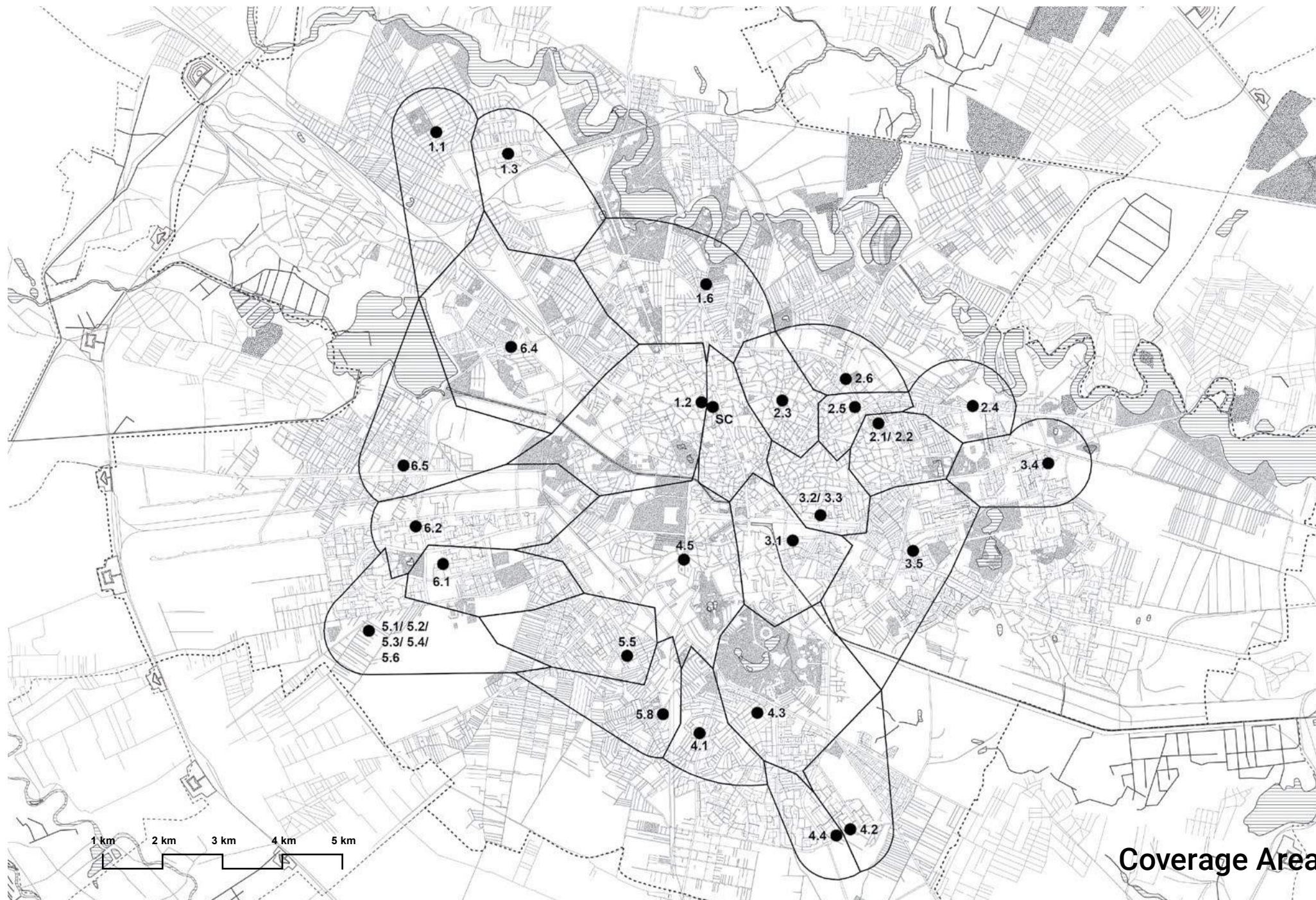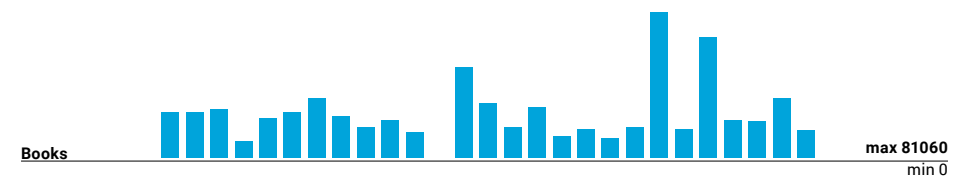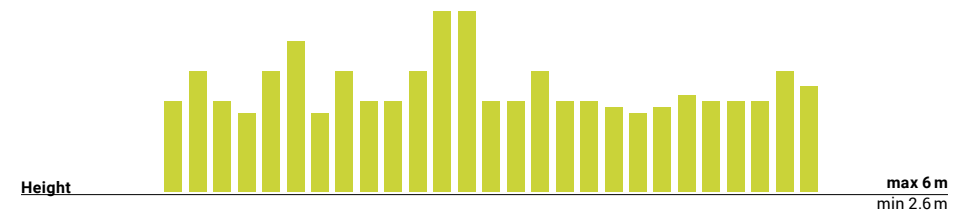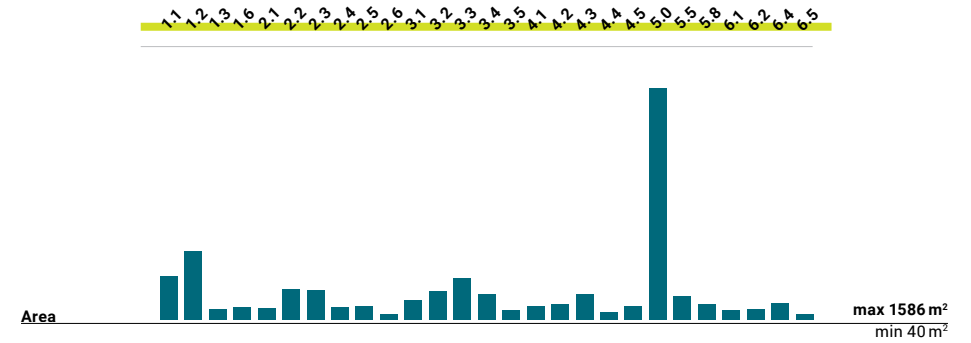
The Matrices

The matrices allow a clear overview of the entire network and can reveal disparities between the different branches as well as systemic dysfunctionalities. This manner of organizing information can immediately reveal some of the critical needs of the system and represents a starting point for the research.
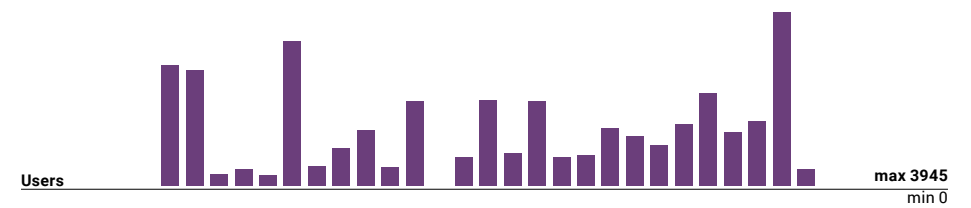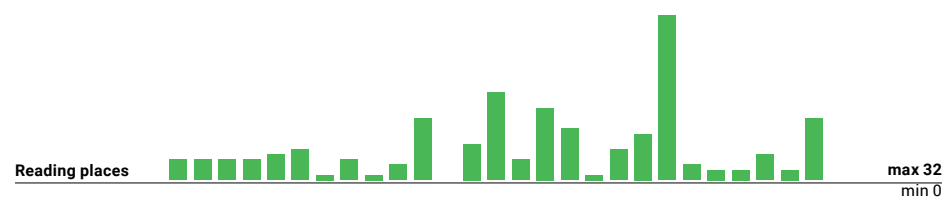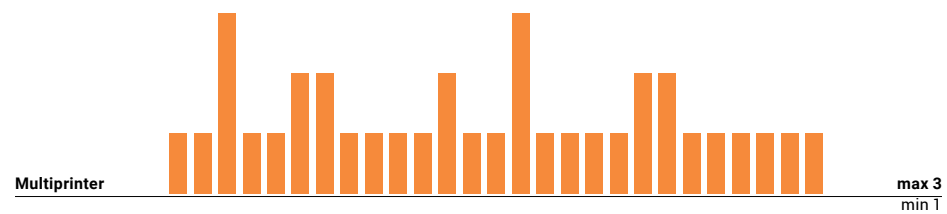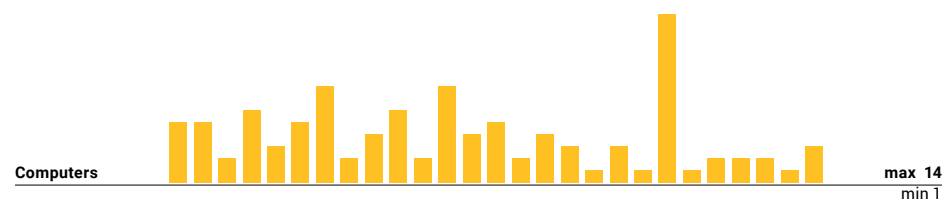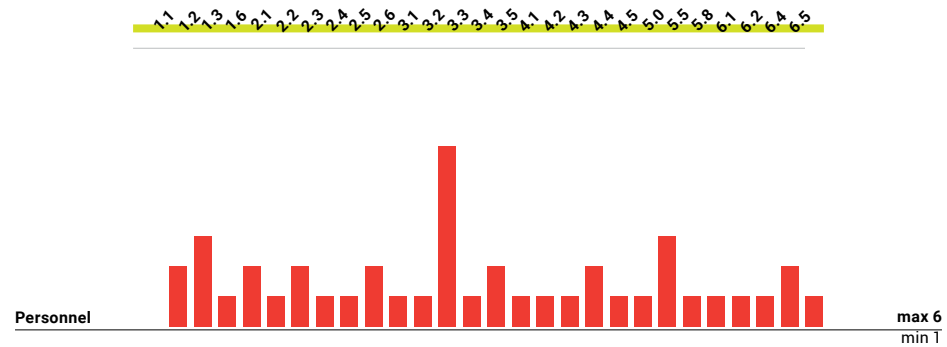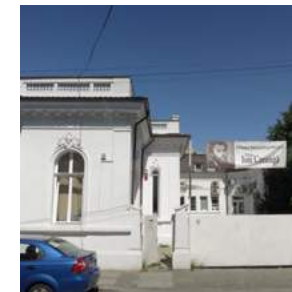
Users
max 3945
min 0

1.1 1.2 1.3 1.6 2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5 5.0 5.5 5.8 6.1 6.2 6.4 6.5

Personnel — max 6 / min 1

Computers — max 14 / min 1

Multiprinter — max 3 / min 1

Reading places — max 32 / min 0

1.1
Dimitrie Bolintineanu

1.2
Ion Creangă

1.3
Petre Ispirescu

1.6
Ioan Slavici

2.1
Sound Library

2.2
Lucian Blaga

2.3
Dimitrie Cantemir

2.4
Costache Negruzzi

2.5
Alexandru Odobescu

2.6
George Enescu

3.1
Emil Gârleanu

3.2
Pantelimon Halippa

4.4
A. Macedonski

4.5
Ienăciţiă Văcărescu

5.0
Octavian Goga

3.3
B.P. Haşdeu

3.4
Liviu Rebreanu

3.5
Ion Neculce

5.5
Ion Luca Caragiale

5.8
Gheorghe Şincai

6.1
Mihai Eminescu

4.1
Nicolae Bălcescu

4.2
Otilia Cazimir

4.3
George Coşbuc

6.2
Nicolae Labiş

6.4
Nichita Stănescu

6.5
George Topârceanu
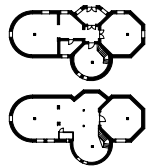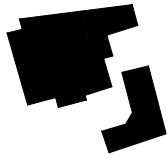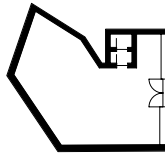
1.1 292 m²   **1.2** 464 m2   **1.3** 73 m2   **1.6** 83 m2   **2.1** 75 m2
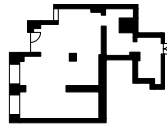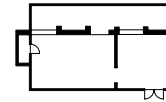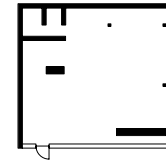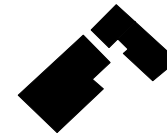
4.1 52 m²   **4.2** 32 m²   **4.3** 90 m²   **4.4** 63 m²   **4.5** 103 m²
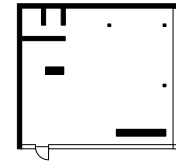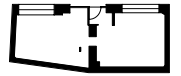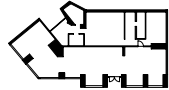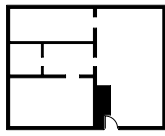
2.2 206 m²   **2.3** 200 m²   **2.4** 292 m²   **2.5** 82 m²   **2.6** 90 m²
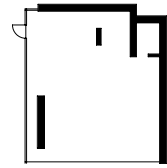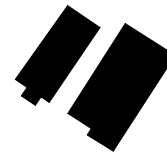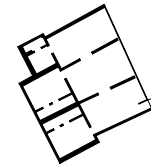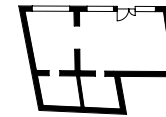
5.0 281 m²   **5.5** 90 m²   **5.8** 281 m²   **6.1** 170 m²   **6.4** 170 m²
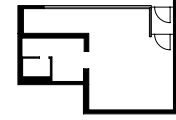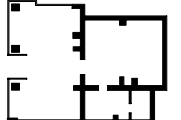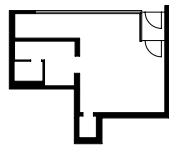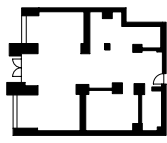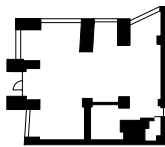
3.1 135 m²   **3.2** 32 m²   **3.3** 63 m²   **3.4** 135 m²   **3.5** 90 m²
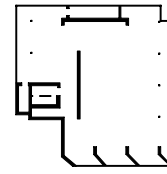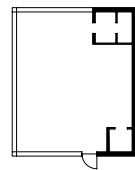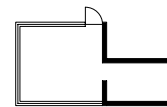
6.5 172 m²

Area
Height
Books
Users
Computers
Reading places
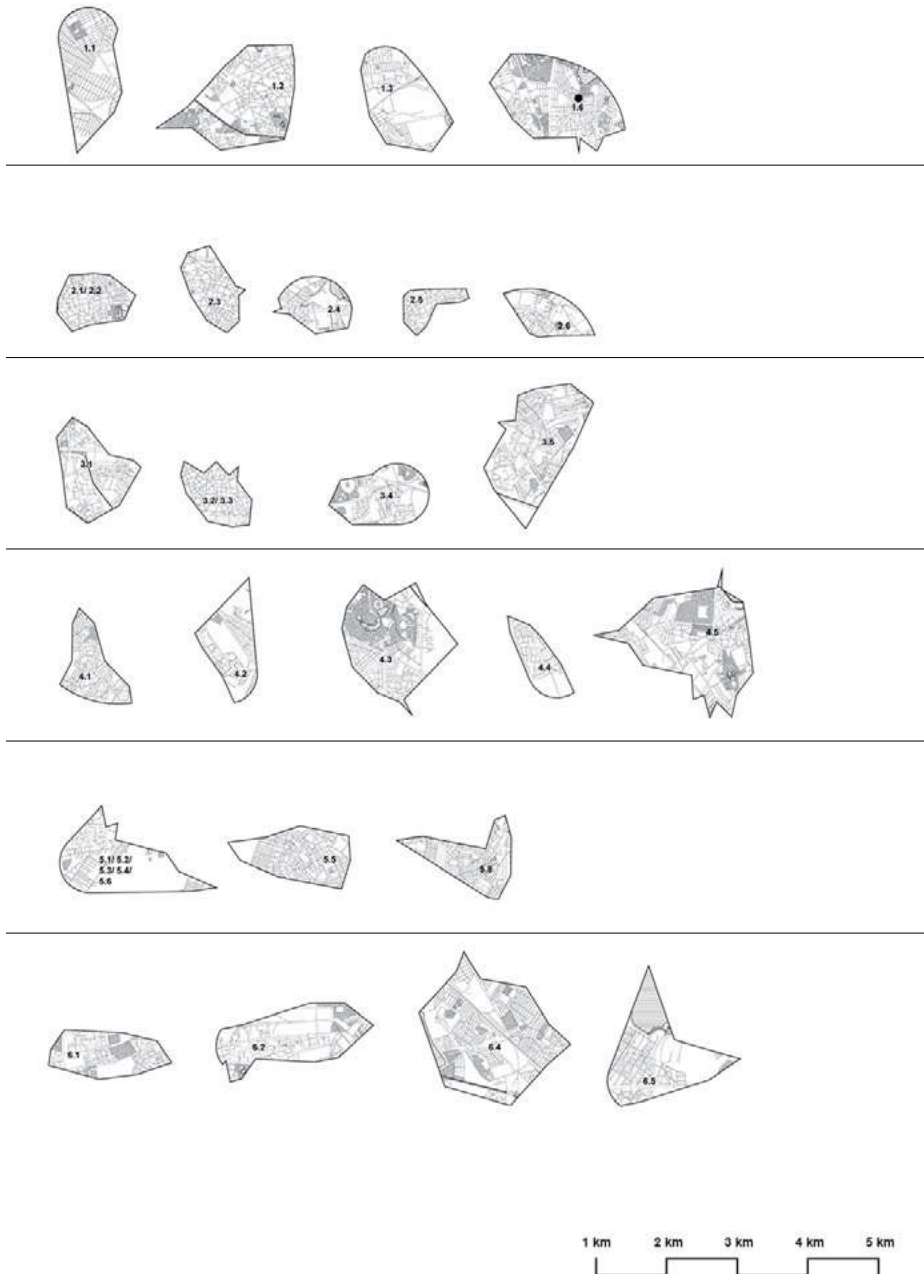
Exploration

The exploration trip to Bucharest was part of our initiation phase. Its purpose was to further our goals or the initiation phase by providing the opportunity to sit down with partners and stakeholders as well as develop our network at a local level through direct engagement, promoting the Dutch library model. It also provided the opportunity to have the Dutch team members and partners on site, in the libraries where they could asses the situation themselves and get a first hand experience of the BMB. This trip was facilitated by the grant received from Creative Industries Fund NL for the exploration of inter-disciplinary collaborative opportunities between the Netherlands and Romania.

The team has promoted the project and expanded their professional network further by travelling to Thessaloniki for the Future Library Unconference 2015. In september 2016 we were invited to present BiblioHUB at INURA Conference in Bucharest.
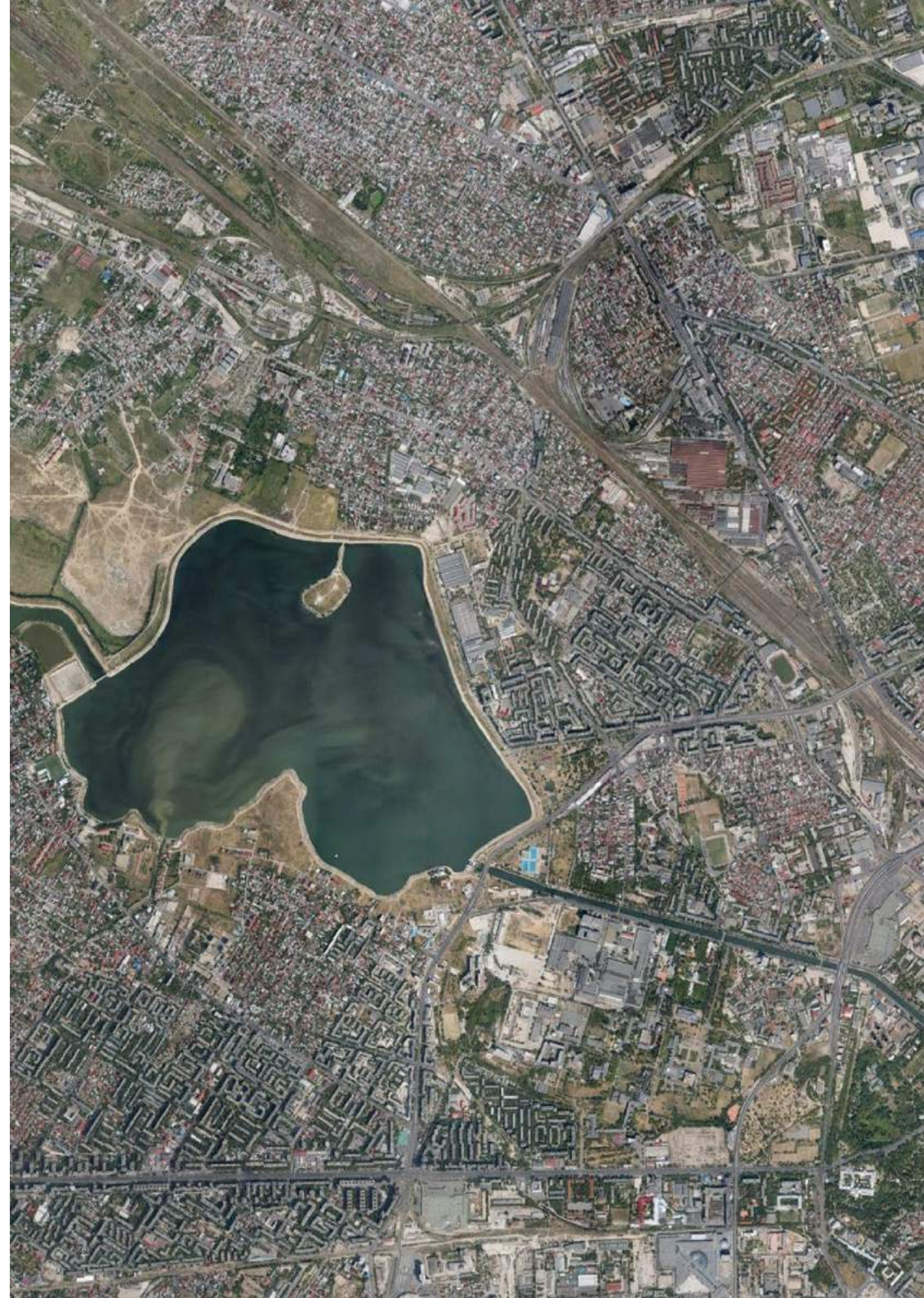
BMB

- POOR (NEW) DESIGN DETAILS AND OBJECTS
- UP-TO-DATE DEVICES
- FRIENDLY LIBRARIANS

ROMANIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY

- BIG SPACE, BIG PROBLEMS
- PLANTS
- LACK OF RESOURCES
- LABYRINTHINE ROUTING
- POOR ATMOSPHERE

INTENSE AND INSIGHTFUL TRIPS, DEBATES & FRIENDLY CHATS IN THE NETHERLANDS, ROMANIA AND GREECE.

BUT SOME FUN AS WELL

FUTURE LIBRARY UNCONFERENCE 2015

27 & 28 November
Thessaloniki - Greece

BiblioHUB PILOT

Following the study trip, Biblio<small>HUB PILOT</small> was designed as a tool for applied research, part of the interdisciplinary research phase of the project. The <small>PILOT</small> project is a testing ground that allows programmatic and spatial experiments that can be evaluated in real time.

SPACE

A crucial step for the PILOT's success is the strategic choice of a branch library. The selection is based on a set of predetermined criteria that relate to spatial potential and operational flexibility. Then the branch is reconfigured in order to accommodate the new services and programs proposed, with the transformation taking place on several levels.

At an urban level, opening and reconnecting the space to the street will increase the visibility and accessibility of the library, creating an extension of the public domain within the library. Thus, the library becomes an integral part of the urban public space, making it an attractive destination.

At the architectural level, the flexible partitioning encourages the multifunctional and simultaneous use of the library. Comfortable furniture, appropriate lighting and a cozy atmosphere transform the library into a place of leisure, a place for meetings, a place to work or study, a place for wasting time, a place to linger- an inviting and domestic space, present and active in the everyday life.

PROGRAMS

From a programmatic standpoint, one of the objectives of BiblioHUB is to use existing resources of the BMB network, as well as involving external specialized personnel. Direct collaboration with the BMB allows adjusting both the operation schedule and the provided services. Developing a platform under which these resources help promoting the existing services and developing new programs of activities is one of the essential aspects of this initiative.

Expanding the existing services by introducing:

• Specialized courses—eg. CGI graphic design, start-ups, leadership, interior design, architecture workshop for children, educational and community theater.

• Consultancy sessions offered by professionals—eg. financial consulting, legal, etc.

New programs

• Library's Ambassador—invited guest custodians tailor and implement additional programs during their four-month residency.

• Satellite Programs—an area in the library hosts temporary tertiary continuous activities (eg. creatives in residence, radio broadcast).

• Experimental activities outside—eg. pop-up dinner, escape room , film screenings, exhibitions, etc.

USERS

BiblioHUB is not addressing only the local community, the way most of the branches work at the moment, but the all users of the BMB network. Moreover, its purpose is to open up to other potential users that are not currently targeted through the offered services.The new activities are designed to expand and diversify the user base among the 26 - 40 age segment (school children and the elderly being at present the two main recurring user groups of the library). Thus, programs and services must be designed specifically for this dynamic and diverse age group. In order to identify the needs of the target audience, underrepresented segments of the population will be identified, each segment being assigned a user id as a prototype. These persona cards are used as research tools for the development of complementary programs.

Through the PILOT project, our main goal is developing the library's capacity to address those who currently use the existing cultural public space, as well as those who haven't been to/in a library since elementary school.
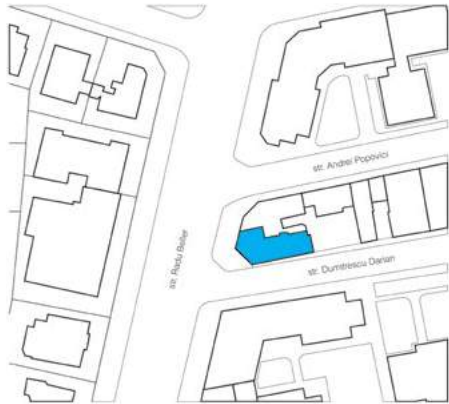
IMPLEMENTATION

The PILOT project is designed to be active for a minimum period of six months, during which the selected branch becomes an experimental space. Thus, it can test various strategies, methods, programs and rules for informing the entire dynamic research. Consequently, a flexible set of tools are identified, helping to define the future strategy specific for each of the BMB branches. After the official end of the PILOT, it is recommended to preserve the PILOT library space as a permanent laboratory.
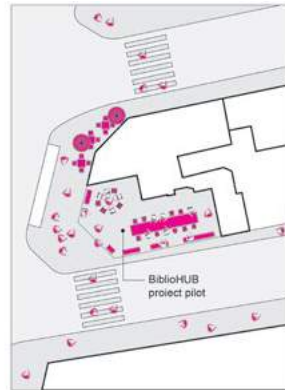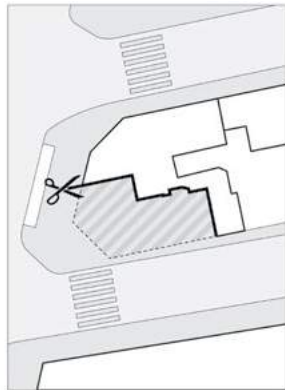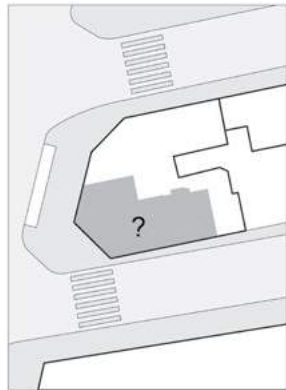
CASE STUDY

The case study was applied for the "Ioan Slavici" branch library and BiblioHUB PILOT URBANIADA organized by ING Bank Romania and The Institute in 2015, where the jury evaluated the project as: "A well-structured and well-documented project, highly creative through the identification of a resource of neglected existing spaces, but with great potential. Its fundamentation on a high-quality applied research is obvious. It is one of the few projects featuring a genuine partnership between a public cultural organization (BMB) and design".

30 min/ 1,2km

30 min/ 1,2km

Bordei

Herastrau

M Aviatorilor

Highscool
Jean Monet

Offices

Offices

Sports Center
Floareasca

Park
Floareasca

Offices

● IOAN SLAVICI Branch

Kaufland

National TV
Headquarters

Floareasca
Market

Parc
cinema Floareasca

Park

Park Kisseleff

Highscool
I.L.Caragiale

Offices

M Victoriei

M Stefan cel Mare

Highscool N.Tonitza

Perla
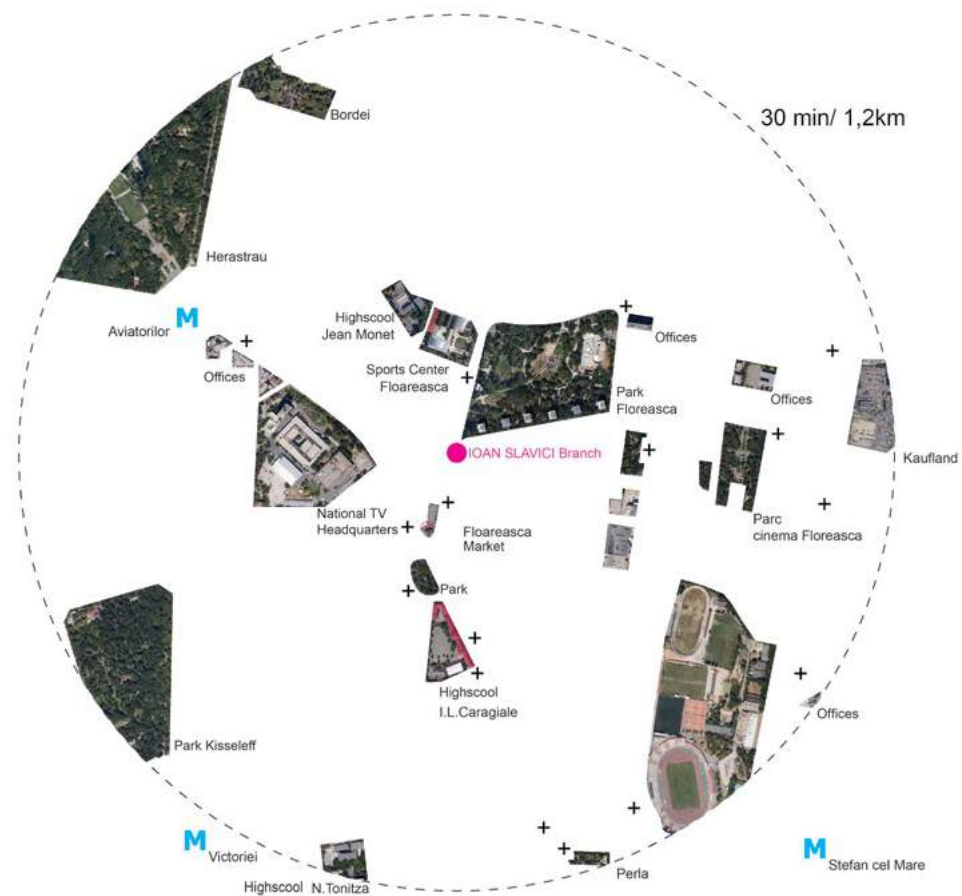
Site Plan

Urban Intervention

Facade Before

Persona cards

The persona cards (user ID as a prototype assigned for relevant population segments) are used as research tools for the development of complementary programs.

They provide a practical approach to understanding the needs of the target audience, and thsus inform the configuration of the pilot.

Fictious user profiles are made based on information gathered from sociological research involving demographic data and other relevant statistcs, surveys & interviews with neighborhood people, etc.

Name: Matei
Age: 24
Occupation: Student

Interests:
graphic design
bicycle
aeromodelling
winter sports

Activities:
skiing every time he has the chance
going out in bars & clubbing
urban contemporary illustrations
plane models collector
volunteering

Matei is a student, he rents together with 2 university colleagues. His day starts at 9 with university where he goes cycling. His flexible schedule allows him to have a part-time job, working partially from home. In his little free time left, he usually meets up with friends in the city or collecting and assembling planes. He collaborates on a volunteer basis with different NGO's that fight for fredom of expression and equal rights for minorities.

Activities addressing him:
- Theoretical Classes related to fine arts
- Civic responsibilties classes

Persona Cards | 13>70 years old population segment

Facade After

1. reading places
2. multifunctional activities space
3. librarian's office
4. restroom
5. deposit space

1.

2.

1.

1.

1.

3.

5.

1.

1.

1.

4.

1.

entrance
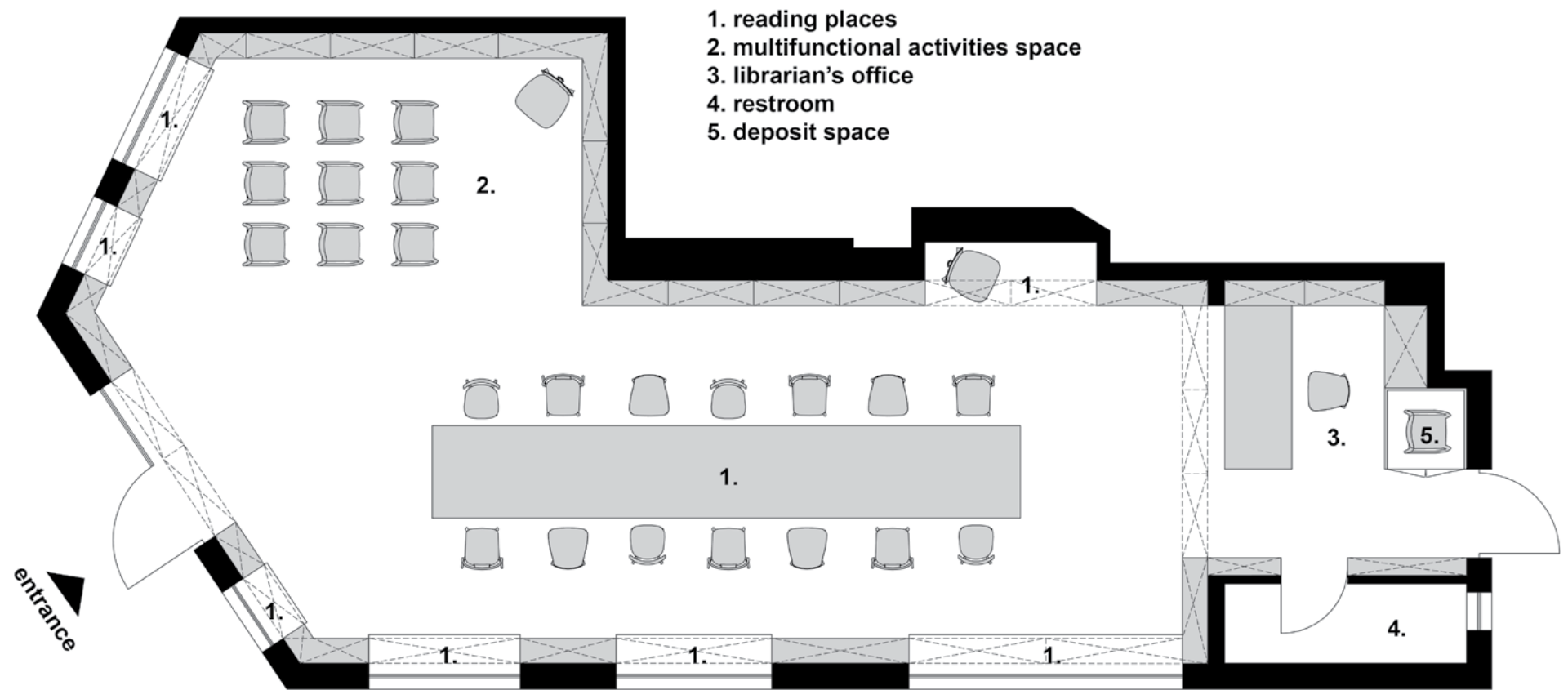
PLAN BiblioHUB PILOT

0m   1m   2m   3m   4m   5m

N

Activities scenarios for the multifunctional space

Training Course for
Librarians

Trainer

Librarian

AMBASSADOR

Reader

Movie Projections
thematic selections

Reader

Student

Alternative Education
Class

Teacher

Student

Reader

Children's Activities
pre-school & elementary

Pre-school
pupil
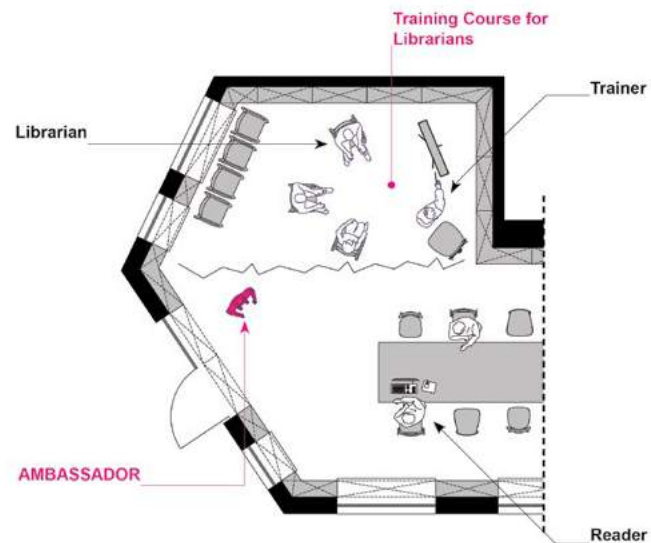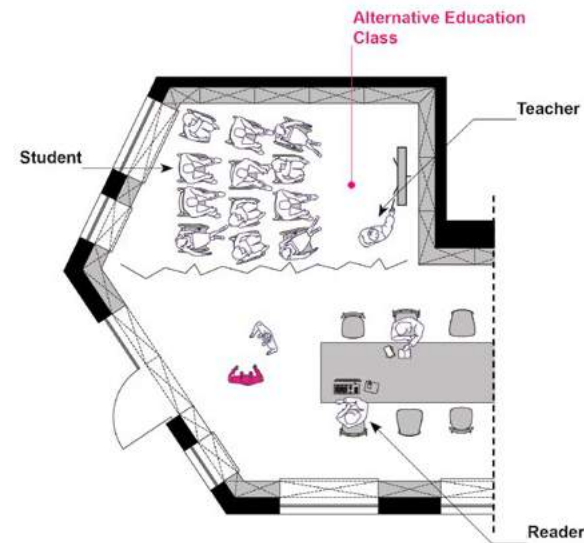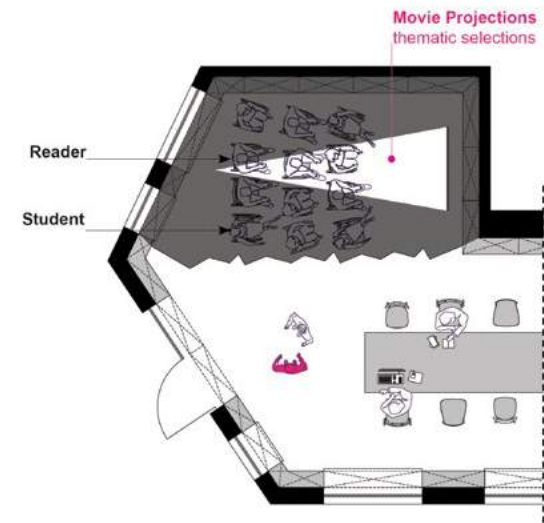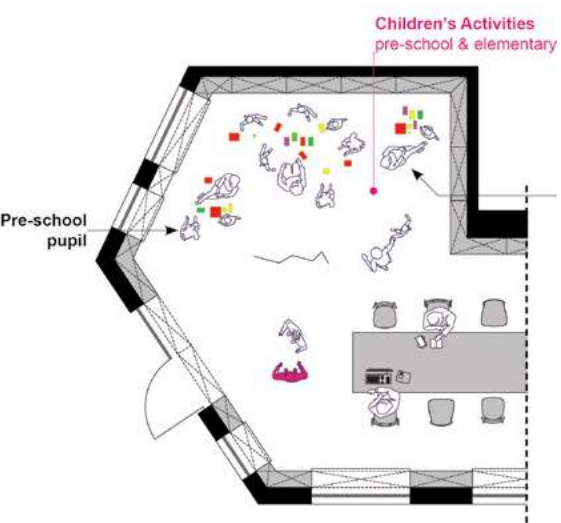
Library Initiatives

"Libraries have always been more than a place where readers come to read. The librarians of Alexandria no doubt collected things other than books: maps, art, instruments, and readers probably came there not only to consult books but also to attend public lectures, converse with one another, teach and learn. And yet the library remained principally a place where books, in all their various forms, were stored for consultation and preservation of "ancient traditions or notions 'gray with time'."

Alberto Manguel

30 Chances

IND [Inter.National.Design]

IND [INTER.NATIONAL.DESIGN] and SO-P&E (Stadsontwikkeling Project Management & Engineering) were commissioned by the Central Library of Rotterdam to make a research and propose a strategy for re-activating the headquarters of the library.

30 chances - is the result of the research project done for the Central Library of Rotterdam. The study focused on the possible privatization process, the shrinking of public finances and on the impending centralization of resources. ind's approach related to the discovery and visualization of a critical number of potential interventions that could contribute to the re-activation of the library on four levels: social, intellectual, spatial and financial.

As such, ind has proposed 30 visions for improving, modifying or drastically changing certain existing spatial, programmatic or social circumstances. These 30 ideas-ranging from playful, to strategic and serious - were presented in the form of postcards and they were used as a tool to communicate with the clients and stir up an engaging dialogue.

No brief
As architects we normally expect a client with ideas, visions, intentions. These are normally transmitted to the architects in a document that we call the brief. Within the brief you have an introduction, a problematic, a vision, which is then followed by schedule intentions, budget expectations, program with areas, regulations to comply with and so on.

In the case of the study for Rotterdam Central Library we were confronted with an invitation to collaborate to envision a future library, which will be soon privatized and needed to rethink quickly alternative directions. The word privatization made us uncomfortable, coming from countries where privatization has lead to scandalous levels of corruption this was the last scenario we would expect to confront from a model country like The Netherlands. The client then explained that the new organization to win the bid is conditioned to do it in the form of a not for profit foundation and has to maintain the key essence of the public library, that is knowledge transfer.

Going back to the brief. This was it. There was no brief. In the discussion that followed some points came out, the city couldn't afford in the future to maintain all its public libraries. Privatization was not an easy answer; the city still worried that even turned private those organizations will face a financial problem in the coming years. To prevent this and make things smoother the municipality will guarantee the financial resources with at least 50% of the expenses of the foundation for the first 5 years. Yet the ultimate aim is to make the new institution resilient in its own terms.

Yet it is precisely this point that put the flags up. Were there limits to achieve this financial independence? Could current libraries convert into a commercially profitable space and shrink their cultural agenda in order to survive? What are the risks to turn this legendary public program of the city into a private club that can be afforded only by a certain class?

Certainly we could not oppose the measures that had been taken, and since we wanted to contribute to the way a library could perform in the future we had to transform our initial disgust and turn that energy into a productive one that aims to maintain the cultural role of the library while securing accessibility for everyone.

The vectors
The client asked us not to make an architecture project; instead they wanted to use our ideas to initiate a debate with the city and also amongst the librarians. They were interested not only on ways of transforming the building physically, they wanted to see scenarios that included ways of increasing internal revenue, scenarios with new social dynamics, scenarios of collaboration with new institutions. Our method to keep a boundary of these general concerns was the introduction of 3 vectors: Space, Activity and People. The scenarios would take their main strength in the challenging of any of these 3 factors.

The postcards
How to represent visions? How to maintain a certain level of non-specificity with a clear understanding of the real potential of the current building? We agree on making postcards, showing with a collage in the front the main idea, while using its backside to reason the idea behind. From around 100 ideas we selected 30.These selection were the result of an intensive collaborative effort with the architect Marc Verheijen representing the city of Rotterdam.

What next
The day of the workshop we presented a brief background of the future of libraries, which added to the challenge of privatization the panorama of digitalized world, and centralization. Then we proceed to show each of the ideas. They were structured in such a way that the initial ones contain very little change and the last ones are drastic scenarios.

The librarians were happy, interested, discussing with each other some of them, then after talking with them, they agreed to make the discussion more open. That is when the agreed to make a website so all Rotterdam librarians could see the proposals, comment and give priority to the preferred ones.

Transition to CERO
Very briefly after our workshop, the current library director (and client representative) step down from his position. Very quickly the reality of the transition from a public library to a Foundation had to be secured in the most practical ways. The way to transform it was not in their priorities for the new organization. We are optimistic that once the new institution is in a more stable condition they might use the material produced to continue in the search for a more open and innovative library.
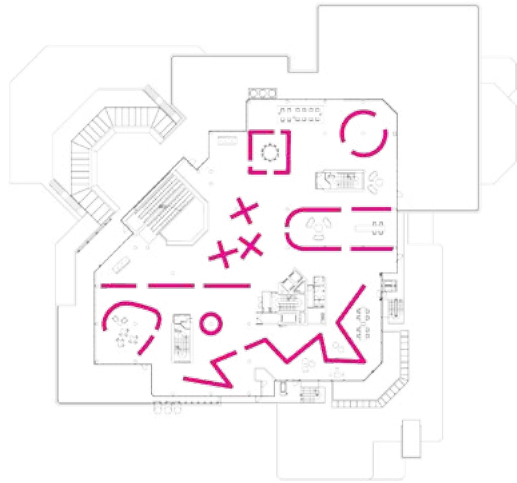
super-bookshelves

Books categories are re-curated and organised by new themescapes, through a bookshelf system that provides reading space, coffee corners, isolation capsules, lockers, plugs for all.

To

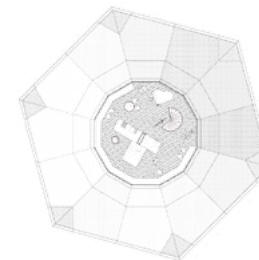BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM

POSTBUS 22140

3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE ....
....
....
....

writers in residence
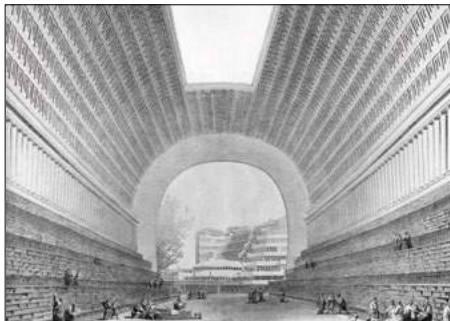
Within a residency program spaces for writers/writing are provided, and the action of writing as an art practice is emphacised (lectures, workshops, exhibitions). The program could be coordinated as an annual prize to writing talents.

To

BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM

POSTBUS 22140

3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE ....
....
....
....

program swap

The library moves into the new market hall and the existing library becomes a vertical food market. Keeping both structures intact, the buildings present a very different feeling once their main activity changes.

To
BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM
POSTBUS 22140
3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE

book repository

The entire book archive is efficiently stored in a more cost-effective location. The books are brought to the Central Library on demand. International partnerships with other libraries and institutions virtually extend the collection.

To
BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM
POSTBUS 22140
3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE

capsules in the city

WiFi furniture objects are dispersed throughout the city spreading the library program in public space.

To
BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM
POSTBUS 22140
3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE

discreet extension

To discreetly making use of its air rights, the library expands in a way that is not perceived by almost anyone.

To
BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM
POSTBUS 22140
3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE

terraces activated

Terraces are opened for the public and offer additional quality space to the library's functions (reading, meeting, discussing, relaxing, enjoying).

To
BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM
POSTBUS 22140
3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE

frequent reader

Customised kinds of memberships enable a more reader-friendly use of the library system: from 'pay-as-you-go', 'once-a-week', 'frequent-reader' to 'golden flatrate'.

To
BIBLIOTHEEK ROTTERDAM
POSTBUS 22140
3003 DC ROTTERDAM

YOUR MESSAGE

Image 2016 © IND [Inter.National.Design]

Re-organisation of the Moscow Library System

SVESMI (ROTTERDAM/MOSCOW) + FALANSTER (MOSCOW)

The System as a Monument

Almost every decade of the last tumultuous century introduced extreme new challenges for preservationists. Totalitarian regimes left us with a vast array of monuments – often truly monumental in size and significance - with practically no instrumentation for their adequate assessment in historical perspective. How should urban environments digest and re-appropriate symbols of past ideologies that still emit dangerous energy? How do we ensure their edifying effect and, at the same time, protect their esthetical aspects, which are often inseparable from their original ideological designations?

Russia with its tragically complex political history, boisterous present and uncertain future displays all characteristic problems of contemporary preservation. For instance, socialist urban systems – networks of worker's clubs, extensive webs of local history museums or a country-wide chain of large-scale movie theaters - still play an important role in formatting of urban fabric, yet there is no clear understanding in the society about what to do with these remnants of long expired cultural frameworks.

In 2012, SVESMI office for architecture and urbanism in collaboration with the bookstore Falanster has initiated a project of re-organization of the Moscow public library system, comprised of 448 branches spread across the city and housed in extremely diverse building types. In Post-Soviet Russia, branch libraries kept functioning along the guidelines once set by professional ideologists, with virtually no connection to the rhythms and demands of the new world emerging outside of their walls. By 2010-s, the majority of Moscow libraries faced both cultural and financial bankruptcy and - in the immediate perspective – closure, as footfalls diminished dramatically even in the best locations in the city centre.

SVESMI/ Falanster project began with a thorough investigation of the current state of all libraries in the capital and helped expose the system as a network of potentially attractive urban living rooms that if properly rethought could have provided the citizens with the precious public space without loosing the original function of a library.

The project emphasised the significance and monumentality of the system that should have been protected, while encouraging the diversification of functions in each branch and propagating nuanced connections to specific contexts. Five pilot projects commissioned by the Moscow Department of culture in the heel of
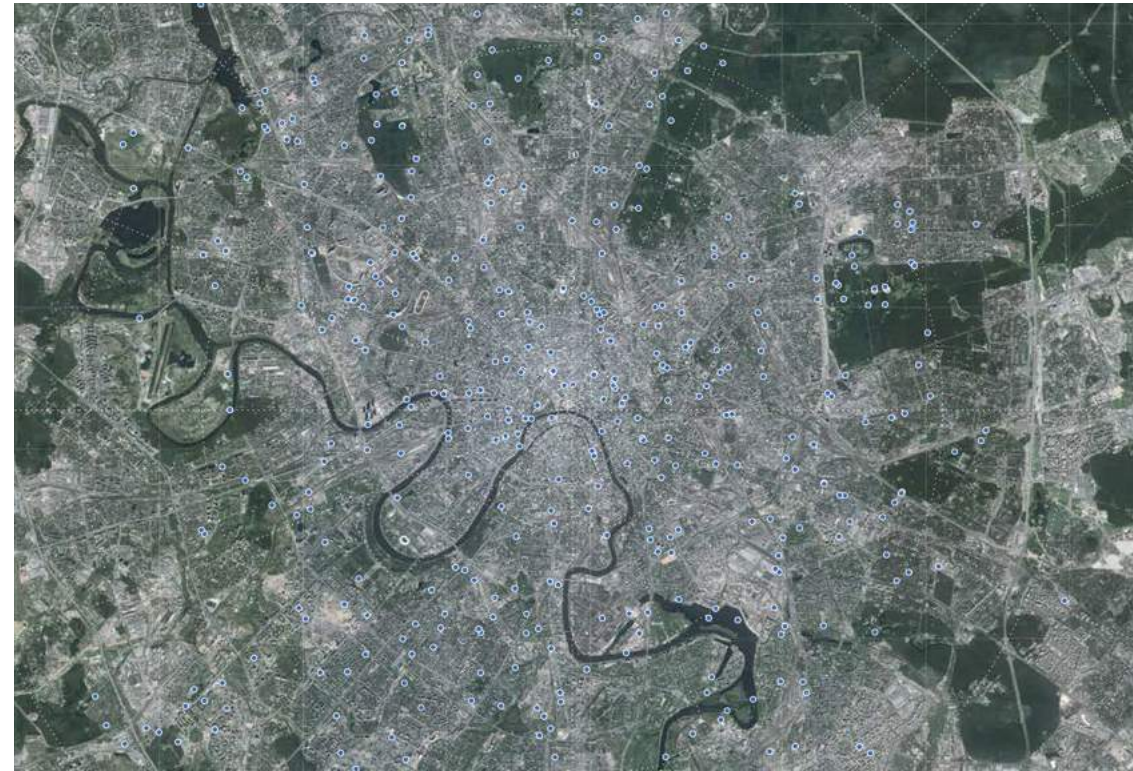
Moscow Library Atlas © Giovanni Bellotti + Paolo Ruaro

research and designed by SVESMI in five different city districts demonstrated how to create high quality containers for public activities and, at the same time, maintain the integrity of the system by means of unified design elements and a set of rules and regulations for space use and institutional organization.

The newly created municipal governing body Moscow Library Centre also lead by the project team was to manage the transitional period and oversee the change of the entire framework.

The proposed preservation strategy proved to be successful. In a matter of just one year, the re-organised pilots saw a tremendous increase in attendance with numbers rising from 300 visitors per month to 300 visitors per day. Taking full advantage of libraries' prime locations, the new emerging system was to preserve the best qualities of the previous one and, at the same time, to foster the next generations of neutral civic spaces attractive to various strata of society.

Dostoyevsky Library before and after renovation © Frans Parthesius

Exterior of Library No.127 at day & night © Frans Parthesius

Re-envisioning New York's branch libraries

CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE | DAVID GILES, JEANETTE ESTIMA, NOELLE FRANCOIS

Branch libraries are serving more New Yorkers in more ways than ever before, yet they remain undervalued by policymakers. In 2014, The Architectural League collaborated with the Center for an Urban Future on a design study that articulated new architectural, financial, and programmatic possibilities for these essential, neighborhood-based resource centers.

The study identified the challenges that branch libraries face and propose design solutions to stimulate conversation about means to support New York's three library systems and the vital services they provide. These challenges include promoting access to expanding resources of the digital world while continuing to circulate books and other print resources; accommodating the full range of library programs, from adult literacy and esl to after-school programs for children and teens and technology training for senior citizens; and enhancing libraries' capacity to serve as physical and civic hubs of their communities.

The design study was in conjunction with and a complement to the Center for an Urban Future's ongoing research on branch libraries in New York City, including their January 2013 report, Branches of Opportunity, on the libraries' increasingly critical role in the city's human capital system, and their September 2014 report, Re-Envisioning New York's Branch Libraries, on libraries' capital needs and recommendations for how to bring these vital community institutions into the 21st century.

The Architectural League invited architects and designers interested in participating in this design study to organize interdisciplinary teams and to submit qualifications and a statement of interest in response to a Request for Qualifications. A selection committee selected five teams from forty-five submissions.

The design study culminated with a public event in the fall of 2014, featuring a presentation of the participants' work and discussion with advocates and policymakers around issues drawn from the study. The research helped lay the groundwork for an enormous win for the libraries and the millions of New Yorkers who use them. In late june 2015, Mayor de Blasio and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito agreed on a city budget for fiscal year 2016 that increases funding for libraries by $43 million* and ensures six-day service in all 210 branch libraries across the city. Combined with an additional $300 million for libraries that was included in the city's 10-year capital plan, this year marked "the largest ever combined increase in operating and capital funding for public libraries".

L+

Situ Studio + MTWTF + Jessica Blaustein & Rachel Meltzer (The New School) + Lauren Comito & Christian Zabriskie (Urban Libraries Unite/ULU) + Jesse M. Keenan (Columbia University)

Study:
• program oriented + urban development

Content:
• study of the formal and informal exist ing library programs

• proposal of a potential program

• study of the functional & technical requirements for the new matrix of pro grams

• develop a kit of parts (flexible furniture)

• site assessments–characteristics + needs

• case studies (S/M/L)

• examples of how the kit would work in those spaces

• branding + mobile apps

• library vs. outpost > outpost = library "How would it be for the library to be your tenant?"
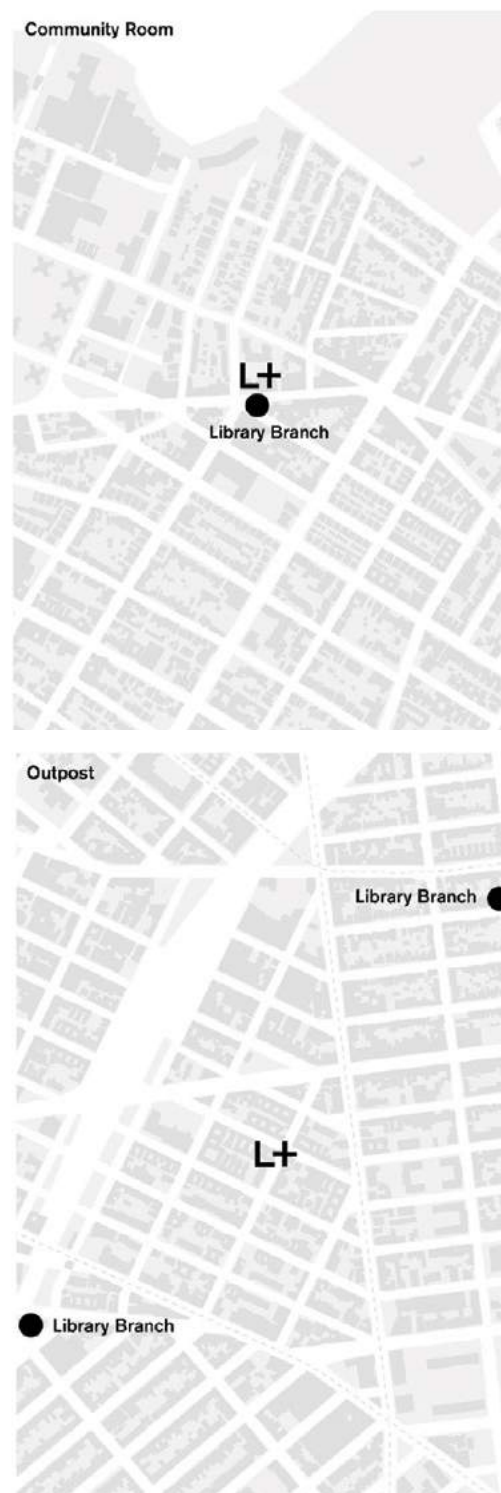
Browsing & Lending

Book Browsing
Book Lending
A/V Browsing & Lending
Learning Materials Lending
Online Book Order & Pick-Up
Book Delivery
eBooks / mp3 Checkout

Reference & Research

Database Access
Periodicals & Journal Access
Local History & Archives
General Research & Guidance
Information Economy & Training

Read & Work

Individual Work Space
Quiet Space to Read
Group Work Space
Group Space to Hang
Reserved Group Study Spaces
Co-Working Spaces

Government Services

Mini City Hall Services
Interface to Gov Health Agencies

Flexible Assembly Space

Programmable Community Space
Neighborhood Gathering Space

Childhood Learning & Afterschool

Storytime
Early Childhood Enrichment
Afterschool Classes / Programs
Homework Help
Afterschool Safe Space

Event & Performance

Exhibition Space
Performance Space
Event Space

Production

Artist Studios
Maker Space
Tool Lending
Media Lab
Workshops (Film Editing, etc)
Recording Studio
Rehearsal Space
Beta Spaces

Mobile Literacy Space

Mobile Literacy Units
Mobile Reading Rooms

Crisis Center / Safe Point

Crisis Center / Disaster Recovery

Youth Social & Recreation

Teen Center
Video Game Night

Economic Support

Economic Empowerment Center
Business Solution Center
Entrepreneurial Start-Up Services
Job Readiness Classes
Off-Site Job Readiness Classes

Skill-Building Classes

Pre-GED / GED Prep Classes
ESOL Classes + Workshops
Adult Literacy Classes
Citizenship Test Classes
Computer / Digital Training
Advanced Computer Training
Online Courses / eLearning
eResources Classes
Mind Gym

Program Types

Small

Medium
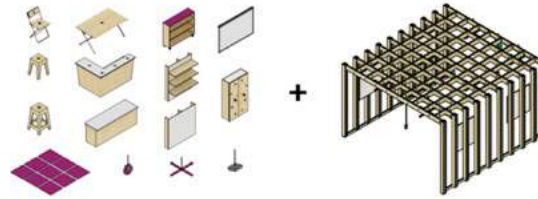
Large
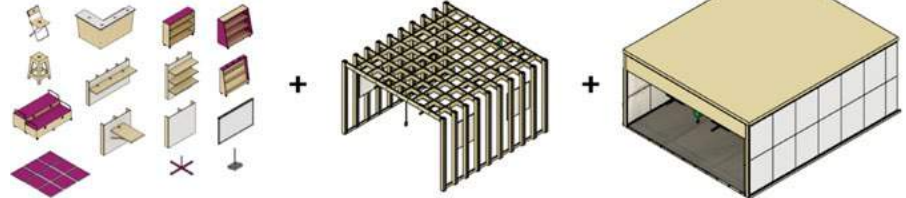
Kit of parts in 3 sizes: S, M, L
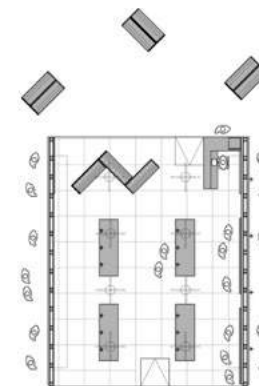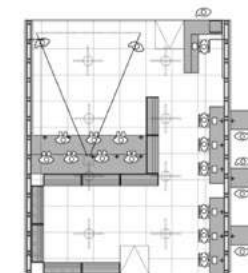
Exhibition Space   Lecture/Tutorial   Performance Space
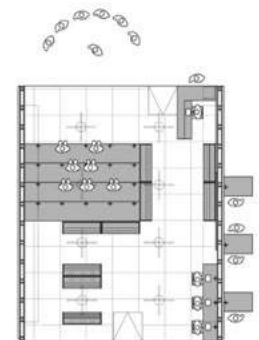
CASE STUDY
St. George Library
Center & Outpost

3 Scenarios:
Lecture Space
Exhibition Space
Performance Space

Macon Outpost Exterior Signage

Union

Annie Barrett (Annie Barrett Studio) + Adriel Mesznik (WXY) + Ann Whiteside (Harvard Graduate School of Design Librarian and Assistant Dean for Information Resources)+ Bryan Boyer (Dash Marshall) + Ceren Bingol (OMA) + Helen Han (Architect & Filmmaker) + Jane Lea (Architecture Research Office) + Landon Brown (Visionarc) + Ryan Thacker (Might Could) + Sapna Advani (Grain Collective) + Scott Geiger (writer & critic)

Objectives:
- heavy branding / heavy advertising / mobile apps;

- visible buildings by interventions on the facades, roofs, and elevate build ings in the flood areas;

- librarian out of the library / reader back to the library.

Re-envisioning Branch Libraries

Marble Fairbanks with James Lima Planning + Development And Special Project Office

Objectives of the study:

• Shift how New York City envisions its libraries from independent branches to one networked system

• Develop new relational tools for planning that help visualize and balance priorities in a continuously changing city.

• Take action to strengthen the library's position as a hub of the community.

Study:

• Top down tool for zoning investigation, assessment of statistic data

• Modify regulations - extra tax for new buildings in the area that go to the library

• Mixed use - library + residential + commercial + green roof

local population per branch
Working from Home

local population with
ESL Education Need

··
10% 20% 30% 40% + percent of the adult population without a high school diploma
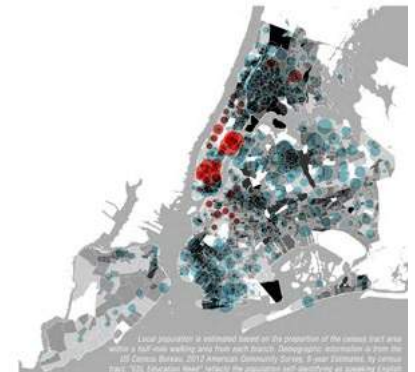
VISITOR COUNTS

··
min: 0.07   total visitor count
mean: 3.38   • local population
max: 36.46   • within one-half mile

population density
50 100 150 200 + (people per acre) by census tract

LOOKING AT THE DATA RELATIONALLY

··
low scores   high scores

Growth Trends

Existing Branches

Development Potential

New Site for Development

New Site for Development
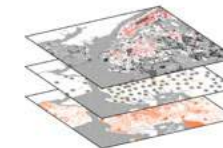
Conclusion

The first phase of the BiblioHUB project had as main objectives (1) establishing a network of partners and stakeholders, (2) compiling an initial evaluation of Bucharest's public libraries' current status and (3) engaging the interest of creative professionals in the field of library (re)design in the Netherlands and Romania.

As the initiation phase comes to an end, we have managed to establish a stable relationship with the Metropolitan Library of Bucharest (BMB), although we were not able to engage with the local authorities under which the BMB is regulated . The collaboration has lead to the appearance of BiblioHUB PILOT and is continuing with a research visit by BMB representatives to the Netherlands as well as a fresh proposal for call an open call for projects. We were able to visit all of the open branch libraries of the BMB and asses the situation for ourselves.The BMB has provided access to relevant statistical data and information over the library network enabling us to make the present material. During our Bucharest visit we have managed to contact and engage a number of relevant professionals and potential partners or contributors for the project, introducing the Dutch expertise to their Romanian experience.

As a conclusion we would like to present what we believe to be the most relevant findings regarding the BMB branch libraries as related to our project, followed by a reframing of the project based on our experiences and interactions in Bucharest using a series of micro-interviews with our collaborators & contributors.

On the library

Since its inception, the project relied on a number of assumptions relating to the BMB. During our initiation phase the research trip on location allowed us to evaluate these hypotheses against reality. Some have been validated, some have been reformulated and some have been infirmed. Out of all our findings we find the following to be most relevant to the project and to its upcoming development.

Lack of visibility in the city

One of the initial hypotheses was the lack of presence and the low visual impact the libraries have in the city, which we identified as a major cause for the low numbers of active users. This hypothesis has not only been confirmed, but the degree of this deficiency and the number of underlying factors contributing to it has increased following on-site visits. The libraries often find themselves pushed into apartment building ground floors, former residences or residual commercial spaces, which give no indication of the program inside. Often, the space has no direct connection with the public space (street, sidewalk) and it is hidden behind thick vegetation, fences or other visual barriers. Signage is sparse and discrete, failing to identify the location even when specifically looking for it, not to mention advertizing it. When there is a direct connection, the library often fails to make an impact at the level of the public space. The view towards the activities is often obstructed by various interior design elements such as louvers, posters or house plants. Display windows (if present) are often ambiguous in the nature of their content, comparable to bookshops, travel agencies and even pharmacies. Deficient internal layout coupled with shortage of proper storage space for the collections often means that the books are stored on site which in turn requires curtains to be drawn in order to protect the books. Overall the libraries are anonymous, closed or simply invisible.

Ambiguous identity

Each branch library has an assigned specific profile (youth, encyclopedic, art, travel, foreign literature, etc.). While branches dedicated to children and youth exhibit their profile quite vividly through use of colour, decoration, sometimes age appropriate furniture, other branches struggle in finding an own visual/ atmospheric identity. Moreover, branches with a particular identity manage to express an alternate identity which only adds to the confusion. For example, due to a relatively large amount of activities addressing children, almost all of the branch libraries display childhood parafernalia (drawings, toys, etc.). While branches which specialize in a particular domain most often fail to communicate this in a clear and efficient manner to any new/ potential user.

Deficit of storage space

Taking into account the population of Bucharest of 1.883.425 (2011 census) and the libraries law 334/2002 which stipulates a minimum required library surfaces of 0.015 sqm/ inhabitant, Bucharest would need 28.251sqm of library space to cater to the needs of its population. In effect, the Metropolitan Library can only provide its users 5.093sqm of library space, distributed over 27 locations across the city (excluding the Headquarters). This extreme deficit becomes problematic for the institution in its role as knowledge provider and repository of valuable cultural heritage. Not only are the spaces improper for daily use by its patrons, but one of the major shortage of storage space for the library's collections. This issue has direct impact on a number of key aspects of the library. To start with the issue of preserving the collection itself. Due to improper facilities a part of the collection depreciates at greater rate than expected. Another key aspect is that the lack of storage requires that the majority of the books be kept "on the floor" meaning most of the branches function mostly as book deposits, with little room for other activities - literally. This impacts the way the branches function, interact with the community, their image and impact on the public space and city life. Instead of vibrant, inviting public spaces they are inert, closed, dusty depots.

Inefficient spatial organization

As stated before, most locations are improvised spaces from the municipality's available real estate fund. There is a wide array of spatial typologies here: former urban individual residences nationalized under the Communist regime, ground floor spaces of apartment buildings, initially designated for collective use by the residents or even dwelling, commercial spaces, both within Communist commercial complexes and on ground level of buildings, contemporary buildings, some built for the purpose (with doubtful results), others simply acquired by the municipality.

Most of these spaces share one common denominator and that is insufficient floor area, which in turn leads to difficult, complicated and inefficient layouts. In most libraries the reading area is simply a chair

awkwardly placed by the shelves or even more inconveniently by the door. The average number of such seating arrangements is 6/ library. Space is not organized around the books, but by the books. What appears as an extreme surplus of shelving, occupies the entire surface of the walls, sometimes even the windows, blocking out light and views to the street, as well as the majority of the central space. Shelving is so densely packed that it is extremely difficult to maneuver, this is a hinderance of regular use, potential interaction among patrons and renders a large area of the libraries virtually inaccessible to people with disabilities.

Our analysis reveals that one feature contributing to the relative success of certain branches is an adequate spatial typology which allows for an open, flexible layout, where there are spaces designated for particular activities (courses, reading areas, group activities), activities which are not marginalized or sidelined for book deposing reasons.

Domestic alternative

The library is for many librarians, by their own account, a second home. This is reflected in the care they exhibit for the space, as well as the tiny details which make these spaces feel more like a private house than a public space. This concept of domestic atmosphere is encouraging for the relationship the library would like to create with its users. It can be an atmosphere that is inviting and comfortable and where people could spend time. We believe this feature can be cultivated and enhanced in order to promote the library as a place for leisure.
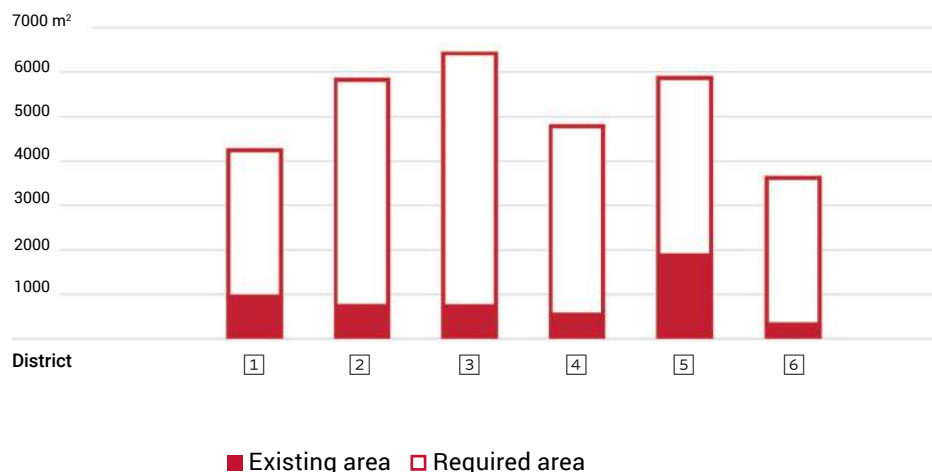
*Minimal equipping criteria, minimum allocated space is 0.015 m² per inhabitant. According to law 334/2002.

On the Romanian Context

Suffering from a generally unstable and inconsequent political environment, Romania experienced an exceptionally dynamic & dramatic year in 2015-2016. A series of events led to protests, an impeachment and a change of government. This, although positive in the overall quest for (true) democracy, proved to be a huge obstacle in dealing with already refractory public officials. The shifting political environment makes continuity within a project almost impossible as succeeding sets of managers shift interests from one project to another, prioritizing or deprioritizing personnel and budget allowances. "One year is a long term commitment." (Paul Baran) Under the circumstances of a provisional government no decision was to be taken regarding future projects involving public institutions.

Micro-interviews

The following micro-interviews were made with people involved in the BiblioHUB project that participated in at least one of the events that took place during the Bucharest exploration trip of November 2015. Together they form an image of the project within its context. The answers have been organized under three main categories: to the city, the framework, the project.

The city

What surprised you the most when in Bucharest?

The BiblioHUB core team is Romanian, so we never thought that Bucharest could still surprise us. We were wrong. On one hand, we were overwhelmed by the optimism with which the project was received. We had the chance to discuss with a lot of people that showed a high interest in either sharing their know-how or their network, without asking for anything in return. Once the project was introduced to them, it felt like they immediately became declared supporters. On the other hand, our own optimism was partially countered by the constant mistrust in finding the required funding. It felt like everybody gave-up on the idea of the possibility to fund the next high budget phases of the project. Up till now, that panic proved to be rooted in reality. *(Collective East)*

Two things surprised me. The first was the diversity of library conditions (within the BMB network) in the city, it is impossible and even dangerous to come up with a single conclusion. Each library presents its challenges, its achievements, its deficits. Some libraries were humble yet were working at full capacity, others were strangely conceived with a lack space for people to stay there.

The second point that surprised me was the incredibly wasted opportunity (and space) of the National Library of Romania. As explained above, centrality is a key measure of library modernization yet, this one deserves strong rethinking.

(Felix Madrazo)

The biggest surprise to me might have been to discover that it is almost impossible to create a PPP (i.e. private-public partnerships) and that on top of that this was approved by the EU. Of course, I know that in Romania there are some difficulties with corruption, but that this was the reason to make PPP almost impossible, was something I didn't foresee. It's a pity that businesses and initiatives combined with governmental entities can't work and benefit from each other in a PPP.

(Denis Stillewagt)

The framework

What should be modified from a legal standpoint in order to facilitate the public-private partnerships (PPP)?

The Law on Concessions no.100 / 2016 establishes a more flexible framework in what private-public partnerships are concerned for awarding and implementing those projects that constitute concessions under the procurement law. Implementation rules have not yet been adopted for this law and should meet the same requirements of flexibility that make the difference between public procurement law and the law of concessions.

The new law transposes the European Directive on concessions (i.e. Directive 2014/23 / EU on the award of concession) and repels the old law on public procurement and concessions (Ordinance 34/2006), but also the controversial Public Private Partnership Law 178/2010. Compared to the old regulations, the new law contains provisions with a tendency to favor investors interested in financing projects (Project Finance) and the implementation of bankable projects.

It requires not only adopting implementation rules, but also involving authorities, possibly with specialized assistance from the EIB, EBRD, World Bank, in order to guide the public authorities with concrete methods on how they will be able to implement the concession contracts.

(Diana Antofie)

To what extent the involvement of international partners may be advantageous / disadvantageous?

Involving international partners could be an advantage given the expertise that they could make available. Especially considering that in Romania there is, unfortunately, no practical experience regarding the implementation of PPPs.

(Diana Antofie)

You have experience working with large scale projects involving libraries in the Romanian context with external financing. What are the biggest challenges facing such an endeavour? What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone trying to undergo a similar task?

For the vast majority of people working side-by-side to implement such a large program, I believe for us all it was an incredible honor to contribute to Romania's development through education and social development. There are many challenges to such an endeavor, but facilitating between the interests of such a vast group of stakeholders while guaranteeing a certain level of quality in programming proved to be a constant challenge. The program required a great deal of firmness with respect to training and capacity development work and unprecedented flexibility in supporting the wide diversity of programming that reflected specific community needs. I believe continuous communication with stakeholders is the key to gain buy-in while creating consensus with respect to key program interventions.

(Paul Baran)

The project

You are familiar with the BiblioHUB project. What are in your opinion the advantages/or disadvantages of developing a public service such as a library in a networked form? Is there a value in developing a "network" of libraries spanning the entire area of Bucharest or should this service be provided in a more concentrated form?

I think BMB – the network library – represents a strategic cultural choice for large cities with different polarized communities as it offers more to the user, demanding much less. The traditional library, albeit transformed lately in a more cozy and hip environment is still non attractive enough for the regular older person or the young hipster generation, simply because of its sheer scale or user typology (specialists, researchers).

The concept of smaller libraries, efficiently networked to improve user experience, represents a better choice for all age groups. These micro-libraries (cultural hubs) are easier to reach, cozy, specific to an area / neighbourhood / community, and they can offer all the advantages of the big library without having an institutional appearance. I strongly believe that the concept of network – polycentric development - encourages a wide spread (not concentration) of small hubs, as this is the main advantage of this typology.

(Matei Bogoescu)

What is the social component/components that a project such as BiblioHUB should take into consideration?

I think a project such as BiblioHUB could contribute on the following dimensions related to its social component (all examples are built upon the Romanian context – they may not apply in all other countries):

• Reducing inequalities in access to culture and, implicitly, education. The libraries included in the BiblioHUB network could act as alternatives for after-hours programs and activities for the children in the community served by the library. Usually families that afford to pay for such ativities for their children will do so, while children from poorer families do not have access to these kind of programs. By developing programs for this dimension, BiblioHUB would help poorer kids in local communities to catch up a little with the richer kids in terms of cultural experiences.

• Encouraging communities to start thinking about themselves as communities rather than a simple collection of individuals or very small groups. The libraries included in the BiblioHUB project should act to position themselves as central spaces within the community. A building and a collection of books are not going to be enough to win over TV and internet. In order to do that, these libraries should offer the community experiences and opportunities the people in the community canot get otherwise. It is a type of involvement in the community that benefits not only the people who access the services offered by the libraries, but also adds something to the community as a whole.

• Encouraging the retired population to become involved in community projects and to remain active during the transition to retirement and beyond. Except for some initiatives of the local public administration, retired people do not have their own space for socialization, for cultural consumption, for keeping active and involved in the community. Retired people are slowly pushed away from the social life, the only remaining spaces they can use being the (disappearing) farmers' markets and the parks. Libraries could attempt to bring back to the center of the community the elderly, organizing activities appropriate for their interests, as well as activities aimed at bringing together different age groups to talk about their experiences.

• Promoting cultural consumption among the adult population and the idea of Lifelong Learning. For those active on the labour market the job and the family take up most of their time, with little left for cultural consumption. Libraries, as community hubs, could attempt to increase the level of cultural consumption of working people and to increase the degree of interaction with the community. For those who are un employed, the libraries could act as a local information point about possible jobs or about opportunities that are available to them for re-qualification and re-training.

(Claudiu Tufiș)

Name one strong and one weak point of the BiblioHUB project.

✚ The integrative approach and complementary skills of the BiblioHUB partners make this one of the most 'open minded' initiatives in recent years. It's basically an infusion of youth and innovation that Romanian libraries needed. The main benefit brought on by BiblioHUB is that in setting up this project there are no barriers, no stereotypes, no patterns to follow. Although we feel inspired by Western models of success, we are aware that Romania is a land of endless creative possibilities. We are professionals, we have bold ideas, we have a world of possibilities and by applying the "small steps" technique we will change the image of libraries in Romania, not only embellished it, through the contribution of those who truly believe in the transforming power of the library.
➖ Judging by the scale and development potential in the future of the partnership BiblioHUB, the main weakness is the lack of financial resources, followed closely by transnational dispersion of experts drawn into the project. The first aspect - limited financial resources - is a temporary state of affairs that can be combated by attracting grants in a joint effort by all partners.

(Ioana Crihană)

✚ A very strong point of BiblioHUB is that it is applicable to any library. Moreover, it is a concept that brings architecture and society together in such a way that they stimulate each other.
➖ The weak point might be that the team is not diverse enough yet.

(Denis Stillewagt)

✚ Optimism to confront a difficult and sometimes obscure political context. Incredible amount of energy to keep a productive agenda. Intelligent discussions with key actors.
➖ How to move forward was put on hold for too long, therefore chances of using momentum are more difficult now.

(Felix Madrazo)

We believe the research so far has been invaluable to the future of the project, not only through the gathered data which will contribute to the development of the strategy, but mostly through an essential reframing of the necessary process.

Collective East

Index Cards

1.1 Dimitrie Bolinteanu

Bd. Bucurestii Noi, 105
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area		292 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		25.000
Users		2.667
Personnel		2
Computers		5
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		4

1.1 Dimitrie Bolinteanu

292 m²   3 m   4
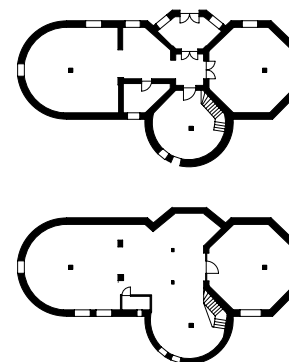
1.2 Ion Creanga

Str. Christian Tell 10
Profile:
Children & Youth

Area		464 m²
Height		4 m
Number of Books		27.000
Users		2.564
Personnel		3
Computers		5
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		4
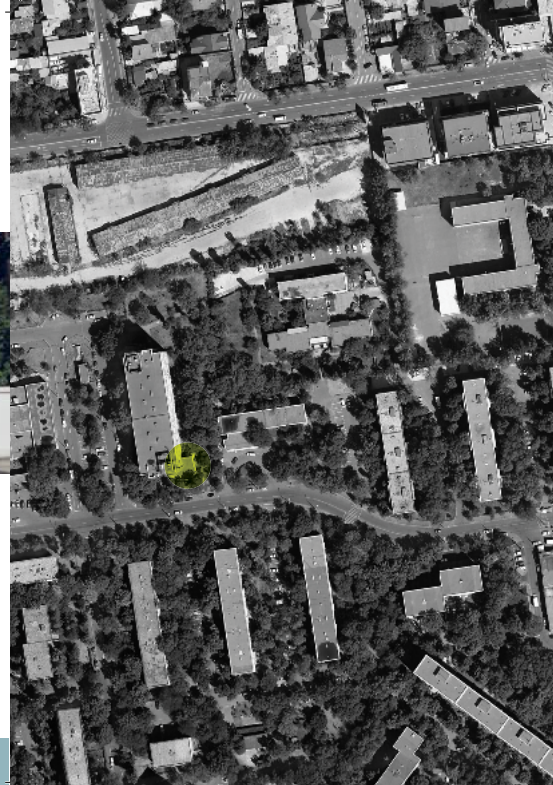
1.3 Petre Ispirescu

Str. Făurei, 1
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area		73 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		9.000
Users		258
Personnel		1
Computers		2
Multiprinter		3
Reading Places		4

1.2 Ion Creangă

464 m²   4 m   4
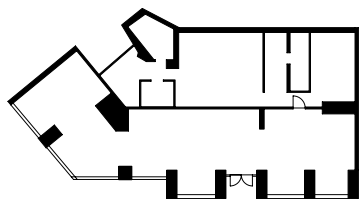
1.3 Petre Ispirescu

73m²   3 m   4
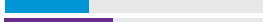
1.6 Ioan Slavici

Str. Radu Beller, 26
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area		83 m²
Height		2.6 m
Number of Books		22.000
Users		368
Personnel		2
Computers		6
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		4
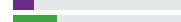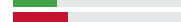
2.1 Sound Library

Sos. Mihai Bravu, 285
Profile:
Visually Impaired

Area		75 m²
Height		4 m
Number of Books		32.000
Users		237
Personnel		1
Computers		3
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		5

1.6 Ioan Slavici

83m²   2.6 m   4
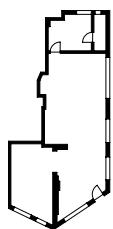
2.1 Sound Library

75 m²   4 m   5
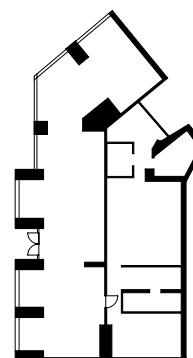
2.2 Lucian Blaga

Sos. Mihai Bravu, 116
Profile:
Encyclopedic 🌐 ♿

Area		206 m²
Height		5 m
Number of Books		25.000
Users		3219
Personnel		2
Computers		5
Multiprinter		2
Reading Places		6

2.3 Dimitrie Cantemir

Str. Viitorului, 52
Profile:
Encyclopedic 🌐 ♿

Area		200 m²
Height		2.6 m
Number of Books		33.000
Users		432
Personnel		1
Computers		8
Multiprinter		2
Reading Places		1

2.2 Lucian Blaga

206 m²   5 m   6
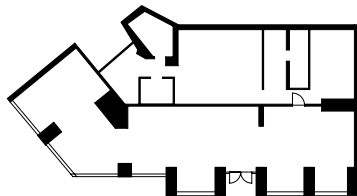
2.3 Dimitrie Cantemir

200 m²   2.6 m   1
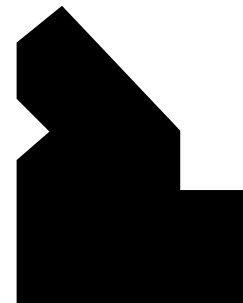
2.4 Costache Negruzzi

Sos. Pantelimon, 239
Profile:
Encyclopedic 🌐

Area	82 m²
Height	4 m
Number of Books	23.000
Users	827
Personnel	1
Computers	2
Multiprinter	1
Reading Places	4

2.5 Alexandru Odobescu

Str. Oborul Nou, 13
Profile:
Encyclopedic 🌐

Area	90 m²
Height	3 m
Number of Books	17.000
Users	1244
Personnel	2
Computers	4
Multiprinter	1
Reading Places	1

2.4 Costache Negruzzi

82 m²   4 m   4
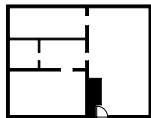
2.5 Alexandru Odobescu

90 m²   3 m   1
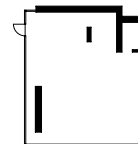
2.6 George Enescu

Sos. Mihai Bravu, 4
Profile:
Media 🌐 ♿

Area		40 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		21.000
Users		403
Personnel		1
Computers		6
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		3
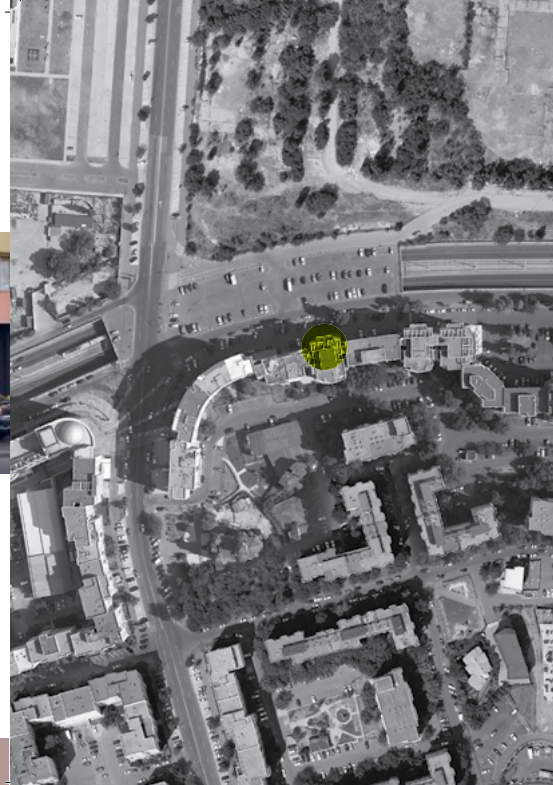
3.1 Emil Gârleanu

Bd. Octavian Goga, 6
Profile:
Encyclopedic 🌐 ♿

© StudioBASAR., 2015

Area		135 m²
Height		4 m
Number of Books		14.000
Users		1873
Personnel		1
Computers		2
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		12

2.6 George Enescu

⬚ 40 m²   ↕ 3 m   🪑 3
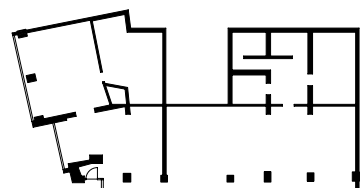
3.1 Emil Gârleanu

⬚ 135 m²   ↕ 4 m   🪑 12
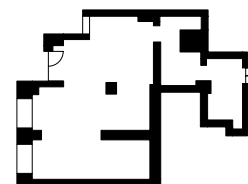
3.2 Pantelimon Halippa

Str. Traian, 2
Profile:
Training Center 🌐 ♿

Area		195 m²
Height		6 m
Number of Books		0
Users		0
Personnel		6
Computers		8
Multiprinter		2
Reading Places		0

3.3 B.P. Hasdeu

Str. Traian, 2
Profile:
Encyclopedic 🌐 ♿

Area		281 m²
Height		6 m
Number of Books		50.000
Users		638
Personnel		1
Computers		4
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		7

3.2 Pantelimon Halippa

⬚ 195 m²   ↕ 6 m   🪑 0
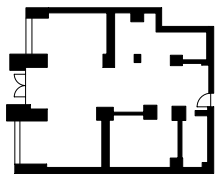
3.3 B.P. Hadescu

⬚ 281 m²   ↕ 6 m   🪑 7
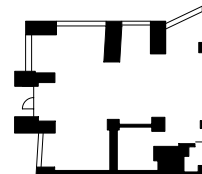
3.4 Liviu Rebreanu

Str. L. Patrascanu, 13
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area		70 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		30.000
Users		1891
Personnel		2
Computers		5
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		17

3.5 Ion Neculce

Str. Str. Dristorului, 97 - 119
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area		63 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		17.000
Users		727
Personnel		1
Computers		2
Multiprinter		3
Reading Places		4

3.4 Livu Rebreanu

170 m²   3 m   17
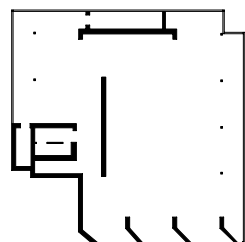
3.5 Ion Neculce

63 m²   3 m   4

4.1 Nicoloae Bălcescu

Șos. Giurgiului, 86
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area		90 m²
Height		4 m
Number of Books		28.000
Users		1.885
Personnel		1
Computers		4
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		14

4.2 Otilia Cazimir

Str. Turnul Măgurele, 19
Profile:
Children & Youth

Area		103 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		12.000
Users		626
Personnel		1
Computers		3
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		10

4.1 Nicoloae Bălcescu

90 m²   4 m   7
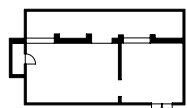
4.2 Otilia Cazimir

103 m²   3 m   10
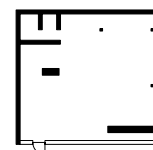
4.3 George Coșbuc

Șos. Giurgiului 86
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area	172 m²
Height	3 m
Number of Books	16.000
Users	671
Personnel	2
Computers	1
Multiprinter	1
Reading Places	1

4.4 Alexandru Macedonski

Str. Turnu Măgurele, 13
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area	52 m²
Height	2.8 m
Number of Books	11.000
Users	1283
Personnel	1
Computers	3
Multiprinter	1
Reading Places	6

4.2 George Coșbuc

172 m²   3 m   1
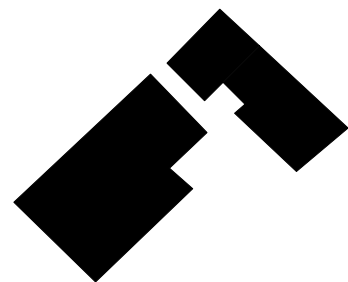
4.4 Alexandru Macedonski

52 m²   2.8 m   6
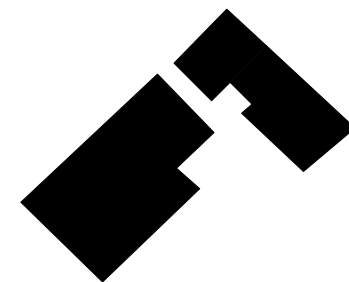
4.5 Ienăchiță Văcărescu

Str. Bosianu, 10
Profile :
Encyclopedic

Area	90 m²
Height	2.6 m
Number of Books	17.000
Users	1090
Personnel	1
Computers	1
Multiprinter	2
Reading Places	9

5.0 Octavian Goga

Str. Gura Lotrului, 9
Profile :
Encyclopedic

Area	1.573 m²
Height	2.8 m
Number of Books	81.060
Users	890
Personnel	3
Computers	14
Multiprinter	2
Reading Places	32

4.5 Ienăchiță Văcărescu

90 m²   2.6 m   9
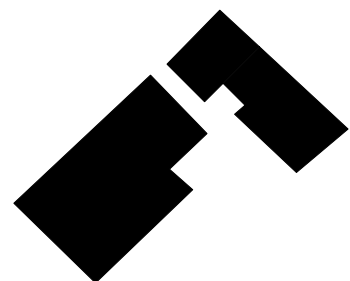
5.0 Octavian Goga

1573 m²   2.8 m   32
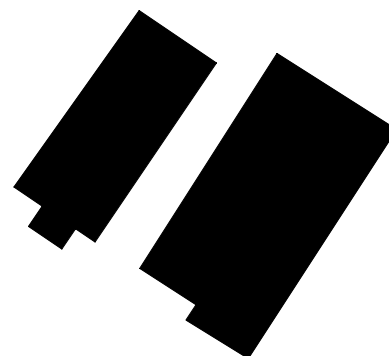
5.5 Vasile Alecsandri

Calea Ferentari, 72
Profile :
Children & Youth 🌐 ♿

Area		163 m²
Height		3.2 m
Number of Books		16.000
Users		1374
Personnel		1
Computers		1
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		3

5.8 Gheorghe Șincai

Str. Prelungirea Ferentari, 5
Profile :
Encyclopedic 🌐 ♿

Area		104 m²
Height		3 m
Number of Books		67.000
Users		2.059
Personnel		1
Computers		2
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		2

5.5 Vasile Alecsandri

⬚ 163 m²   ↕ 3.2 m   🪑 3
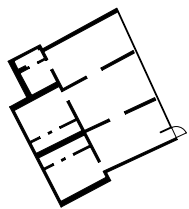
5.8 Gheorghe Șincai

⬚ 104 m²   ↕ 3 m   🪑 2
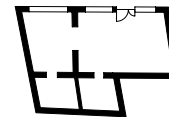
6.1 Mihai Eminescu

Al. Valea Prahovei, 3
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area	65 m²
Height	3 m
Number of Books	21.000
Users	1.187
Personnel	1
Computers	2
Multiprinter	1
Reading Places	2

6.2 Nicolae Labiș

Str. Brașov, 14
Profile:
Encyclopedic

Area	68 m²
Height	3 m
Number of Books	20.000
Users	1.440
Personnel	1
Computers	2
Multiprinter	1
Reading Places	5

6.1 Mihai Eminescu

65 m²   3 m   2
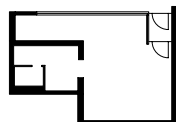
6.2 Nicolae Labiș

68 m²   3 m   5
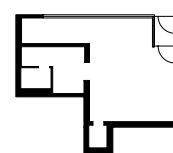
6.4 Nichita Stănescu

Calea Crângași, 19
Profile :
Encyclopedic 🌐 ♿

Area		109 m²
Height		4 m
Number of Books		33.000
Users		3.845
Personnel		2
Computers		1
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		2

6.5 George Topârceanu

Str. Veteranilor, 7 - 9
Profile :
Children & Youth 🌐 ♿

Area		39 m²
Height		3.5 m
Number of Books		15.000
Users		375
Personnel		1
Computers		3
Multiprinter		1
Reading Places		12

6.4 Nichita Stănescu

109 m²   ↕ 4 m   🪑 2
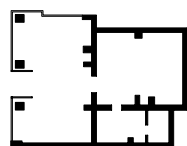
6.5 George Topârceanu

39 m²   ↕ 3.5 m   🪑 12
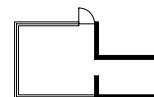
Short Bios

COLLECTIVE EAST

Initiator of BiblioHUB, Collective East it is a dynamic incubator of ideas, formed by a team of 9 young architects and configured as a versatile think tank. They are involved in research studies, architectural and urban projects. The Collective's strength draws from the divers background and experience of each member. Their professional experience has been enriched by working in offices like: OMA/AMO(Rotterdam, NL), Tom Postma Design (Amsterdam, NL), import.export Architecture (Antwerp, BE) and Shigeru Ban (Paris, FR). They are currently living and practicing in Paris, Bruxelles, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Bucharest, collaborating with studios across Europe.

Coupled with their design activity, the members of Collective East intensely engage in teaching, writing, research and art, which are all an integral part of their approach to architecture.

Collective East team: Radu Costăchescu, Tudor Costăchescu, Andrei Fanciali, Maria Ionescu, Matei Niculescu, Mihaela Rădescu.

DUTCH COLLABORATORS:

IND [INTER.NATIONAL.DESIGN]

IND [Inter.National.Design] is an architecture and urbanism office founded in 2007 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands by Arman Akdogan and Felix Madrazo. The practice has been characterized by its interest to achieve design clarity and a delicate response to context.

Felix Madrazo is a founding partner of IND [Inter.National.Design], co-founder of Supersudaca collective and researcher and lecturer at The Why Factory, TU Delft. He studied architecture in La Salle University, Mexico City and later received his Master of Architecture from The Berlage Institute.

IND's work has been recognized on numerous occasions in international competitions.

SVESMI

Alexander Sverdlov is a founding partner of SVESMI, Rotterdam-based agency for architecture, urbanism and cultural programming. His experience spans over 15 years as an architect and project leader of large-scale projects for several internationally renowned architecture offices. In recent years, SVESMI has won several awards in international competitions. Sverdlov's expertise extends to curatorial work, research and teaching.

SVESMI is currently working on experimental library projects within Museum of Fine Arts and Polytechnic Museum where the firm is involved in renovation/ extension of both museum complexes.

DENIS STILLEWAGT

Denis Stillewagt works since 2003 as a consultant in the real estate industry. He works both for the public and private sector and is often involved in establishing redevelopment of cultural heritage and development of real estate projects based on a public-private partnership. Due to his knowledge of the interest and way of thinking of both parties within a PPP, Denis is able to talk in both "languages".

In recent years, Denis has also participated in various workshops and round-table meetings in Bucharest such as for ARA (the Association of Romanian Architects) and presented and promoted the Dutch approach in/to re-development projects and the PPP within these projects.

Besides the BiblioHUB project Denis started this year a new project in Bucharest called Hotel Cultural. Hotel Cultural is a private initiative for an international cross-cultural hub where cinema, dance, theater, architecture, music and business such as a conference center, exhibition center, hotel and a grand café can blend under the same roof.

In The Netherlands, Denis is currently working on the strategic real estate- and development vision for the real estate department of the city of Amsterdam. Here various current and future complex demands of the city blend together and need to be addressed.

ROMANIAN COLLABORATORS:

ANBPR

With a tradition of nearly 25 years, a functional network of about 3000 libraries nationwide, more than 3,300 active members, an important logistics base and qualified personnel, the ANBPR is an interface to centralize and disseminate information in order to meet the main interest of the library professionals. The declared purpose of the ANBPR community is to bring together, round the same ideas and common desideratum, all the public librarians of Romania and to promote the important role of the library in the community.

Ioana Crihană is currently the executive director of the Romanian National Association of Public Libraries and Librarians. A philologist and economist by design, but businesswoman by nature, she graduated with a Master in Consultancy and Advertising Expertise from the University of Bucharest, she remains passionate about the broader spectrum of social humanistic sciences and communication. With over 10 years experience in marketing, Ioana has worked as journalist, copywriter, communications specialist and brand manager in top-level businesses, before settling on management. Since 2009 she has been an active member of the Biblionet project, the largest project for the reform of the public library system to date.

CATALIST

Catalist is a cultural association that has extensive knowledge in disseminating information in classic media, constructing media and cultural partnerships and handling project communication.

Catalist aims to support and promote cultural projects and initiatives. Seeing as the Romanian literary market is in need of new writers with

different visions and approaches, most of the organization's activities have focused on the fields of Romanian literature and promoting books.

ZEPPELIN
The missions of ZEPPELIN have always revolved around the Romanian urban problematics, by promoting the highest quality examples of architectural practices, by getting involved in projects of coherent urban development, by actively stimulating critical reflection within the architectural realm, by supporting innovation and continuous learning, as well as through creating a professional international network. Through projects and specific cultural interventions, the Zeppelin team aims at bringing together multidisciplinary experts and the local communities by involving them in a series of projects of social, urban, spatial and heritage relevance.

In 2014, Stefan Ghenciulescu was the initiator and co-curator of the international project CONNECTED, involving architecture and urbanism experts from 4 different countries: Archis (NL), Nordic Urban Design Association NUDA (NO), Fargfabriken (SE), Eurodite (RO/NL). The project investigated the future impact of the new technologies upon the European urbanities. Developing concepts like smart city or smart community, the research sought to reveal the future social and cultural mutations that tend to better value individuals and communities together with their human, creative and entrepreneurial potential.

CONTRIBUTORS:

ADNBA
ADNBA was established in 2003 in Bucharest, by Andrei Șerbescu and Adrian Untaru, later joined by Bogdan Brădățeanu. ADNBA's practice is characterised by the attempt to search for the right balance between experiment and experience in the complex and delicate landscape of contemporary life. While they believe in architecture as a creative gesture, with cultural value and social responsibility, they also acknowledge the sometimes hazardous, and always subjective distinction between such attributes, in a rapidly changing environment as nowadays Romania and the whole of Eastern Europe.

ADNBA has achieved critical recognition for both their built projects and competitions entries, many of which have been awarded in national and international juries.

ADNBA has developed a diverse body of work, including both residential and public projects.

DIANA ANTOFIE
Diana Antofie is a lawyer and an expert on public acquisitions that has been involved in several negotiations for large scale public acquisitions projects in Romania. She is a former councillor for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

PAUL BARAN
Paul-Andre Baran is is currently working as the Technology and Innovation consultant for the Romanian American Foundation in Bucharest, as Digital Champion for the European Commission and as Impact and Advocacy for EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries).

CRISTINA BOGDAN
Born and bred in Bucharest, educated in Paris, hardened in London. She is online editor of Revista ARTA and runs ODD, a curatorial and educational platform in Bucharest.

MATEI BOGOESCU
Matei Bogoescu is an architect, urbanist and theorist born and raised in Bucharest, professionally trained and shaped in Switzerland, Italy and the Netherlands. Matei is most of all a story-teller and a story-maker, using the city as his inspiration. Since his return to his hometown, he has engaged in every possible aspect of his profession, from teaching and research, practice and consultancy and now as a founding member of BAZA. Matei is an associate partner at BAU and 4B arhitectura and has participated in the development of the General Development Plan of Bucharest.

CLAUDIU FORGACI
Claudiu Forgaci is an architect, urbanist and scholar. He is not from Bucharest, but the years spent in the city have defined his professional persona. Bucharest has become a personal and professional fascination and is central to his ongoing research as a PhD candidate at the TU Delft.

ANCA FRONESCU
Anca Fronescu is a transnational polyglot (multilingual) globetrotter active in the cultural field mostly in the area of literature and film, as well as theater and education. She is based in Amsterdam but her work cultural/ project management and film production makes her

an active presence in the cultural field from New York to Bucharest. Through her work she has contributed to the promotion of contemporary Romanian Literature outside Romania.

MIHAI LUPU
Mihai Lupu, EduCaB Founder & Catalyst. He is enthusiastically involved in getting EduCaB to the point where is not needed anymore in the communities they are tackling.

VERA MARIN
Vera Marin is an architect and an urban planner, founder and president of ATU (The Association for Urban Transition) since 2001, member of professional Romanian organisations of urban planners and architects (RUR, APUR, UAR), PhD in urban planning since 2009, and lecturer in the Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Development at the University of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu" Bucharest. Vera Marin has professional and teaching experience in various domains: housing theory, housing policies, strategic planning, urban management, participatory urbanism, urban policies. She has participated as coordinator or as team member in a number of projects for applied research, communication, education, for local development strategies and public intervention methodologies.

MIHAELA MICHAILOV
Mihaela Michailov is a playwright and performing arts critic. Her main interest is in socio-political theatre. She wrote plays about Romanian Revolution, about the gap between generations, about recent history events, about violence in schools. Mihaela Michailov has been initiating various projects concerning theatre in education and community arts projects. The most recent one is as co-founder of the Replika Center for Educational Theater She took part, as documentary and participatory artist, in several community art projects. She is also co-founder of Community Art Center The fourth Age, dedicated to artistic projects focused on elderly people in a senior residence. In 2009, she was invited to Lark Theatre, New York (in a program conceived by Lark Theatre and ICR New York). She has a PHD in Theatre Studies at University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest. She is the co-editor of Political Art Newspaper – G.A.P.

MARINA NEAGU
Marina Neagu is a professional with consistent experience in technical assistance to central and local governments on issues such as strategic planning, private sector support and local economic development. She has been involved in project with institutions such as theRomanian Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

She is a founding partner of MKBT (Make Better), a startup in urban development and regeneration and co founder of the Romanian Centre for Innovation in Local Development, a long term civic engagement platform to generate meaningful not-for-profit initiatives in support of local communities & the profession of local development workers/planners in Romania.

DAN PERJOVSCHI
Dan Perjovschi is a Romanian artist, writer and cartoonist and sometimes curator. His works, especially large scale works with thousands of miniscule portraits have been exhibited internationally, including the Venice Biennale,Manifesta and MoMA. He also writes for the 22 Magazine (Revista 22), hailed as the 'opposition' newspaper in Bucharest, and contributes to the webzine Tiuk.

CLAUDIA POSTELNICESU
Claudia Postelnicescu is lawyer, activist, publicist and playwright. She lives and works in Bucharest. She took part in developing 'The Romanian Initiative' (Inițiativa România) after the tragedy from Club Colectiv in november 2015. Claudia has a continuous engagement with human rights advocacy, having participated in projects concerning women's rights, children's rights, immigration, asylum seekers and refugees. She is currently interested in the balance of individual freedom/ rights and security. Claudia has worked as an editor and publicist for a number of publications in Romania (LaPunkt, EuroPunkt, Contributors, Revista 22).

ȘTEFAN VIANU
Ștefan Vianu is a philosophy professor at the University of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu" in Bucharest. He published two books (The Metaphysics of the spirit from Aristotle to Hegel, Humanitas, 2005; Existence and Idea, Eikon, 2016) as well as articles in various local magazines.

IOANA VÎRGOLICI
Ioana Vîrgolici is an architect and a (very) private citizen practicing in Bucharest.