

List of chat box questions

Introduction

According to even modest predictions, the global economy can shrink by almost 5% and industrial production up to 15%. I guess there will be the second wave of deindustrialization (now creative industries) and more redundant buildings. Do you consider adjusting your plans correspondingly?

- We plan to follow actual economic situation, especially local, and adjust our actions if necessary. It seems very dubious that deindustrialization should really apply to Praga, which is deindustrialized already. What is most important is that we are looking for solutions which are applicable to specific places and methods to support entrepreneurship. They will be relevant to the underused sites/buildings no matter what their number might be. Currently entrepreneurs we cooperate with do not communicate decrease in demand.

Heritage in Praga

Do you consider yourself as a platform or as an activist player?

- Mostly a platform, but we put into test ourselves as the activists while negotiating the lease on bakery with the municipality, experiencing the barriers first hand.

What is the status of the area and buildings in terms of legal protection of heritage?

- Several buildings and sites are listed and protected, which is mostly perceived by the investors as an obstacle.

Great to see the broad understanding of heritage, inclusive. How do you collect stories (and how do you share them)? How to make sure to keep open for more stories and aspects? and how do you deal with contestation / different interpretations between the stories?

- Basically, we collect stories from secondary and primary sources. Secondary is obvious, all data, articles etc. to which we have an access. Primary sources are our collaborators and people we support in our lab. This includes our board of advisors (including local activist and museologist), participants of bakery workshop (two teams, and advisors including vice-president of the city), artists and entrepreneurs from Made in Praga contest (3 participants from different backgrounds, all strongly connected with new wave of artists and circular economy), NGOs including well-known and respected in the areas Open Door. LME (showing and documenting stories as they are not as we wish them to develop). What we collect – stories and memories about places like Bakery and people supporting Praga's heritage. Apart from organising seminars/meetings and sharing information on our platform, we also plan to publish results of the bakery workshop in the form of open source document. Most of our work and findings will be presented or at least reflected in Living Memory Exhibition.

follow-up question on being a platform: is there a need by the local community to indeed express their ideas by using this platform? and with what kind of questions/ideas are raised by the community itself?

- It depends how we define the local community. If we talk about activist interested in various topics regarding Praga including heritage, then no – they have their own channels. So the situation is reversed – we use them as a platform to inform about our actions etc. But if we

refer to the heritage community interested in OH project, we need to say yes, good example is bakery workshop. In this specific case question raised include issues of transferability of the results to other sites in Praga etc. What matters is to network people and provide solutions, not only exchange ideas. However, during our workshop we had several signals this is also lacking – the possibility to discuss the issues, to experiment freely and we provide such possibility.

Work as value - how did you identify this? What other values do various communities identify?

How do you explore these?

- Work appeared as an important topic in the in-depth interviews with stakeholders and heritage community members. We expose that value due to its intangible nature (ethics of work, forms and traditions of work, meaning of work) and tangible nature manifesting in the urban structure (places of work: alive or abandoned). We decided to use it as a main value due to the very specific nature of the area, identity based mostly on production and trade. Work provides also inclusive heritage, combining people from various paths of life, ethnic and religious background. We focus on production, manual work, craft and art, but trade and local markets consist also an important element of heritage. Praga has also work traditions related to the informal (grey) economy. Our recognition of the Praga values, as mentioned above, comes from the in-depth interviews. Another values that were identified are related to specific neighborhood and social relations; XIX and XX century architecture mostly tenanted houses, traditional street urban landscape (like Stalowa str.), architecture of different phase of industrializations but also some post-war modernism.

Immaterial heritage indeed seems to be an important aspect, but maybe difficult to express, could you think of ways to 'materialize' the immaterial?

- We explore the issue, which we also find fascinating and challenging. We think that one way of 'materialize' the immaterial is to work with the use of the space. The use itself is intangible but you almost always use something tangible. So the question would be how to use spaces keeping them alive respecting continuity of its development and cultural meaning. To do it the use should always bring contemporary values rooted and dialoguing in the old ones. We are also looking forward to exchange ideas with other CHLs members.

How is the image of Praga changing according to your perception? What are the ideas people associate with?

- Praga still is perceived as “dangerous” and “poor” district but also as the genuine, “old pre-war” Warsaw. Praga’s image has changed dramatically in the past years. Comparing it to the other more prominent parts of the city the changes are fragmental. It is still troubled area but it is becoming a trendy place with cafes and bars. There are three both negative and positive processes going on affecting the image: (1) specific touristification, (2) invasion of the housing market transforming old places of work to the mixed use (with domination of the housing) mostly for newcomers. New problems are on the horizon – mostly questions about gentrification and what will happen to the area after the regeneration program will be completed.

How do you justify the uniqueness of the district in different contexts (local, national, European)?

- In Warsaw it is different because (1) it is best preserved pre-war or even 19th century part of Warsaw (2) it was also different, poorer, detached from the rest of the city (3) its identity is very much linked to the working class heritage. On the country level it is important also as a

part of the capital city and part of the post-industrial heritage, created in three waves: 19th century (Russian market-driven), 1920s and 1930s (innovations, part of the economy after regaining the independence), centrally-planned economy. In Europe it is also part of the post-industrial heritage, part of the CEE history, including aforementioned three waves of industrialization. It is also an area which provides very good possibility to experiment with today challenges, especially regarding sustainability and circularity.

Is there a circular economy program for the city of Warsaw as a whole?

- Not yet, there is a growing interest.

Circular economy and heritage together is a new idea - how did you come up with it? (Our sister project CLIC focuses on it as well)

- in the proposal we defined one of our goals as “Services and products: Creating strong and sustained entrepreneurship through adoption of circular economy principles and promoting local craftwork supported by the modern tools of creative industry” (similar to Lisbon CHL, which proposed “To promote and sustain social and private business environment: to create an environment for new forms of investment, circular economy, crowdfunding, public and private funding, attracting business and entrepreneurs to boost the local economy.”). We perceive it is part of “greening the economy” as in the H2020 call. The relation between the heritage and circularity is something we currently explore.

How to avoid heritage-based gentrification? Do you actively search for methods for this?

- Yes, through providing the uses which could serve various groups of inhabitants and provide local jobs.

Do you have shaped a development narrative for PRAGA out of the intangible values/potentialities that you identified?

- Actually it is currently one of our task while working on Made in Praga and foremost Living Memory Exhibition.

Do you consider the COVID-19 impact both on your activities and Praga, and have you already found some responses to this crisis

- As yet the crisis did not impact directly any place or people we cooperate with. Of course, if there are economic changes we will our best to follow.

What would be your very optimistic vision of the district's future (in terms of heritage)?

- A network of small and medium production and repair entrepreneurship rooted in the local heritage, both in spatial terms (especially variety of scale) and in socio-economic terms (local entrepreneurs and skills). **Also the new development respecting the different scales of places, spaces and building with their architectural and social values.**

Local circular economies to be activated is a good point, but how sustainable they are in that specific local context?

- It is indeed to be explored.

Is there a development plan for the district? And what is the place of heritage in it?

- There is a Revitalization Plan, for which heritage is crucial element and subject of many interventions.

what are your instruments to bring your visions to and channels of cooperation with the municipality, any synergies with municipal programs?

- We have declaration of cooperation with municipality, several municipal representatives are involved in workshop process, including Deputy Mayor and City Architect.

who gets to decide what is “good” use, and what is not?

- Truly involved stakeholders and decision makers.

Do you have mapped the empty buildings already? Are you aware of the planning for them (private/public), and have you integrated this topic already in one of your workshops; the use of these buildings, together with all the stakeholders. And also important what is the need for space within the City of Warsaw? Is it cultural/social/residential etc etc. This should be taken into the process.

- Our goal is not to map empty buildings in Praga. This is actually a task of the city within the frames of regeneration (revitalisation) program for Praga. Buildings, which we are concentrating on need to be important for local heritage and connected with the values of work. Therefore they are selected site, not all the stock.
For sites which we map and investigate in current and planned workshops we do so called investigation or reality check – so certainly we search for info about the current and planned state including public/private ownership, use, demand and supply. What is needed in the district and the city itself is being identified by public bodies, so there is no need to double the work. Our aim is to act as whistle-blowers and advisors to the decision-makers by showing them problems and solutions regarding renting, management etc. of heritage sites based on the results of our actions in the lab.

To what extent it is a danger now that really large scale demolitions and changes can happen in the district. Under the present conditions one may think that investment will stop in these types of projects, but we know from experience that in crisis periods some really large scale investment projects can happen, because protection and social resistance against demolishing areas is not that strong.

- There are several ongoing investments. In fact, there are hardly any large scale unchanged sites left. What is still to be „saved“ is small and medium scale (in spatial terms) heritage. It provides the variety of scale which is crucial for Praga heritage. There is also important risk of the merging process of the smaller places so it could be more profitably sold and transformed.

Circular economy is something totally opposite to the economy based on the First and Second Industrial Revolutions (large scale processing of material resources) which you seem to be “defending”. Do you aware about this contradiction?

- We are strictly opposed to the “frozen” heritage, so we see no risk of promoting the 19th century ways of production in our approach. But as critical as we are today of the past economic models we are also opposed to erasing the memory of it. We think about Praga heritage as a process of production and work in the area. The goal is to find contemporary continuity for industry, production, craft and repair and in this respect circular economy seems to be an obvious choice. **Keeping to coevolutionary approach to heritage we**

understand that uses can change but tangible and valuable parts should be kept, protected and adapted.

The tangible heritage can be used as an embodiment of the changes in the area on the intangible level. Experiment with circular economy models in Praga, by using the heritage, developing new workspaces for example. To keep the work value in place.

- Exactly our point, thank you for putting it so nicely.

Circular economy: are the small businesses a way to preserve an "authentic" image of the district with small shops? How exactly does CE contribute to preserving heritage (what aspects)? What will be lost?

- Variety of scale is very important part of Praga heritage, both in tangible and intangible terms. We are currently exploring CE opportunities and risks. **CE works with different strategies some of which can be develop more efficiently in Praga's urban structure enhancing cooperation by limiting distance, offering spaces of different sizes.**

Bakery- territorial integration

How would you characterize the community you want to reach out with the bakery, and how would does it relate to the community you want to reach out?

- Former inhabitants (who still remember the Bakery operating) and newcomers (from the new investment in former factory just across the street); local specialists who can provide new ideas; stakeholders (municipality as the owner and decision maker, investors, entrepreneurs). They are Praga community in a nutshell.

Are the students involved in the workshop as well? Or any participants from the new generation :)

- Now we do feel older...:)) Students are involved in our other activities. In workshop it is necessary to be more experienced. We are not sure how new should be the new generation, some people are young (we think...).

Did you collect different ideas about the future development of this place? Have you a set of alternative choices?

- Yes, this is what the workshop is about.

Why were the teams interested to apply? Were they paid?

- Yes, otherwise they could not afford to spend so much time working on the project. The workshop approach has a good opinion, due to the former workshop organized by OW SARP and people are willing to work together in the interdisciplinary teams. It is also a possibility to impact the area and learn something new escaping from daily design routines.

For an inclusive approach the users of the building, can be included in the process from the beginning. To produce sustainable ideas/content for the building

- We have included the current tenant, and the owner.

As a follow up: who are the current users?

- The tenant plans to use the Bakery for local food centre, comprising education, restaurant and similar uses.

Were owners involved in the workshop?

- Yes, the site is municipally-owned.

How will the crisis change your bakery ideas in your opinion?

- In fact we expect the ideas to be just the thing – less waste, more sustainable consumption and circular economy gain importance as the crisis develops. As to other possible changes it is better to observe and react than to guess.

Are there already leading ideas generated out of the workshops to shape the future transformation of the bakery?

- Yes, they will be publicly presented this year in form of the recommendations.

This is a perfect case for the financial task force, especially for Joep's and Rolf's expertise. The observatory case "ExRotaprint" is a blueprint for that. When can we come over to work with you?

- We certainly hope you will!

Do you see the possibility to activate the neighbourhood as supporting community for the bakery?

- This our goal. But the new ideas must appear, be explained, discussed and promoted.

What does the tenant do with the building?

- The tenant plans to use the Bakery for local food centre, comprising education, restaurant and similar uses. We do not know how this changed to COVID-19.

Has the tenant a long term contract with the Municipality?

- 3-years lease.

Can you reflect on the role of transportation and the revitalization program?

- New metro line is crucial for Praga development. Revitalization programme makes Praga important area of interest for the municipality which is also an important factor.

The bakery is an important driver for The Praga regenerative process, but I understand that the scale of action of your practice is more ample and you should add complementary initiatives to the bakery. Otherwise, we will talk about the requalification of an object...and not of a more ambitious idea of creating a different and social innovative model for relaunching a part of the city.

- We do not aim at transforming the Bakery. It is a good case study for proposing innovative models of management and cooperation between various stakeholders, as well as identification of heritage values and their role in heritage adaptive re-use. The model and the recommendations will be applicable in broader context, also beyond Praga, this is our goal.

Is the PARGLAB programme supported by the municipality? do they contribute (also in finance?)

- We cooperate with the municipality, but also municipal cultural institutions (as Museum of Warsaw) do contribute but rather in terms of other resources than funds.

How do you reach out to your community?

- By direct contact and open calls. We were also contacted by the community members who heard about the project. We also organize meetings and discussions on the different topics related to economy, heritage, adaptive re-use.

Praga Lab needs a 'strong' support: this can be the municipality (on paper and with financial support) or an organized community (with a clear agenda) or (social) investors.. Which one of these three is most feasible within the next 6 months?

- We cooperate with the municipality (please, see above as well as the Lab description we provided for the report). It is the most important and stable partner, but we are also supported by the members of local activists and community (present in our Advisory Board). We plan to involve local investors but their goals are too often contrary to the Lab's goals so we tread carefully there.

Do you see the chance of a structural change in the politics of municipality, like selling that place to an association of activists?

- Institutional change is what we hope for, but we do not see privatization as the best solution. There are and should be other tools to free resources.

Resource integration

One of the comments we got from the EU review was to define resource integration broadly, not just financially. How could you apply this for the Praga case?

- Part of the model we work on the workshop. We take into consideration such resources as premises; skills, time; information; institutional support.

Crowdfunding comments

<https://dartagnans.fr/> - crowdfunding for castles

There is an example in Ukraine where they work with small-scale shareholders, it is a version of crowdfunding. <https://promprylad.ua/en/>

Crowdfunding is also a tool to develop community, it would be a tool that is useful for you in many respect.

<https://dehallen-amsterdam.nl/>

<http://urbanspace.if.ua/en>

Other comments:

maybe the success of a local project in the area is really to find room to this transition of the local work...towards a more artistic and creative dimensions...but to find room, tangible room...

- There is a lot of space for such activities, to lower the barriers between people and places is what we aim at.

proof of the pudding.....,

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an idea: install a community makerspace in the bakery

- This is exactly what the teams proposed.

Inspiration for circular economy model:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/08/amsterdam-doughnut-model-mend-post-coronavirus-economy>

- Thank you. We also have a Ph. D. student cooperating with us for Bakery, who received a grant from City of Warsaw for her research in local circular economy.