

Daily newspaper „Danas“

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News about Urban Incubator: Belgrade

Our future visions for Savamala

Savamala is a forgotten city-quarter, rundown and deserted, but rich of exhaust fumes of countless heavy trucks which are the only regulars to Savamala. Recently, though, this Belgrade quarter has developed to a meeting point for artists from the whole of Europe who in a joined effort try to bring back the former glory to the streets of Savamala.

Together with the residents of the Savamala quarter and other citizens of Belgrade they are looking for answers to the most difficult question of all: namely, how the future of the oldest of the modern city quarters of the Serbian capital is to be shaped. It is exactly this question that the independent online-platform for urban development, "NextSavamala", deals with as part of the Urban Incubator: Belgrade project. Their aim is to design together with Savamala residents a vision for their city quarter and thus to enable them to think about and actively contribute to the future of their neighbourhood.

On the website www.nextsavamala.net all interested citizens can point out their own vision for Savamala which would then be evaluated by other visitors of the webpage. Thus, there are proposals to chance Savamala into an oasis, into a pedestrian zone, or into a center for alternative cultural life including many artists' studios, workshops, and pubs with a good and affordable menu. Another idea, collected on the NextSavamala portal, was to establish a green park with open-air stages, bicycle lanes and fitness parcours where arts festivals, performances, and other events can take place. One idea not to be left out: one Belgrade lady suggested to turn Savamala into a kind of "land of milk and honey" where to spend "quality time", and where, at the same time, interesting business offers would create some nice turnovers. In Savamala, according to some contributions to the online survey, a solution to another problem could be found: as there are numerous vacant accommodations, there are some suggestions as to develop this city quarter on the right banks of river Sava into a modern center for the preservation of former craftsmanship which used to flourish in Savamala.

Those visions for the future of Savamala on nextsavamala.net obviously are not only numerous, but also extremely heterogeneous. The development to a monotonous city quarter lacking character due to skyscrapers, office buildings and shopping malls seem not desirable at all. After collecting all ideas and workshops where to exchange and debate them, the results will be published in a book and be ceremoniously handed over to the city parliament of Belgrade.

Last but not least, we would like to remind everybody that this unique project titled Urban Incubator: Belgrade lasts from March until November 2013 and aims at re-vitalizing the neglected Savamala quarter.

During this time, many artists, architects, and activists will live and work in this neighbourhood in order to contribute, through their activities ideas, and events to a better future. Initiated by the Goethe-Institut Belgrade, supported by the City of Belgrade and Savski Venac Municipality, the German cultural institute is also organizing the project.

Workshops for kids

Pupils of Isidora-Sekulić primary school are preparing their own future visions for Savamala – from small formats like paintings or drawings, they will re-decorate the school´s inner walls on May 27th. Guided by Ilija Lazarević and Katarina Atanasković, both of them members of the local NextSavamala-Team active as part of the Urban Incubator project, 15 pupils from third and fourth grades each will participate in a two-part workshop. During the first workshop phase, the pupils made small drawing on paper or carton which then, in the second phase, will be copied onto the inner walls of their school yard. Drawings and murals will be photographed and scanned in order to record and document the results of the Nextsavamala project for the future.

Text: N.P.

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