

Reflection.

P4 – Landscape Architecture Track
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This document represented a reflection of the graduation project: "BREATHE - Redefining a zone of informal settlement for Ho Chi Minh City" through the process, outcome and the relationships to other related fields. The discussion will be analyzed from the lesson learned, trial and error in different aspects and further elaborated on the future development of the project.

Reflecting through the process

- **The relationship between research and design**

The project aims to propose an alternative way for the informal settlement. It is strongly required an understanding of the context and cultural living of people while offering a new approach back to the context. By reviewing the process from the beginning to the outcome, the project has been created through two essential processes which are research and design. In different stages, one method will be used more often than another, but the two methods always collaborate.

The analysis stage has been done mostly by research in which the design is used as a framework to limit the scope of analysis. On the other hand, during the design stage, the design has been implemented by using the research as a guideline to frame the design. Throughout the process, the interactions between research and design were implemented; it has been tested and evaluated several times to acquire the most integral outcome. Therefore, the relationship between research and design is strongly represented in the process of this graduation project. It is part of one another, and it is hardly operated in separation.

- **Limitation of the project**

Throughout the process, the most difficulty found in the analysis process. Vietnam is a country governing by socialism, in which the data involved in the stability of the country will hardly be published. The updated map of the critical data, such as infrastructure, settlement and geographical map, has been provided only in image form of data.

More importantly, as the essence of the project involved in the "informality," the official data related to the informal community was limited and most of the physical data have not been documented. As a consequence, the accessibility to the community during the site visit was also one of the complications. Not all of the communities were allowing the outsider to enter and, in some case, taking photo was restricted.

- **The Ethical issues and Dilemmas encountered in doing the project**

Social segregation and human right have been concerned as a crucial aspect of the project. The zone of informal settlement is one of the residential areas in which it represented the cultural value of the Vietnamese community and the water. The design proposal offered an alternative way of living to the community in order to provide a better living quality to the informal settler. On the other hand, the design also attempted to change the perception of the informal settlement. The approach of social segregation and perceived them as the outsider of the city need to be redefined. Furthermore, the design also concerned the ethical issue from the perspective of the informal settler. As it has been proposed to be accessible by the public, but the privacy of the community will have remained.

Reflecting through the relationship to the Flowscapes studio

- The project is part of the Flowscapes studio, the graduation studio of the MSc Landscape Architecture. The studio offered a various approach in landscape design included landscape as infrastructure, green and blue structure, landscape and urban development and landscape as ecology. The studio is expected an ultimate goal to create a better environment for the society in the form of different flow in the landscape. As a result, this graduation project has created various flows to society. It showed the notion of landscape architecture as a living system that improves the quality of water and quality of life for people.

Reflecting through the outcome

- Relation of project outcome and research question

The proposed design strategy acted as landscape acupuncture which not only upgraded the problematic area as an informal settlement but also improved the environmental quality to the city. Therefore, the design has answered the initial intention through the aspect of sociology, ecology, and landscape architectonic design. The crucial part is the use of a small-scale intervention in which the 3x6 meters of the small house has revived into the element of the landscape living machine. This represented that design has been explored through different scales, and every scale has been carefully connected as one complete system.

However, with the limitation of time and travel distance, there are several issues that the project can explore further. The first one is in the large-scale approach; the design has been proposed under the criteria of Ho Chi Minh City's culture which seemed to be relatively specific to the site. The design intervention could be explored further to be applicable to the other area in South East Asia. This would create more alternative to the design intervention and enhance the life of local communities in a different context.

Another approach is the idea of participatory design; the idea of the local community can enrich the programs of the intervention. The next step could be the process of design development through the approach of informal settler. The opportunity to discuss the design proposal to people who involved in the plan would bring about a more solid social strategy.