

Subject to challenges

Landscape Architecture Education in Europe

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Landscape education in Europe is now in its ninth decade. Before the First World War, there were garden design courses in horticulture colleges and some teaching of landscape architecture on planning courses, such as that at Liverpool University taught by Thomas Mawson. But the first landscape architecture programme in Europe was set up at Ås in Norway in 1919 at the Norges Landbrukskøgscole now the Norwegian University for Life Sciences. By the 1930s, there were university courses at Kaiser Wilhelm University in Berlin, at the University of Reading, and at the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy in Moscow. Further schools were established in Germany, Britain, Scandinavia and Holland in the 1950s and 1960s. In Portugal Francisco Cabral began teaching the first programme at the Instituto Superior de Agronomia (Higher Institute of Agronomy) of the Technical University of Lisboa in 1940-41. In France the first school was the Versailles school set up in the sixties, while in Poland there has been a remarkable growth since 2000.

Growth of landscape architecture education

Usually planning and environmental legislation has led to a need for landscape architects, leading to a desire to set up schools. A classic example is the UK New Town Act of 1946 requiring landscape masterplans, which in turn led to the establishment of landscape architecture schools in the following two decades. Now there are more programmes in Europe than one might think, over 140 at our latest count, which are courses in landscape architecture, paysagisme or in Russia »green engineering«.

One issue facing all these schools is the pressure from governments to economize on higher education. Particularly governments have used the Bologna Declaration as an engine to cut the length of undergraduate education from five (the traditional German style Diplom) to three (the Bachelor degree).

Bologna has established a European-wide model of Bachelors and Masters programmes leading to doctoral studies in order to promote education and vocational exchange. Hence the institution of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits based on hours of study (which was prompted by the European Union's Erasmus and Socrates exchange programmes). Formally Bologna sets the model of three (academic) years of 180 ECTS and Masters of 90-120 ECTS.

Note that despite popular misconception Bologna does not set a 3+2 year model of undergraduate Bachelor and postgraduate Masters. The two year Masters programme is one way of achieving a 120 ECTS Masters, but one calendar year (i.e. 12 months) is a way of achieving a 90 ECTS Masters. However, most would agree

that a five year Bachelors + Masters is an ideal full time education.

Generally, vocational education such as architecture and landscape architecture has been longer than the three years Bachelor. In Germany, it has been five years; in the UK four years for landscape architecture. EFLA settled on a minimum four years model for landscape architecture education in 1998 its Education Policy Document and this has been confirmed in 2008 both by EFLA and IFLA in its IFLA/UNESCO Charter for Landscape Education.

Education and professional title

This of course affects title and employment. In countries where there are state registers, it is education which gives the right to use a professional title, for example in Germany, Länder Architektenkammer award state registration on the basis of education.

In Italy there is a different situation. Since 2000 landscape architecture has been state recognized, and only Masters students can gain the full title. The problem is that the majority of Italian landscape architects and members of Associazione Italiana di Architettura del Paesaggio (AIAPP) do not have Masters degrees (the first Masters in landscape architecture was set up in Genoa in 1999). Therefore, most landscape architects cannot become state registered.

The Dutch dealt with this more satisfactorily when they set up their state registration system to include landscape architects. They granted »grandfather« rights to practicing landscape architects without Masters degrees but with more than ten years work experience, subject to a presentation of work and interview for those.

Challenges

Landscape Architecture in some countries is subject to challenges and some schools have been under threat. For example the Munich University course in 2004 (which was successfully resisted) or the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Masters course which ended in 2003. However, overall across Europe landscape architecture education is growing. There is an increasing number of graduates. A further challenge is to ensure that there are adequate design and planning education: design studio units or courses are relatively expensive. EFLA therefore sets a minimum of 50% for landscape design and planning courses as part of landscape architecture education and in this follows the IFLA guidelines.

And of course, there is support for landscape education in countries where landscape architecture is not fully recognised and where there are too few schools and programmes. We are very aware of the situation in Spain. And so we are glad that Spain has ratified the European Landscape Convention (which includes a com-

mitment to landscape education), and that indeed the Catalan Observatori del Paisatge is held up by the Council of Europe as a model for the rest of Europe. EFLA aims to support its member association Asociación Española de Paisajistas (AEP) in its efforts to promote landscape architecture education. Landscape Architecture in Spain is remarkably under-developed compared, for example, with Portugal with its five schools of landscape architecture. The situation in Spain, however, is full of opportunity. There is an urgent need for landscape architecture professional services in Spain, even more so in a time a recession, in order to influence future physical planning. Landscape Architecture's role is to mediate man's development and impact on the landscape.

ECLAS: the educationalists

The main European-wide academic body is ECLAS, the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools. ECLAS holds an annual conference (in 2009 in Genova in September), and publishes a good, readable, peer reviewed academic journal JoLA, Journal of Landscape Architecture. ECLAS has also been very successful in obtaining European Union assistance to set up LE:NOTRE, which is a European thematic network and is now world-wide in scope. LE:NOTRE is largely web-based, but also has an annual meeting which was this year in Versailles. ECLAS and EFLA work together using LE:NOTRE and have surveyed landscape architecture education throughout Europe (and continue to update this), and we trust that further cooperation will enquire possibilities to establish a Common Education Platform in the European Union.

ELASA: the students

The students also work together via ELASA, the European Landscape Architecture Students Association, which organizes two meetings per annum. Last summer there was a two week, travelling »circus« around Hungary and in 2009 there is to be a spring »mini-meeting« in Istanbul and a summer get together in Rumania. There is even a son and daughter of ELASA in the form of ELAN, the European Landscape Network, which hosts similar meetings for former ELASA participants.

EFLA's role

One of EFLA's main roles is that of promoting professional education for landscape architecture, and it does this in several ways:

- | it works closely with ECLAS to survey European landscape architecture education, and contributes to the IFLA guide;
- | it operates a School Recognition System based on EFLA guide-

lines in co-operation with national member associations, e.g. the bdla in Germany, with aim of enabling free movement of professionals from one country to another;

- | it is working (with ECLAS) to establish a Common Education Platform for landscape architecture under the European Union 'Qualifications' Directive;
- | it publishes advise notes on landscape architecture education, available on www.efla.org;
- | it advises on education, for example the meeting in Rumania in July 2008, where EFLA supported the improvement of curricula of landscape architecture programme of the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest, and participated in the diploma presentation;
- | it also promotes the EFLA/LE:NOTRE/ELASA/IFLA Internship Guide which covers international work experience, opportunities and also country by country guide for young professionals to get a job;
- | EFLA also aims to promote landscape architecture and landscape architecture education around the Mediterranean including the Arab world, it has promoted the Symposia on the future of landscape architecture in the Mediterranean countries in Athens in 2006 and in Istanbul in 2008 and aims with IFLA to support the next symposium in Beirut in 2010. We have to support landscape architecture around the Mediterranean, east and west, north and south.

Conclusion

Landscape Architecture education in Europe is developing, above all in Central Europe and around the Mediterranean. As it approaches its first century it is full of interest and challenge. There are many opportunities for collaboration across Europe. True the challenges, often from ministries of education, threaten resources for relatively small and expensive programmes, but the opportunities are for mankind to relate to its environment in a sustainable way. That is the bigger challenge.

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