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Imagining cultures of cooperation: universities networking to face the new development challenges

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VERNACULAR APPROACH TO ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IN A DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION EXPERIENCE IN SOME INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OF MEXICO

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Archintorno is a non-profit organization of young architects based in Naples, that since 2005 has undertaken initiatives for development cooperation with indigenous communities in the state of Oaxaca Mexico, involving universities, associations, local government and professionals in Italy and abroad. The association's projects rely on a didactic format, internationally known as Design-Build Studio, according to which students of the faculties of Architecture and Engineering are accompanied to the design and self-construction of buildings in developing contexts.

Our projects aim to use local materials and resources through low-cost technologies, repeatable, appropriate to local climate, social and cultural context. The design choices arise from a careful, participatory analysis of lifestyles, housing culture and local construction techniques. The cultural exchange between students and local people also plays a no less importance role. In the debate about the different approaches to architectural design in international cooperation, therefore, the experience of Archintorno stands in close continuity with the local vernacular culture.

Through the analysis of the three experiences of cooperation Archintorno in Mexico, this article presents an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed approach. The topics discussed, left as open questions to the scientific debate and to this sector operators, cover forms of participation and capacity building, the project's impact on the local community in terms of economic, socio-cultural, as well as environmental and landscape, the transposal of technological and architectural innovations.