Training future architects through professional responsibility. Work with real cases in the master's degree in architecture at ETSAV.

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Since 2015 Spanish schools of architecture have converted the former Final Degree Project into a one-year enabling master's degree. In this context, the Vallès School of Architecture has proposed a pedagogical model focused on the concept of responsibility, a commitment to the evident social and ecological global challenges affecting the outskirts of Barcelona city. Barcelona’s demographic pressure, its difficult access to housing, the increase in air pollution and the restrictions of the recent Covid-19 confinement have caused a 'back-to-the-land' movement to other peripheral territories. According to this reality, this contribution will explore how the course transfers responsibility to the students to come up with an executable design result thanks to three main goals:

First, open process: the studio expresses how design is not an autonomous task but a process of accumulating information, interests and availability that the architect/planner has been able to capture. Negotiation, conflict mediation, collaboration, the idea of limit and the time scale come in handy for a design process based on the uncertainty of the economic and environmental crises we are living through.

Second, social return: the service-learning method is applied to local demands. Through participatory action research the stakeholders involved become aware of urgent
problems in their living environment. The future architects reflect on managing inclusion and diversity in the decision-making process.

And third, physical experimentation: some proposals to be shown are built thanks to the exercise of searching for funding. This corresponds to the students so that they understand feasibility constritions together with the potential of an economy based on scarcity of means.

By a series of diagrams, images of the process and results, the contribution will present how this pedagogical structure takes form through the most common topics emerged. Future challenges and internal contradictions will serve to conclude.

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Marta Serra is a PhD Architect, researcher and full-time lecturer in the Department of Theory and History of Architecture at the Vallès School of Architecture, Polytechnic University of Catalonia – Barcelona Tech. She’s Serra Húnter Fellow and has been teaching since 2009. She belongs to the research group Architecture, City and Culture. Her field of study is based on theory, history and practice of participatory design, the community dimension of architecture and urbanism. She explores power relations and the social responsibility of the architect within the design process and the autonomy of the user. Her dissertation was awarded cum laude 2014 with European Mention and it includes public space politics, creative spatial practices and critical historiography on contemporary urban studies. In education, she works through Participatory Action Research and Service-Learning. She teaches at the Masters in Architecture since 2015 and coordinates the theoretical subject in history Architecture and City for second year BA students.

She has published in national and international journals and lectured at the Illinois Architecture Study Abroad Program among others. She has been co-founder of the co-op Cíclica [space, community, ecology], where she has run community-based projects awarded by Bauwelt, Zumtobel and European Prize for Urban Public Space.

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professional activity as an architect in collaboration with other architects. In 2017 he won
the FAD architecture awards (Spain) in the category of ephemeral architecture for an
installation in the Mies Van der Rohe Barcelona pavilion.

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