• Paper / Proposal Title:
Experiencing collective values in an online world through design-based partnerships

• Author(s) Name:
Carles Martinez-Almoyna Gual

• University or Company Affiliation:
Victoria University of Wellington

• Abstract (300 words):
Contemporary societies risk inequality, disintegration and segregation due to a complex array of social changes that have been occurring over the last few decades. These changes include the loss of shared values, changes in how individuals interact and get together, and new practices relating to participation and decision-making. While these changes offer new opportunities for innovation, they also threaten to generate division in diverse and complex societies. Within this context, University has the opportunity to expand its social responsibility by affirming that teaching and research can contribute to redressing social inequality, disintegration and segregation.

University can empower diverse groups of individuals by partnering communities and local governments, facilitating collective experiences, developing self-management, and activating bottom-up approaches to decision making. University can facilitate learning new ways of understanding citizenship by promoting participatory processes through partnerships. Partnerships open teaching and research to wider horizons, enabling experience of practice-based education by developing real projects. Students can begin to develop skills relevant in practice and frame professional
identities underpinned by civic engagement and social responsibility, whilst helping communities understand and improve their conditions.

This paper aims to assess the capacity of design-based partnerships to shape collective values when undertaking a change in a physical environment. From within the framework of an Action Research methodology, different partnerships have informed this paper. The projects were facilitated by communities and local governments in New Zealand and were developed within design courses of landscape architecture. Reflections show that partnerships enable civic engagement through participatory processes. They are useful instruments for helping communities transform their physical environment. But partnerships are also essential tools for experiencing civic learning and for creating a sense of empowerment – a feeling that when working together, important changes can happen.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Carles Martinez-Almoyna is a Spanish architect and landscape architect graduated from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC). Originally from Palma de Mallorca, he studied and lived in Barcelona for more than twenty years, working essentially as a practitioner on a large variety of projects that range from interior design, architecture, urban design to landscape architecture.

The multidisciplinary approach to landscape architecture that he has developed has been complemented over the last years with the academic work. In 2014 Carles moved to Wellington, New Zealand to teach Landscape Architecture at the School of Architecture of Victoria University of Wellington.

Carles is interested in research that finds links between practice and academia. During these years in New Zealand, he has focused his research around how to engage with different communities to produce knowledge that can be socially useful. He explores partnerships with communities and local governments, developing practice-based research at University. Following action research methodologies and using participatory processes, Carles fosters change in the physical environment by implementing small scale/temporary projects. He is particularly interested in analysing the impact of those interventions in order to gather knowledge that could be applied to future projects.