

From macro goals to micro sites: scaling SDGs as site-specific pedagogical tools in architectural education

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In the millennium, architectural education, faced with multiple global crises and inequalities, is obliged to adapt its traditional frameworks and rigid institutional methods to local realities. This study discusses the re-imagining of architectural education not merely as a pedagogy that transmits knowledge, but as one that seeks a “fitting” in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In the process of transforming site-specific interventions at the micro, meso, and macro scales amid multiple crises, the “rediscovery of the right measure” should be considered a fundamental pedagogical threshold. This research aims to highlight how flexible, informal learning practices, which can be defined as “in-forms,” reintegrate into architectural education through relationships with local actors and sustainability-based expectations. In this context, it is argued that the SDGs, in addition to being theoretical keywords added to the curriculum, are positioned as tools for developing site-specific interventions in applied courses. Methodologically, this study maps contemporary architectural projects against the UN SDGs using a comparative case-study analysis. These cases are categorized according to a multi-scale framework to evaluate their ‘fitting’ capacity and effectiveness in generating local solutions. By synthesizing these results, the study proposes a pedagogical matrix for site-specific design interventions. Drawing on examples ranging from infrastructure solutions developed in resource-constrained contexts to social interventions within existing urban fabrics, this study discusses how architectural design can generate social, ecological, and economic values in a site-specific and appropriate scale. Ultimately, this paper presents a model that aims to train architecture students not only as aesthetic designers of spaces, buildings, and products, but also as harmonious and sociable actors who listen to the needs of the local context and generate solutions.