

My Architect and I: A role-playing workshop to improve housing design service

Keywords: participatory design, architecture, user experience, role-playing

1. Workshop Organizer

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2. Context and Aim of the Workshop

During two years, the Inter'Act research laboratory (University of Liege, Belgium) studied the interactions between architects and client-users in the specific context of residential architecture, where participation during the daily professional practice remains problematic compared to other design fields [1, 2]. Through a survey (n=97), literature reviews (n=2), interviews (n=49), observations (n=5), and workshops (n≈10), we identified challenges related to architectural services provided in Belgium today; we revealed best participatory practices; we selected tools, techniques, strategies and methods implemented in other design fields for similar issues, and we adapted or invented new ones for architecture with a participatory mindset.

During DRS Bilbao, we aim to share, test, and evaluate the transferability of the tools co-designed by Belgian architects and client-users. We plan to use role-playing technique with two different scenarios [3] tackling two different problematic situations (e.g., budget) created for two profiles: the architect and the client-user. The role-playing kit is based on qualitative data and gathers a user portrayal, quotations, a scenario with a problematic situation, a solution, and an evaluation framework with four different sections. The role-play kits include issues and criteria that the players need to defend and respect when debating and evaluating. This workshop offers a playful and dynamic activity to improve empathy and share our applied research practices in design and architecture.

3. Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes

The workshop is a **1.5 hour activity** organized with a collective introduction, conducted using the "**1-2-4-8**" **technique** and reaching a collective concluding moment. We plan to hold our workshop in only one mode: **face-to-face**. The research team (n=4) will be present in Bilbao and act as organizers and passive facilitators. We expect an expert-based evaluation and iteration of our toolkit and test its transferability to another cultural context. The planned activities, duration, and tools are presented in Table 1:

PHASE	ACTIVITY	TOOL
Welcoming (10 min)	Presentations and explanations of the past research, the objectives, and the protocol of the workshop.	Computer and projection
Individual (10 min)	Each participant individually discovers his/her role-playing kit and evaluates the given solution by completing the first part of the evaluation framework.	Role-Playing Kit with A6 stickers cards including a rich portray, stories, a scenario and a solution proposal with an evaluation framework.
By two (15 min)	"The architect" and "the client-user" start a debate about the problematic situation presented in the scenario and about the suggested solution; they fill the second part of the evaluation framework by discussing.	Vocal recording, table for two, sitting. Evaluation frameworks of each participant are gathered
By four (20 min)	The duos with the same scenario show the tools that they evaluated. They enrich the third part of the evaluation framework and select one of the tools.	Vocal recording, table for four, sitting. Evaluation frameworks of each participant are gathered
By eight (25 min)	Each group of four has five minutes to summarize how to change the problematic situation and fill the fourth part of the evaluation framework. They use and stick on their role-playing cards on A1 to contextualize.	Vocal recording, in front of a wall with a A1 sheet, standing. Evaluation frameworks of each participant are gathered an A1 sheet
Concluding Remarks (10 min)	Each group of eight discovers the other groups' scenario and evaluations. Finally, the research group summarizes and concludes the workshop.	Both A1 papers with stickers of evaluation and role kits are exhibited to share the content and the evolution of the evaluation process.

4. Intended Audience

We expect 16 participants: architects, researchers, designers from DRS and Bilbao local community. We can count on the support of the Deusto Cities Lab Katedra, from Deusto University, and the network of close colleagues. On the one hand, we want to attract profiles with an architectural background who will role-play the client-user and, on the other hand, we will invite designers and other profiles to play the architects' roles.

5. Space and Equipment Required

This activity needs to be organized in a studio with minimum **ten tables, 20 chairs, computer-based projection, and two walls that each allow one A1 poster setting.** Chairs and tables should be easy to move and combine. The space flexibility and acoustic qualities are important as the groups will work in parallel and discuss lively. A colorful informal studio with removable soundproofing panels is welcomed.

6. Potential Outputs

We expect to 1) collect evaluations from experts; 2) improve architects' and designers' empathy; 3) experiment with the role-playing approach; 4) share our research about participatory architecture developed in Belgium; 4) reinforce our existing networks and create new collaborations. Finally, the research team will benefit from working in an international context after two years of work in Wallonia and thus test the limits of the toolkit's transferability. By choosing the 1-2-4-8 technique, we stay flexible and ready to shift in an online mode if sanitary circumstances change. We hold more than ten years of experience in workshop design and facilitation, with dozens of workshops organized in different fields and countries with analog and digital tools.

8. References

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About the Organizers:

Yaprak Hamarat Yaprak's works unfold in two intertwined axes: pragmatic aesthetics and social design, both driven by ethnographic fieldwork. She holds a PhD in Environmental Design from the University of Montreal. She designed and organized workshops and residencies for public libraries in Canada.

Catherine Elsen Catherine is Professor at the University of Liège and former Research Affiliate at MIT. She holds a PhD in Engineering Sciences and MS degrees in Social Sciences and Architectural Engineering. She designed and conducted several face-to-face and digital workshops in Belgium.

Çiğdem Yönder Çiğdem is an enthusiast of co-creation and is currently studying co-design methodologies and how they support designers' and users' interactions for her PhD. She designed and organized workshops with children, students, designers and creatives in Turkey within the framework of co-creation.

Audrey Mertens Audrey holds a MS degree in Architectural Engineering from the University of Liege. After professional experience in architectural agencies, she studies the interactions between architects and their end-users through her thesis. She holds experience in conducting field research abroad, notably in Bali.