Enabling food distribution
Designing tables for Restos du Coeur

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Promoter(s).
Restos (restaurants) du cœur, ENSCI-Les Ateliers/Urban Act

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Aknowledgements.
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Context.

Les Restos du coeur is a charity which distributes food packages and hot meals to the needy in the streets. Its aim is to fight social marginalisation. The association is organized within locally based organisations that can be found throughout the French regional network.
The project.
With the help of an architectural firm and of volunteers from ENSCI/Les Ateliers, a group of students was brought to design a new concept of table to enable the food distribution in a more convenient way. The project brief was designed and tested on site throughout the project.
The design process.

- March: brief, field research and participation in food distribution
- April: presentation of the requirements
- May: presentation of sketches and feedbacks from the community
- June: presentation and experimentation on site of 4 different prototypes
- June: selection of 1 prototype
The Restos du Coeur is entirely based on volunteers who are in charge of food distribution in each area and city. Volunteers were involved all along the project as user experts, co-designing the requirements and testing the prototypes on site.
Students took part in food distribution as a means of experiencing every step of the process, interaction and contact with beneficiaries. A group of volunteers was involved in the design process all the way to guide the students and enable the experiments on site.
On site food distribution shapes the streets and squares where it is temporarily installed. Its furniture and infrastructure has to blend with the urban environment: sustainability, durability and conviviality in the street. Therefore tables have to be easy to handle, to set up and to wash.
Actively fighting against a huge housing problem, Restos du coeur enables food distribution and consumption in the street for everyone who needs it. Local volunteer teams collect the surplus products on site, set up and operate the distribution.

Production, Distribution and Consumption

free food distribution for people in need using surplus products

Actively fighting against a huge housing problem, Restos du coeur enables food distribution and consumption in the street for everyone who needs it. Local volunteer teams collect the surplus products on site, set up and operate the distribution.
By experiencing the distribution themselves, students were able to develop 4 different prototypes of tables tested on site. A core team of volunteers gave feedback at every step of the development.
Visualisations, requirement and feedback records were the main tools developed to share the students proposals with the volunteers on site. Feedback records were used in several distribution spots.
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