



STUDIO
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**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
STIFTUNG** Für die Freiheit.

Lebanon and Syria

BRPI [Beirut River: Portrait & Injection]

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedoms collaborates with Studio Madane on a project called 'The Beirut River: Portrait and Injections', with Madane's aspiration to engage the youth in socio political reform and decision-making through research and practice.

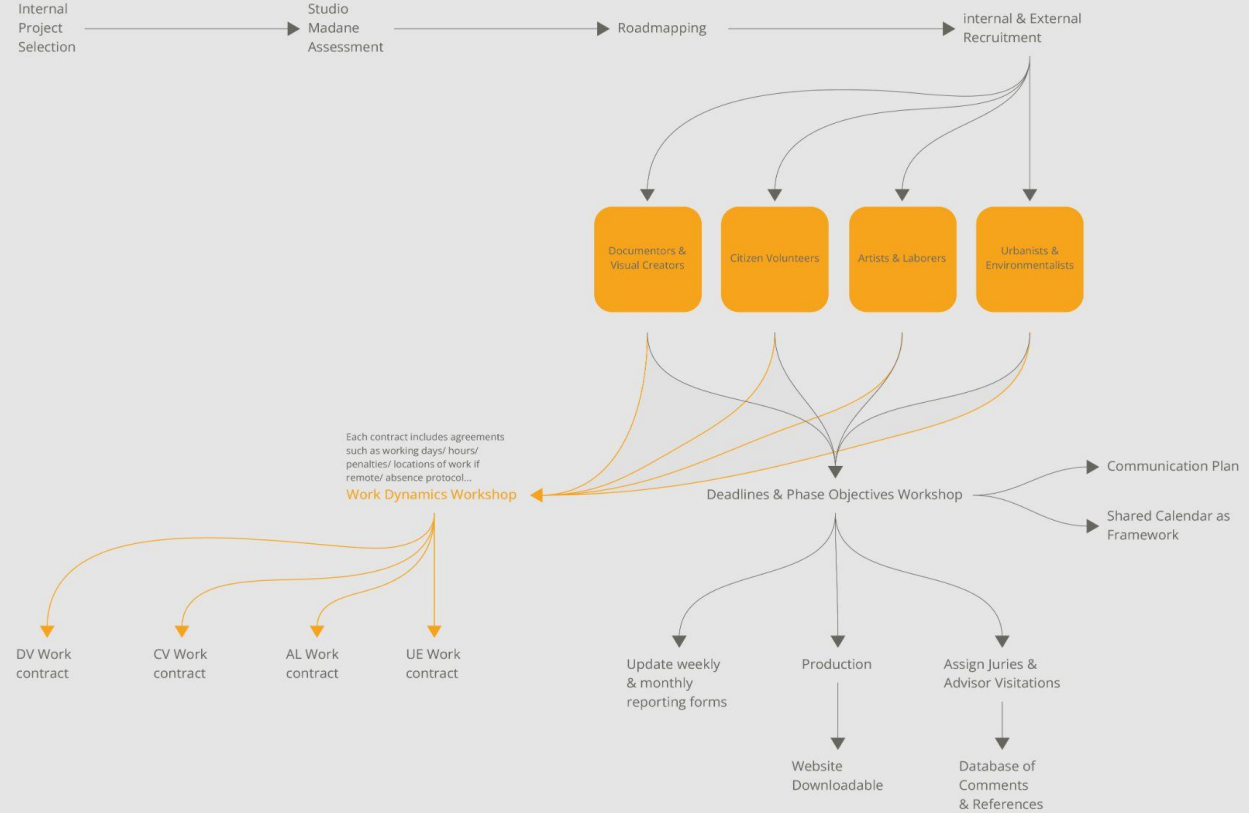
Studio Madane

Studio Madane is a Lebanese-based youth-led 'sociopolitical studio'. Madane aims to engage youth in higher-level discussions, decision-making, and advocacy, and design across Lebanon. The collective is at the intersection of collective action, reformism, sustainable inclusion, and prototyping. It works with/ for women, LGBTQ+, minorities, and neuro-diverse communities.

Studio Madane fosters active civil societies and merit-based ecosystems. It does that by coining a new grassroots working model called 'multidisciplinary practices towards civic + socio-political reform'. It uses the studio approach, hence its name, and by that, different actors in society are involved in hands-on critical change. The collective employs rights-based approaches and circular governance. The studio manifests its goals through the production of a diverse body of projects about urban regeneration, digitization, decentralization, policy, public development, data analysis, social contracts, and more.

Seeing that recruitment has channeled different individuals from society [architects, artists, journalists, photographers, authors, researchers, volunteers, nappers, surveyors...] into different departments, a flexible system was crucial.

The 'Work Dynamics Workshop' was designed to allow separate working contracts for each working group. The members of each cluster built their own contracts which pertained to the working hours, working days, communication platform selection, and anything that related to the work ethic of those in the field.



Workflow

It is of the essence at Studio Madane to gather the youth to develop a workflow model that is custom to the context and actors in the project at hand. One step forward that the youth took, since the onset of the October 17th revolution in 2019, was their interest in converting all the slogans and noble objectives into practice.

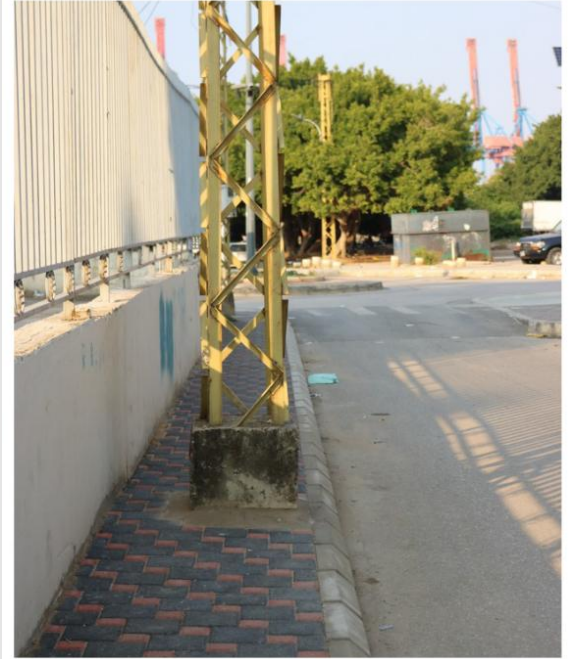


Sidewalk as Space for Disposal size in 16cm x 11cm

Location: 33.899809, 35.533290

A public sidewalk used as a disposal by private companies and the municipality.

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Infrastructure Over Walkability Size in 12cm x 17cm

Location: 33.901636, 35.530023

An electric pole put by the municipality takes the entire sidewalk can threaten public safety.

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Urban Environment

Photographic surveys were used to convey the socio-political realities through the physicalities of the urban environment. How are the residents using barriers and props to define their living? The authorities, unions of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders are potential collaborators in the lack of order in the cities.

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Research Question

Does reform, the promise of Lebanon's 'leaders,' affect people's political decision-making when it arrives from a political alternative?

Narrative

The current political class has not changed in Lebanon for the past 30 years [Dr Lina Khatib, Lebanon's Politics and Politicians] and, with that, the living conditions continue to deteriorate. Despite that, affiliations to the same leaders persist because of the many promises they continue to make. Can providing these people an effective and useful alternative alter their affiliations? Can direct reform, perhaps civic reform in their neighborhoods, affect their political decision-making?

The Karantina - Nahr Beirut - Bourj Hammoud radius is a socially, demographically, ethnically, economically, environmentally, and politically controversial area. It is a radius that picks up a fraction of the capital Beirut, and a fraction of its northern suburbs [local christians, local muslims, and non-locals [Harake, Nabaa Neighborhood Profile, Bourj Hammoud, Beirut]. This ground provides multidisciplinary research the richness that it requires.

- Dr Lina Khatib Director. "Lebanon's Politics and Politicians." Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank, 25 Jan. 2022, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/08/lebanons-politics>.
- Author(s) Harake. "Nabaa Neighbourhood Profile, Bourj Hammoud, Beirut." Nabaa Neighbourhood Profile, Bourj Hammoud, Beirut | Urban Response Portal, 1 Mar. 2017, <https://www.urban-response.org/help-library/nabaa-neighbourhood-profile-bourj-hammoud-beirut>.

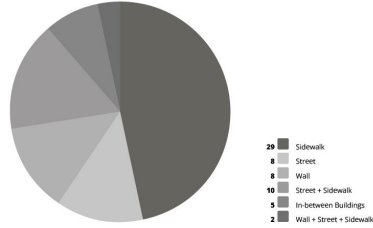
'Kazdoura' Map

The mappers and surveyors from the Artists & Laborers working group went on several 'kazdoura' [strolls] between the areas and identified a lot of phenomena in the urban landscape. The lines mark the paths taken, and the points mark socio-political, environmental, and physical informalities.

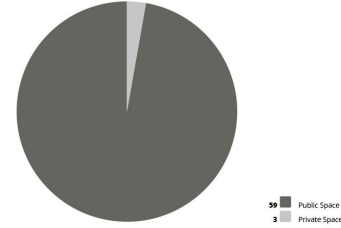


- Primary Research Area
- Secondary Research Area
- Intersection of Areas
- Illegal Separators
- Ethnic/ Religious/ Sectarian Interventions
- Joining Interventions
- Suggested Boundaries
- Most to Least Roamed

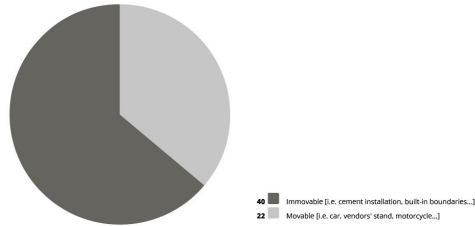




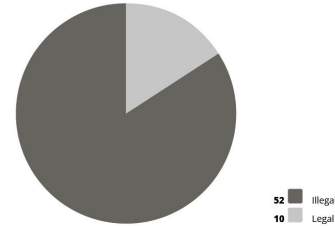
What does the barrier occupy?



Does it exist in a public or private space?



Is the intervention movable or immovable?



Does the image contain something illegal or legal?

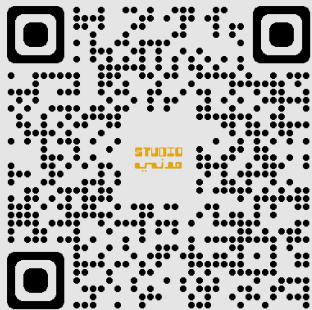
Quantitative

In their first assessment, it was shown that almost 100% of the barriers in the photographs invade public space, and nearly 50% occupy sidewalks. More than half are immovable installations.

Track 07: "I Can't Imagine Change, Forget It"

[0:50 - 1:33] "...by attempting to fix anything, we pose a threat to the dominant parties..."
This testimony resonates with a lot of the locals' thoughts who want to create change.

The recordings by the Documenters group testify the inability of locals to create change-making initiatives without threatening their position in society.

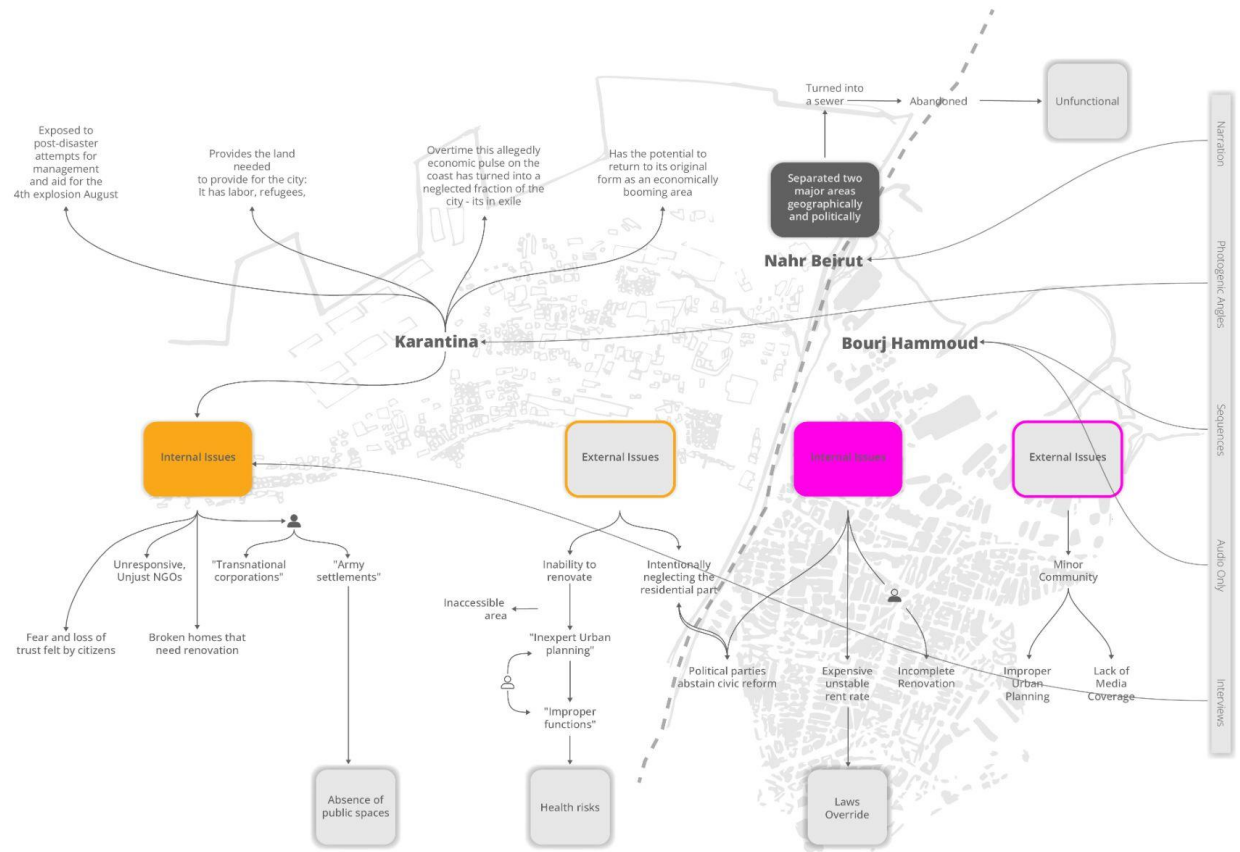


Album 02: State Exterminates Citizens

It is starting to become clear that political parties have completely consumed public offices, which has consequently caused municipalities to become bodies that are in opposition to the citizens. Citizens feel like they are unable to create the necessary reform, without turning themselves into a direct threat to the state.

Karantina evolved from a hub of economic prosperity in the country to an isolated and highly militarized island that has no infrastructure to recover from any inconvenience, let alone the August 4th explosion.

Bourj Hammoud is in the dark and witnessing unprecedented clashes between locals and immigrants, and between locals themselves of different ethnicities. Nahr Beirut continues to act as a wound in the middle, and the residents are 'trapped' because of their passion for their neighborhood of birth, but also suffocated.



Mind Map

The Documenters & Visual Creators, whose goal was to conduct and develop documentation for social impact, began their field work by conducting field surveys and testimonies from the residents. The testimonies were juxtaposed over the geography.



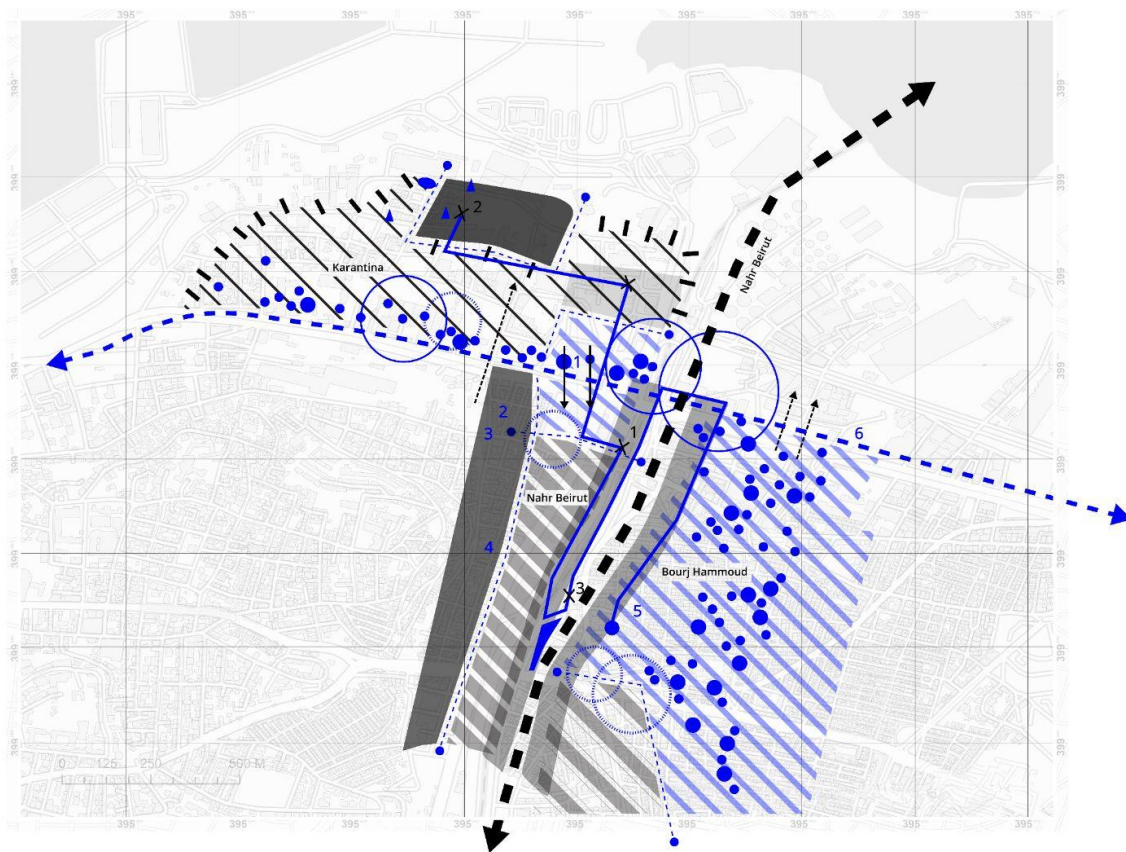
Organized Entropy عشوائيات منظمة

Documenters and Visual Creators

Organized Entropy

A film was conducted as a testament to the findings. What is the relationship between the residents, and between themselves and the land? A focus group of specific profiles was spoken to from the beginning of the project until the end.



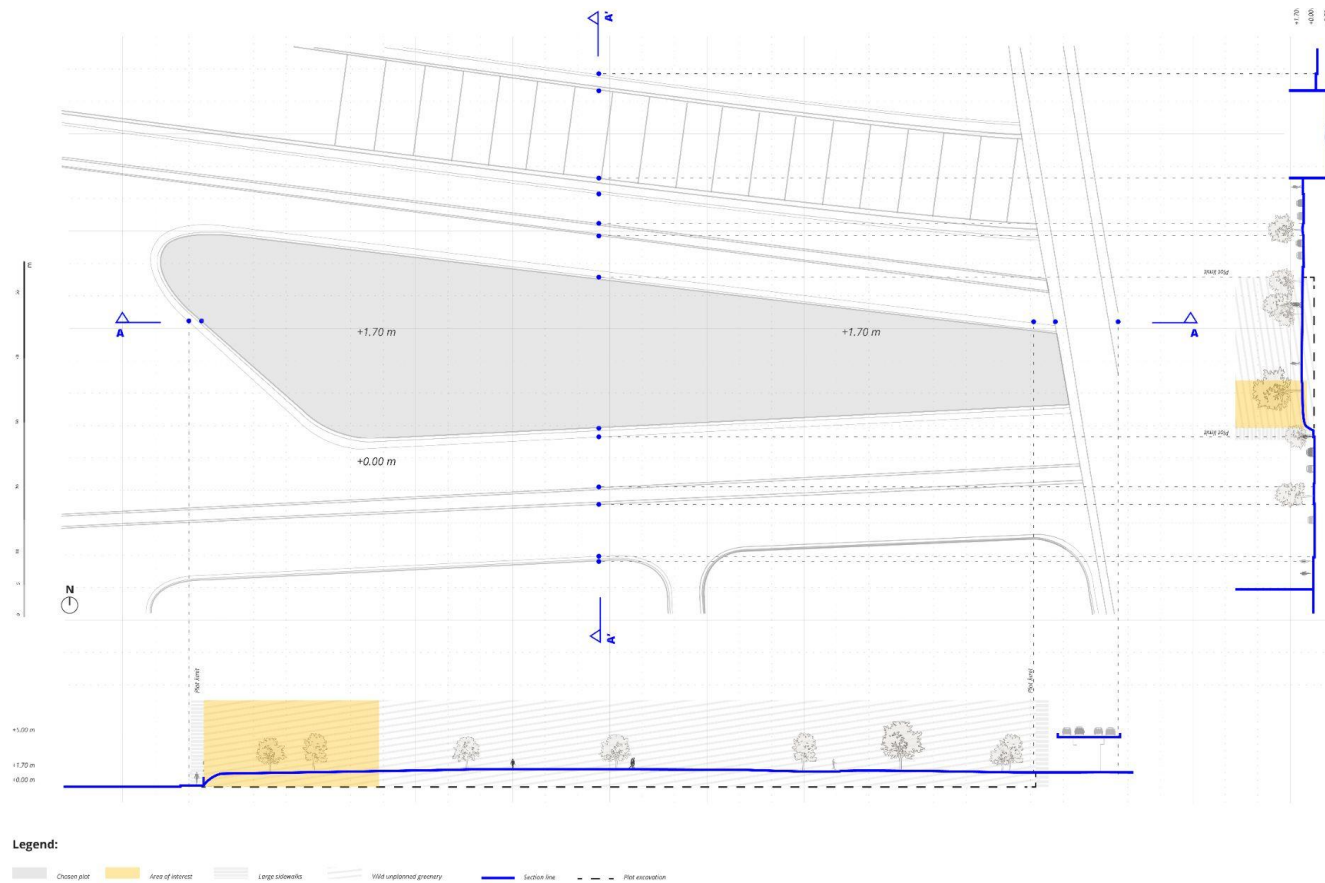


- Plot of intervention**
- Social-urban dynamics and issues**
 - Uneven condensation of community
 - Cultural exchanges/ communal co-habitation
 - Main vehicular/ social flows and exchanges
 - Non-porous area/ lack of exchange with surroundings
 - Compilation/ concentration of trash along Nahr Beirut
 - Slow/ inactive concentration in business area
 - Work flow/ activity of laborers
 - Social/ leisure flow
- Sectarian behavior and segregation creating a dispatched urban fabric**
 - Palestinians- Kurds- Armenians- Maronites- Shia
 - Armenian Christians
 - Armenian Christians- Maronites
 - 90% Armenian Christians- 10% Shia Muslims
 - Syrian refugees of war
- Urban junk spaces**
 - Abandoned business centers
- Reading(s) of the area**
 - Intended division and reading by intervention
 - How the city is being used currently/ division by behavior- urban infrastructure
 - Current sectarian division
- City by foot**
 - Itinerary by foot taken by urbanists
 - 1 1.5 km/ 23 minutes walking distance
 - 2 0.8 km/ 12 minutes walking distance
 - 3 0.55 km/ 19 minutes walking distance
- Landmarks as urban signs of navigation**
 - 1 Forum de Beyrouth
 - 2 Starbucks Mar Mikhael
 - 3 Bank of Beirut/ Lebanese Flag
 - 1 Porsche Dealership
 - 2 Armenian Martyrs' Roundabout
 - 3 Mano Basturma
- Military presence**
 - Army bases- residences
 - Army checkpoints



Regional Map

The Urbanists and Environmentalists superimposed their architectural and social behavior-related findings onto the geography as well. It allowed them to spot the plot of intervention out of a selection of interesting sites.



Plot Selection

The selected plot for intervention was redrawn, and it acts as an updated and detailed plan in comparison to the one provided by the state. This document is downloadable and usable. The 3d scan is also a public document that can be used to get a different visualization of the plot.



Town hall 1

The collective discussion between all working group members and advisors had many takeaways, and the most important one was regarding future prospects. Now that the portrait is clearer, what types of interventions can be injected?



Privatizing public streets size in 15cm x 10cm

Location: 33.893948, 35.538098

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A public street transformed into shop extension and private parking. The business owner claims to be entitled to the space in front of the shop.



Communal Resting Place size in 16cm x 11cm

Location: 33.902747, 35.531183

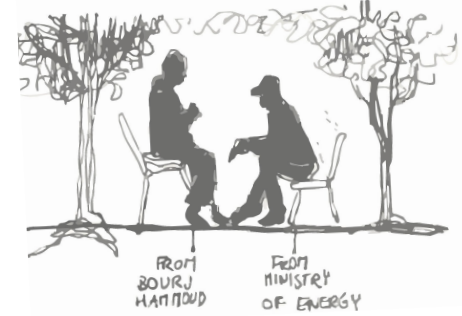
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An communal resting place done by a private company for the civilians, takes a portion of the sidewalk.

Joining Interventions

Many urban informalities showed positive contributions. These are attempts to achieve healing: extra space, planting, walkability, parking, sanitation... The two essentials were communal spaces, and storage/ disposal spaces.

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- 01 to Transit
- 02 to Socialize
- 03 to Buy
- 04 to Power
- 05 to Play
- 06 to Wait
- 07 to Rest
- 08 to Sell



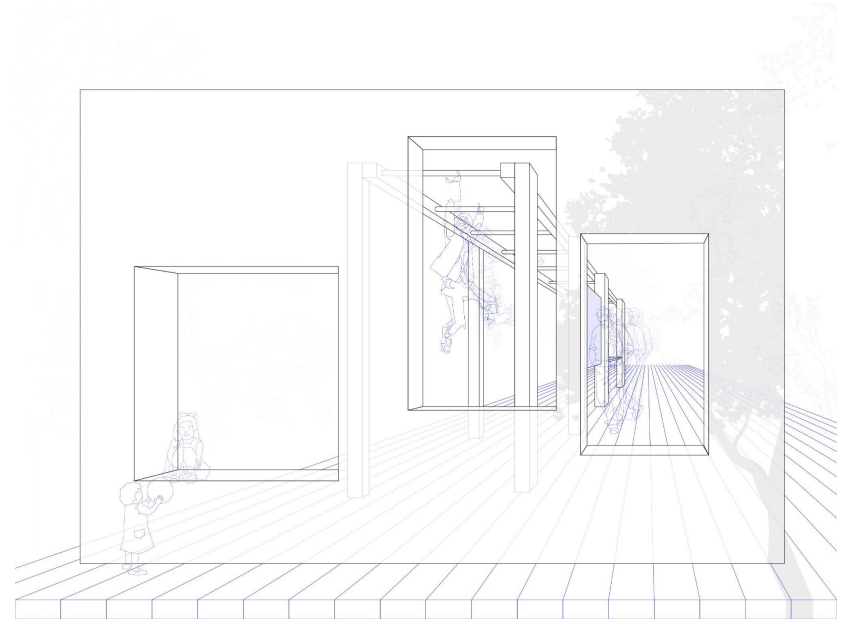
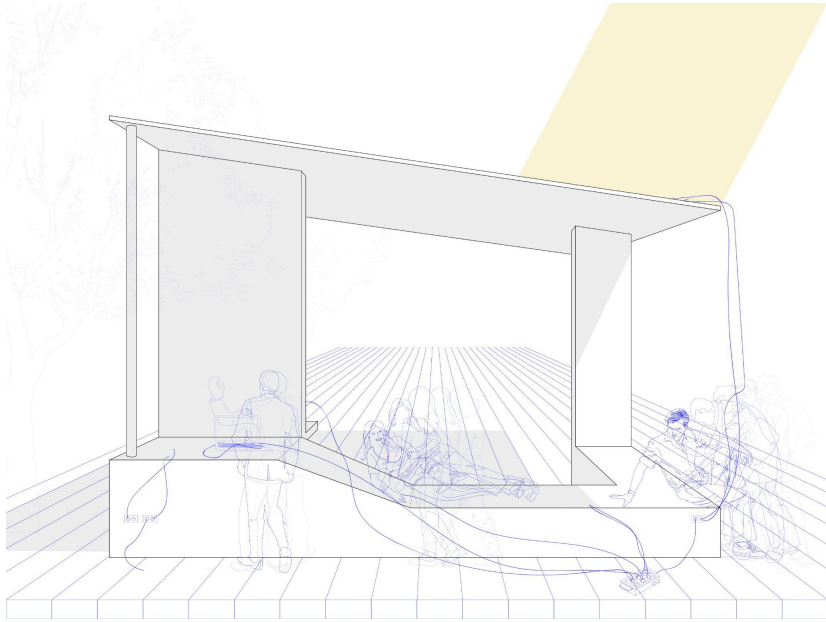
Program of Civic Reform Proposal

The demands and end users were tabulated and crossed to each other in order to set guidelines for a potential civic intervention.



Dergelet, 2020

Wifi was installed in 35 public spaces in Cuba. The outcome of this injection to public spaces gathered a lot of people to common areas and gave significance to the public realm. The ambition is quite similar.



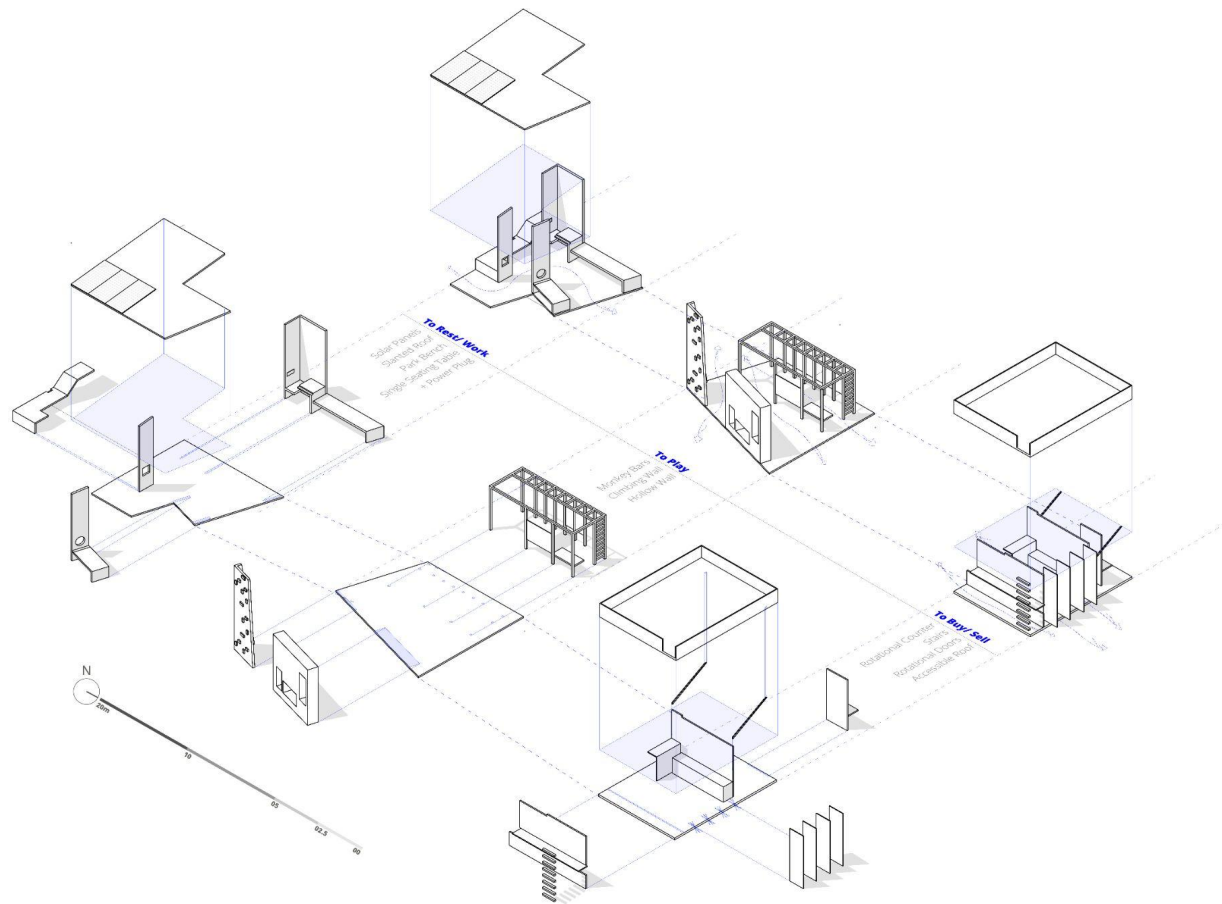
Photomontages

The sketches transformed to scenarios. The three pillars of the intervention[s] should align with resting/ playing + trading/ 'newelne' + powering/ charging/ wifi. A self-sufficient capsule that merges the three scenarios is intended to tap into the necessary sociopolitical healing.



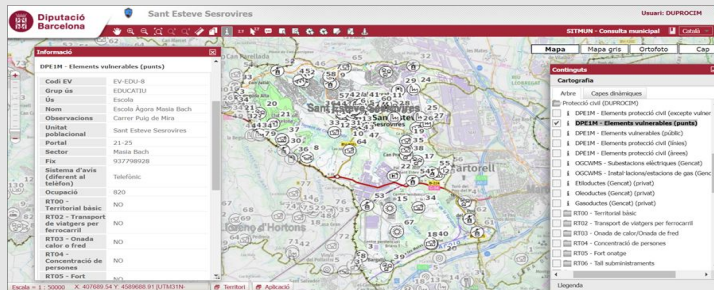
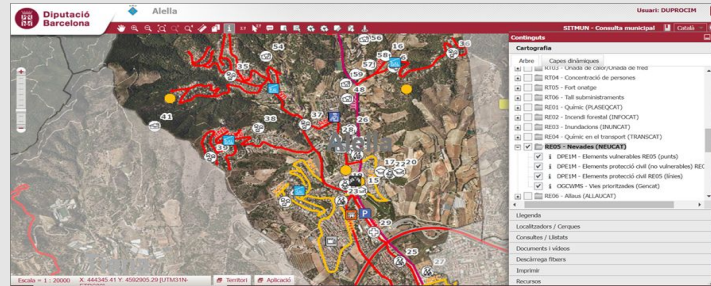
Town hall 2

However, since there are many geolocations that were pinned as identically vulnerable, and could benefit from some of these scenarios, if not all, it is necessary to see the capsule as one injection within a series. This was a very important takeaway from the second town hall discussion.



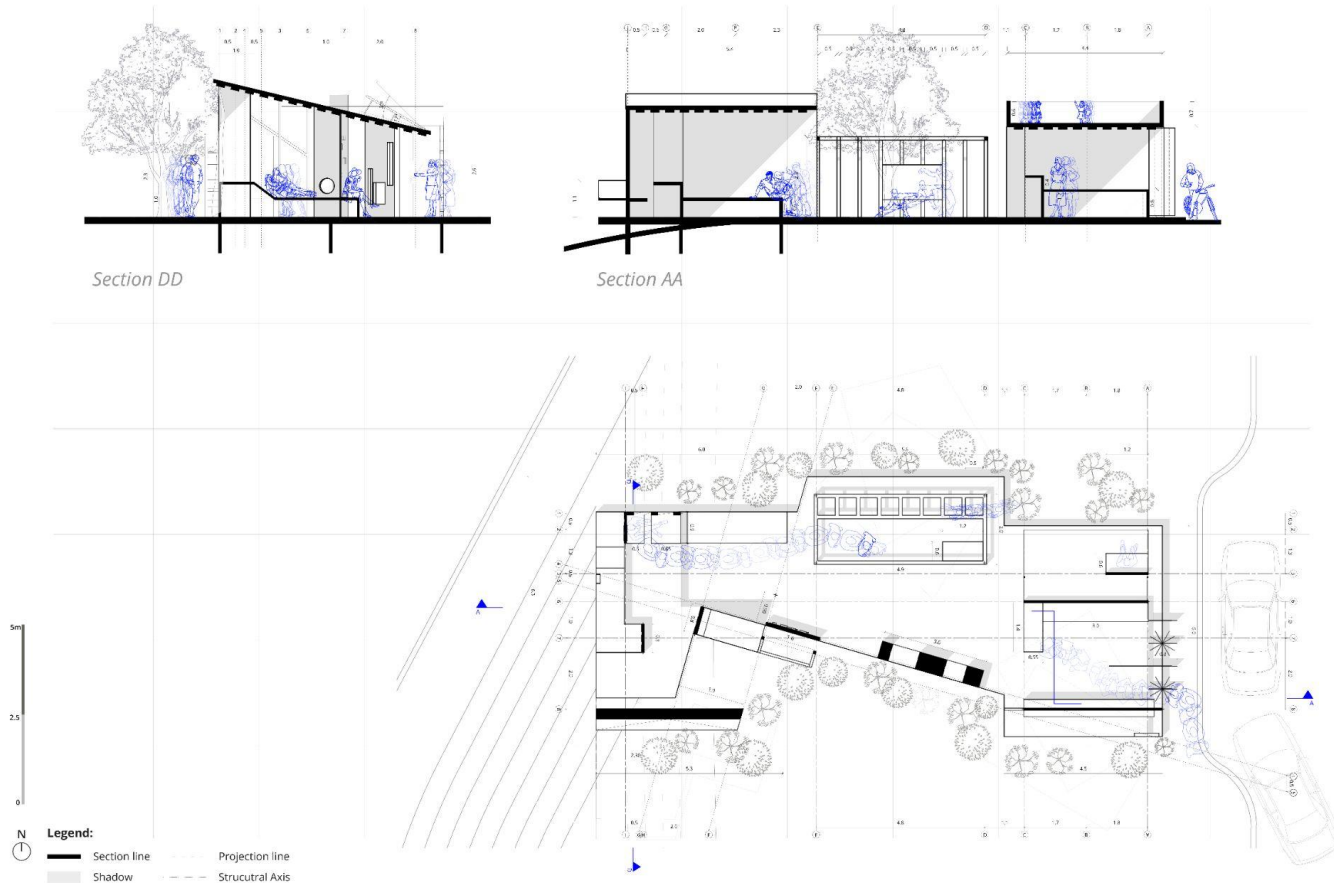
Exploded Isometric

The capsule can be fragmented into three distinct installations, each accommodating for one of the previously mentioned scenarios, and can be merged into one capsule that hosts all.



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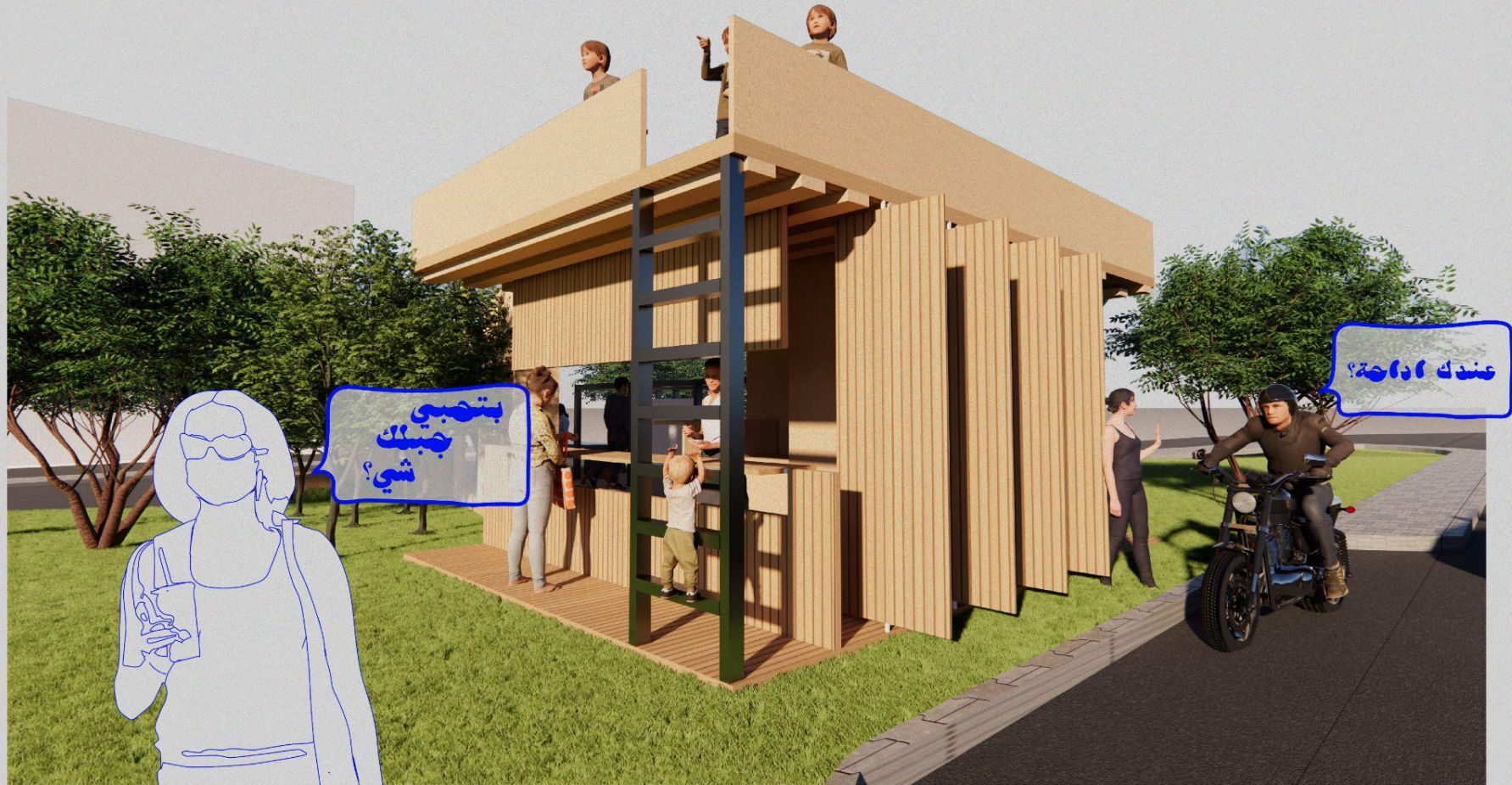
This technique of connecting an urban situation to a geolocation is familiar to some municipalities in Catalunya, Spain. Municipal Civil Protection encourages participatory governance to advance the action towards reform while including the residents and stakeholders.



Architectural Drawing of Civic Reform Proposal

The civic reform proposal was also proposed to the focus group. It included the architectural drawings of the capsule. These drawings are some of the drawings that are to be submitted to a separate construction-oriented grant. They were shared with the locals to convey the level of seriousness of the project.

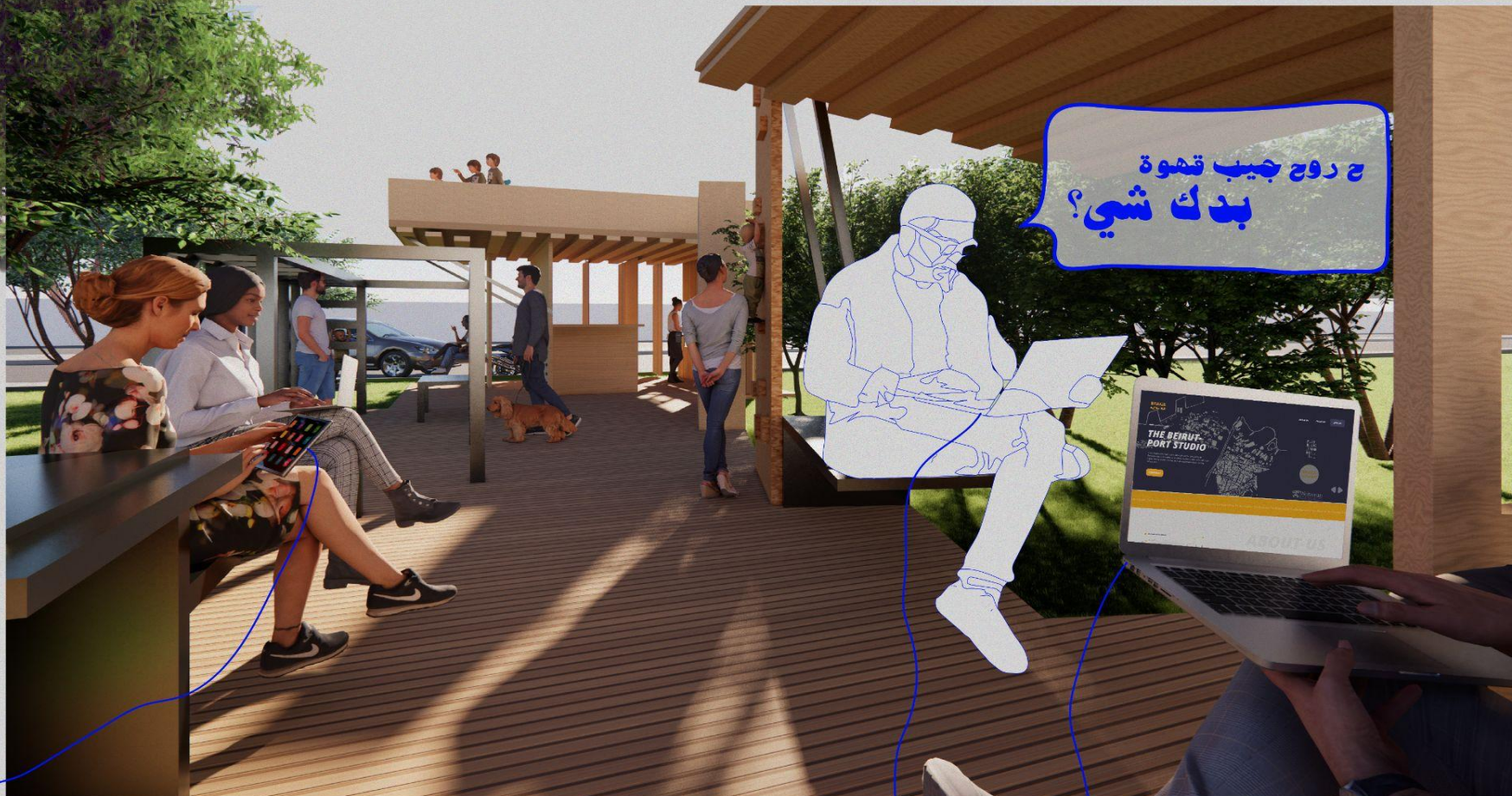




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جيبك
شي؟

عندك اداة؟

ح روح جيب قهوة
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Reflection

Despite their perception of freshness, contextuality, and practicality of Studio Madane's proposal, residents still rendered them as another vision that is far from manifestation due to the multitude of tangible and intangible obstacles. Even if the proposed change was applied, it does not seem to have the competence to generate the necessary reset in people's political choices; whereas, there was room for hope that several layers of applied change could alter people's affiliations.

In this hands-on project, Studio Madane has developed the concept notes for a digital reform project and a civic reform project that are scalable and have both short and long term impact on our communities. There is a great idea regarding which citizen-centered, healing, and pragmatic direction should be taken, which is why the project is open to extension, especially in the application of the two reform proposals.

Lebanese Clientelism

As much as people are suffocating from their reality, they have also managed to take advantage of the condition to benefit themselves in whichever way they can. While some are bartering expensive tires for military protection, others are profiting financially. This reality cements the crises because of lifelines tied to it. It emphasizes the necessity of institutional reform that branches from socio political, and civic reform works in parallel.



[L'orient Le Jour](#)



[Conversas, Barcelona](#)



[Friedrich Naumann Foundation](#)

Publications about BRPI

The approach towards this study is a pilot that can be implemented in different contexts to retrieve answers to the same question. This project was conducted by Studio Madane's multidisciplinary approach towards socio-political reform, meaning the job happened transversely across distinct fields of work and craft. This generated diverse outcomes. The project was acknowledged by a couple media platforms and exhibited in Barcelona, Spain.