

BEIRUT TRAINING SCHOOL

Re-Imagining the port as an urban strategy for re-housing: assessment, development, and future



15th-19th November 2021

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), Beirut, Lebanon

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The general objective of this *Training School* is to learn about the urban strategies, development plans and international housing assistance programs of Lebanon in general and Beirut in particular from the post war period until the August 2020 Port blast, and to evaluate how this event might be an opportunity to redefine urban and design strategies, as well as public policies on collective housing.

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Acknowledgements

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU)

Lebanese American University (LAU)

American University Special Collections
and Archives (AUB)

Emmanuel Durand (Sina)

Naji Moujaes

Gioia Sawaya

Beirut Training School

Re-Imagining the port as an urban strategy for re-housing: assessment, development, and future

Monday 15th to Friday 19th November 2021 /NDU, Colony Beirut, AUB Archives)



Presentation

Training Schools (TS) aim to facilitate capacity building on a topic relevant to the theme of the respective COST Action through the delivery of intensive training on a new or emerging subject

This TS is part of the EUROPEAN UNION COST Action 18137: European Middle-Class Mass Housing

The main challenge of this Cost Action is to create a transnational network that gathers European researchers carrying studies on Middle-Class Mass Housing (MCMH) built in Europe since the 1950s. This network will allow the development new scientific approaches by discussing, testing, and assessing case studies and their different methodologies and perspectives. Please check our website [mcmh](https://mcmh.eu)

For more general information about the European Union program, check the [Cost Action](https://cost.eu) website.

Trainees:

In the Training School participate 5 local students (Beirut) and 15 foreigner students selected by the Core Group of COST Action 18137.

The Training School is aimed at ECI, new PhD & Master students of different backgrounds who have a research interest in post-traumatic (collective) housing themes. It aims to develop tools to survey and access post-catastrophe zones; to train methodologies for producing multidisciplinary reports; and to critically analyze produced data to support urban interventions, identifying the aspects that condition public policies of collective housing, using Beirut's context to cross it other Mediterranean and European contexts.

Registration to the Training School is free. Selected participants from outside the Beirut Community will have financial support.

To be selected as trainee, it is essential to complete attached the application form.



Beirut Training School 15-19th November 2021

Objectives

Main Objective

The general objective of this *Training School* is to learn about the urban strategies, development plans and international housing assistance programs of Lebanon in general and Beirut in particular from the post war period until the August 2020 Port blast, and to evaluate how this event might be an opportunity to redefine urban and design strategies, as well as public policies on collective housing. Lebanon has not implemented any state social housing, yet has historically intervened in the housing market in the form of rent controls. The notion of housing as a state responsibility in Lebanon lasted a very short period; there were several unsuccessful attempts at slum clearance, urban renewal, and housing projects in the sixties. Lebanon since then still suffer from a severe housing shortage and most of collective housing complexes were built under the rental scheme purpose targeting an for emerging middle-class who could only afford to rent rather than buy. Lebanon is one of the most urbanized countries in the Arab region, with a legacy of uncontrolled urban growth and sprawl. According to the UNHCR and UN-Habitat report from 2014, the national average price for residential properties ranged from 3,800 to 4,500 USD per square metre, the significant proportion of the population find themselves excluded from the housing market. (UNHCR and UN-Habitat (2014), Housing, Land & Property Issues in Lebanon: Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis August 2014 P. 17)

As recognised by the Government of Lebanon, the state has been historically absent in terms of affordable housing with no investment in housing provision or effective intervention in land markets. (Government of Lebanon, Council for Development and Reconstruction (2016), Habitat III National Report: Final Report. P.53)

The few public social housing projects have been led or co-led by municipalities, are of an extremely small scale and those older developments are falling into disrepair. (UN-Habitat, 2016d. P.58)

In the absence of social housing provision by the state, rent control has been one limited means by which the government has promoted access to adequate housing for all since 1940. Rent controls became problematic with the Lebanese civil war and the depreciation of the Lebanese pound that saw owners of rent controlled properties “left with mediocre rental income which fails to cover maintenance costs”. (Blominvest Bank (2014), The End of Rent Control in Lebanon: Impact Analysis)

With the high value of real-estate in central Beirut, properties subject to rent control have often fallen into disrepair given that land value is more profitable than rental value with its associated maintenance costs. As this is eventually the most important to Beirut, the study projects were selected for their relatively high density and multistorey configuration.

In contrast with that of the Arab Middle East, Lebanon is a fairly special case in terms of social development and physical urbanization. The country's location at the historically important node east of the Mediterranean basin, the rich history and diverse communal fabric, and the constant exposure to the Europe, all contributed to a phenomenal speed of change. Beirut, the capital, was before the Civil War the largest urban center in the region, containing the majority of economic, political, and cultural faculties.

During the war (1979) the urban populations was the highest along the non-European Mediterranean basin. With two cement plants and a limited capacity for aluminum and steel production. The prevalent construction technology is a simplified version of concrete skeletal construction with hollow concrete block infill. With high land utilization requirements and the densification of the city required a technology compatible with multi-storey configurations. Until the exponential devaluation of the Lebanese pound took its toll, such technology was within the reach of almost everybody, to the extent that it became widespread even in rural areas.

The construction market was prosperous and highly speculative well into the civil war. The sharp increase in construction wages, partially owing to labour immigration to Gulf states and mostly due to inflation, have resulted in a remarkable slowdown of building activity.

Within the framework of Cost Action 18137, it is expected that the results of the **Training school** would allow:

- to develop tools to survey and access post-catastrophe zones and relate them to housing themes on a broader disciplinary context;
- to test methodologies for producing multidisciplinary post-catastrophe/post-conflict (collective) housing reports;
- to familiarize with urban analysis processes;
- to foster the construction of critical arguments and concepts based on data to support urban interventions, identifying the aspects that condition public policies of collective housing,
- to be introduced to the operational mechanisms of NGOs and the role of the professional vs the professional/non-professional volunteer;
- to understand the need to develop multiple simultaneous approaches on a short, medium and longer terms in post-catastrophe/post-conflict zones, through the participation in GOs and NGOs activities.

Specific training objectives:

- to interpret public policies on planning and housing in Beirut, analyzing cases during the post-war period and relate them with the intermediate periods and present situation;

- to know the current problems of local groups –therefore, the policies that supported them - and, if necessary, to redefine possible intervention strategies.
- to
- to use Beirut's context to cross it with other Mediterranean and European contexts.

Methodology:

The *Training school* will bring together three teaching instruments:

- Theoretical and historical sessions with *key speakers*.
- Expert guided tours and technical sheets of the selects case studies.
- Workshop sessions aimed at achieving the general objectives indicates. We will work in groups of five-six students, applying a role-playing methodology. Each group will have a teacher and/or a support expert.

Participation:

The Training School is face-to-face, and attendance is compulsory, controlled by daily personal signature in order to get reimbursed.

Attendance at the TS is restricted to those enrolled.



Country	GNP (US\$)	Current population		Density (per sq.km)		Growth rate (%)		Population in year 2000 (millions)
		Total (millions)	Urban (% of total)	Total for country	Agri.land	Total for country	Urban	
Turkey	1 200	41.9	42.9	54	76	2.5	4.7	64
Jordan	1 050	2.9	52.9	30	197	3.3	4.5	6
Lebanon	~	2.9	69.8	279	806	2.5	4.9	5
Tunisia	950	5.9	48.0	36	77	2.3	3.6	9
Syrian Arab Republic	930	7.8	46.7	42	55	3.2	4.7	15
Morocco	670	18.3	37.4	41	90	2.8	4.1	34
Yemen Arab Republic	580	5.0	7.9	26	329	1.9	7.3	9
Democratic Yemen	420	1.7	34.3	5	18	1.9	3.2	3
Egypt	400	37.8	43.9	39	1 324	2.1	2.7	58
Sudan	320	16.8	20	70	54	2.6	6.9	31
Total population		141						234
Average	724	14.0	40.4	56	303	2.5	4.6	23.4

Source: World Bank: Social Indicators, August 1979.

Staff

Local Key Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Mona Harb, Professor of Urban Studies and Politics, Coordinator, Graduate Programs in Urban Planning, Policy and Design Department of Architecture and Design; Research Lead, Beirut Urban Lab Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture American University of Beirut (AUB), Beirut, Lebanon - Prof. Elie Harfouche, Assistant Professor Architecture and Urbanism Department, Lebanese American University (LAU). D.E.S. Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Architecture, Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Lebanon M.S. Architectural History, University of London, England. His current research focuses on the history and current state of social housing in Lebanon.
International Trainers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Mónica Pacheco, Assistant Professor Department of Architecture and Urbanism, Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL). Holder of a Diploma degree in Architecture from Faculty of Architecture of Technical University Lisbon (FA-UTL), a MA in Housing in Urbanism from the Architectural Association in London (AA); PhD Degree. Research Fellow from Bartlett (UCL); interest focused on critical reading of pre-established systems of knowledge transfer through postcolonial transnational organizations and education systems, their mutual impact and role in (re)theorizing discourses and agendas in housing and urbanism, the (re)shaping the profession and the professional. Grant Holder Scientific Representative Cost Action 18137. - Prof. Ricardo Camacho, Invited Professor Department of Architecture and Urbanism, Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL). Holder of a Diploma degree in Architecture from Faculty of Architecture of Technical University Lisbon (FA-UTL), a MArchII Graduate School of Design (GSD Harvard University). His research interests focus on the Middle East Modern Architecture and he is co-author of the two volumes of "Modern Architecture Kuwait 1949-1989" (Niggli 2016 and 2018) and "PanArab Modernism 1968-2018: The History of Architectural Practice in the Middle East" (Actar 2020).
Local Trainers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Nadine Hindi, Associate Professor at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) in Lebanon, at the department of Architecture since 2015. Holder of a bachelor's degree in architecture from the American University of Beirut, she pursued a Master and a PhD degree in urban regeneration at the University of Barcelona in Spain. Her research and publications focus on urban topics including urban forms, urban history, war geography, public spaces, and waterfront cases. - Prof. Kristine Samra, Lecturer at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) in Lebanon, at the department of Architecture since 2010. Holder of a bachelor's degree in

architecture from Notre Dame University-Louaize (**NDU**), a Master degree in urbanism at the Lebanese University and a PhD degree in architecture and the built environment at Ulster University – Northern Ireland- UK. Her research focuses on urban issues including cities in conflict, social exclusion, and urban borders.

- **Arch. Jad Cortas** (Studio 33). BArch from Notre Dame University-Louaize (**NDU**)
He developed an extensive residential and F&B portfolio of projects in Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.
- **Samar Mikati Kaissi**, Associate University Librarian, American University Special collections and Archives (**AUB**)

Timeline

Day 1: Monday 15th November

09.00	Welcome. Group meets at “Colony Beirut”, 77 Senegal St., Karantina
09.30	MCMH research project: Cost Action 18137. Housing for the biggest number: the beginning of housing missions (Prof. Mónica Pacheco)
10.30	Group meets at Lebanese American University Campus (LAU). Beirut Metropolitan and Downtown debrief (Prof. Prof. Elie Harfouche masterclass with introduction to the city).
12.30	Lunch break
14.00	Exploration of the city walk between downtown and Hamra St., AUB & Corniche. This is the larger city walk to set things into context (printed maps for each participant).
18.30	Debrief with Prof. Elie Harfouche (LAU), present with the students throughout the city tour.

Day 2: TUESDAY 16th November

09.00	Group meets at “Colony Beirut”, 77 Senegal St., Karantina, Introduction of the different project areas (Prof. Ricardo Camacho)
09.30	Exploration of the Neighbourhood (different field visits (5 areas) to cover all the neighbourhoods affected by the Beirut blast (facilitated by different trainers).
10.30	
12.30	Lunch break
14.00	Exploration of the Neighbourhood Following the visits, the groups will record and report in a round table discussion.
18.00	Debrief with Prof. Kristine Samra (NDU)
19.00	Visit to Bernard Koury’s Office, Son of a Gun

Day 3: WEDNESDAY, 17th November

09.00	Group meets at “Colony Beirut” with NDU students. Quick introduction by trainers
09.30	Workshop in Nature with Prof. Nadine Hindi (NDU)
12.30	Lunch break
14.00	Initial mapping of the open spaces on the Port blast influence area. Introduction of 5 different

16.00	Group work divided into the previous thematic themes (facilitated by different trainers)
18.00	Group presentations (5' each) and round table discussion between participants and trainers.

Day 4: THURSDAY, 18th November

09.00	Group meets at NDU. Debrief of previous day activity.
09.30	Presentations with participants and NDU students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify various problem area/statements; - Hone in on one problem area that can be addressed by the team; - Each group drafts a few HMWs; - Identify stakeholders (who is affected by this topic and how are they affected); - Ideation.
12.30	Lunch break on the move to American University of Beirut Campus (AUB)
13.30	Exploration of the AUB rare collection Archives. All participants will engage in small groups with pre-selected archives.
18.30-	Exploring the Coast
20.30	Walking and boat journey of the coastline. Dinner in Rouchet.

Day 5: FRIDAY 19th November

09.00	Group meets at "Colony Beirut". Quick introduction a day with a NGO by Prof. Kristine Samra (NDU)
09.30	Field Work
10.30	Participants will spend a full day with one of the NGOs working in the affected areas of the Beirut blast. They will be introduced to the operational mechanisms of that NGO and will participate as volunteers in all activities scheduled by the NGO on that day.
12.30	Lunch break in the street
14.00	Field Work
17.00	Final presentations, discussions and reflections.
18.00	15' each team followed by Q&A

NOTE:

This program may have variations in the schedule and in the guests depending on the sanitary restrictions due to the covid pandemic imposed by the governmental and/or academic authorities.

Case Studies

The selection of cases of studies developed in Beirut to be visited tried to cover the following:

- 1) representative examples of different planning paradigms and cultural models, particularly in the post war period;
- 2) housing schemes reflecting varied urban challenges to the mass housing needs;
- 3) examples presenting different social, economical, demographical, and political (pre)conditions (ethnic/religious, refugees/newcomers, etc.).
- 4) an overview that allows a comprehensive overview of housing policies from the mid 20th century onwards.