Proximity. Learning spaces in dialogic relationship with the context

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The following contribution reflects on the design of small-and-medium-scale educational spaces as a situated practice, understanding and interpreting the specificities of context by exploring proximity, in its various forms, as a design principle.
This investigation, part of a broader doctoral research project addressing the design of innovative school spaces in relation to their place, identifies and analyzes three virtuous case studies that, on a small scale, reflect different qualitative intervention experiences in a sensitive dialogue with the context. The research structure, therefore, methodologically presents a comparative analysis of recent interventions in learning spaces which, in their different spatial configurations, respond and interact with contextual characteristics and variations in proximity: from a new small-scale intervention, to one for the renovation of the existing, up to a system of new, specific, repeated interventions in the urban context. Thus, these educational spaces become opportunities for architectural, urban, and social reactivation and reconnection. The analysis, through similarities and differences, aims to highlight architectural design as a significant response to the construction of dialogical relationships and the interaction between contextual forces and spatial configurations, between interpretation and adaptation, between spatial and social reconnections.
The cases also examine how learning spaces can be a condition of innovation even in calibrated, measured interventions that enhance the available starting conditions, from a perspective of design opportunities and generative resources of spatial and social processes. This investigation, as in the doctoral research, aims to identify best design practices for school architecture and learning spaces to contribute to the development of the Guidelines for the Iscol@ program of the Sardinia Region.