

ARC•PEACE and ASF-Int work together

In 2005 ARC•PEACE decided to join International *Architecture Sans Frontières* (ASF-Int). We found that the ASF-Int platform, the Hasselt Charter, has many features in common with the ARC•PEACE Charter. Both documents emphasise architects' social responsibility. In fact the Hasselt Charter is more specific than ours when it comes to ethical professionalism, urban inclusion and working with disadvantaged communities. The ARC•PEACE Charter is more specific about the need to reduce arms of mass destruction, but this does not constitute a conflict with the Hasselt Charter, which includes demands for peace building, international solidarity etc.

ARC•PEACE actively behind ASF-Int

Since ARC•PEACE decided to sign the Hasselt Charter we have been quite active in ASF-Int. Our veteran member Stephan Hawranick, living in Paris, joined the French ASF member *Architecture et Développement* and became its secretary. He also assisted in the coordination of ASF-Int matters before a formal secretariat was formed in 2007. Stephan and the undersigned were most active in arranging the joint presentation of ASF-Int and ARC•PEACE at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in June 2006, an event that attracted more than 100 visitors. We also worked actively in preparing the ASF Constitution, which was adopted at the constituent General Assembly meeting in Belgium, April 2007.

On behalf of ARC•PEACE the undersigned was instrumental in preparing the General Assembly meeting of ASF-Int. ARC•PEACE's long experience has been of great value for the establishment of ASF-Int as a formal organisation. This fact probably contributed to me being elected secretary of ASF-Int. In this capacity I have participated actively in working out procedures for membership registration, for disseminating information to members, for establishing the first budget of ASF-Int, for building up archives, for improving the website, and for outlining principles for cooperation with other organisations.



Participants in the Constituent meeting in Hasselt, Belgium, April 2007, representing the 15 organisations that founded Architecture Sans Frontières (ASF Int).

ARC•PEACE and ASF-Int supplement each other

One weakness of ARC•PEACE is the lack of concrete actions among many of our members. Here ASF-Int has a strength from which we can benefit. Almost all the ASF members work with concrete design and building projects. On the other hand ASF-Int needs to involve itself more in public debate about ethical issues. Perhaps ASF-Int can learn something from ARC•PEACE in this field?

One may note that ARC•PEACE has members in countries where ASF-Int has no members (except India and the UK) and vice versa. This constitutes an additional reason for our two organisations to cooperate. ARC•PEACE members in Bolivia, Cuba, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Sudan may fulfil functions of ASF-Int. Persons who want to join ARC•PEACE in countries where we do not have chapters, may be referred to ASF member organisations (e.g. Brazil, Congo, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden). In this way we may be stronger by working together.

Dick Urban Vestbro

This issue of the Newsletter has been edited by Dick Urban Vestbro with support from Osman El Kheir. The last issue was alternatively called no 19 and no 20. We consider it to be no 20 since no 19 (of 2004) was in fact made but never published. Therefore we decided to call this the no 21.

Address of ARC•PEACE

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Architect for Peace Australia shows the way

One of ARC•PEACE's youngest members is *Architects for Peace Australia*. It was formally founded in February 2003. One of the most active members is its founder *Beatriz Maturana*. She came as a political refugee from Chile to Australia in 1987. Earlier this year she visited Stockholm. She then told the story of **arch-peace**.

Beatriz was appalled by the US invasion of Iraq following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre 11 September 2001, an attack in which Iraq was not involved. In its support for the Iraq war the Australian government used expert arguments. Beatriz thought that **arch-peace** should also start from a position of expertise. Architects, planners and engineers are experts on cities, she thought.



Beatriz Maturana in Stockholm

A question of lifestyle

Beatriz says that we as professionals are requested to solve symptoms rather than the root causes of today's problems. Wars are symptoms of deeper conflicts such a difference of lifestyles. Peace is not only absence of war, but should also encompass the ability to avoid conflicts. Peace is a result of a struggle. It is difficult to build trust between governments. It may be easier if trust is first built between people.

Professionals are in a good position to act internationally to this effect.

- We must question our lifestyles. What is our architecture doing socially, environmentally, economically? Our cities are unsustainable in many ways. I do not maintain that arch-peace has all the answers, but we are raising important questions and encourage public debate. At the schools we are taught to deal with aesthetics and not politics, but aesthetics at the expense of critical thinking IS politics.

Colleagues in different part of the world should work together for a common interest, peace, social justice and ecological sustainability **arch-peace** has a network covering many countries. In fact one third of the members are from outside Australia.

Environmental refugees

Beatriz says that there are also lots of problems to address in Australia. This country has one of the highest per capita productions of greenhouse gases in the world. Thus Australia is strongly contributing to disasters of the kind Tuvalu is experiencing. The country of Tuvalu in the Pacific is virtually sinking into the water because of the raising sea. Despite this, the government of Australia has declared that Australia will not receive this new wave of environmental refugees.

arch-peace has no office. Money is raised through membership donations. The membership fee is 35 Australian

dollars a year (USD 25) or \$190 for businesses. The network comprises more than 300 persons, but paying members are only about 70.

arch-peace sees itself as an umbrella organisation. Members are encouraged to propose and run projects that represent their areas of interest and expertise and that fall within the principles and goals of the organisation. This is how **arch-peace** now has diverse activities and forms of interaction, from the monthly forum, to the virtual gallery (studio+space), news, editorial, discussions, *Pro Bono* and a yearly forum event.

Free of charge services

arch-peace has built up a *Pro Bono* service for clients who need professional assistance but cannot afford architect fees. *Pro Bono* is a formal body lead by a group appointed by **arch-peace** and assigned with the task to channel requests for support to appropriate consultants. If the request is considered socially motivated it is channelled to one of the listed architect offices, which will then carry out the design free of charge.

During her visit in Stockholm Beatriz also held a seminar arranged by ASF-Sweden. She spoke on the theme of how to make peaceful cities.

Dick Urban Vestbro

New ARC•PEACE website and digital library produced by Leonardo students

In 2005 ARC•PEACE was invited by ASF-Italy to be part of a program for recently graduated students interested in working as interns in the ARC•PEACE office. With money

from the Leonardo program of the European Union ARC•PEACE thus received three young Italian architects for a period of four months starting in March this year. During their stay they

have done a course on Third World Housing, scanned at least 500 slides from slums in various parts of the world, and made a new updated website of ARC•PEACE.



Elisa Ceria



Anna Zocco

ARC•PEACE archives

The archives of the Stockholm office of ARC•PEACE now comprise 220 digital pictures and documents from all our meetings. Our publications are out of print, but will soon be available in pdf format for downloading.

Environmental design with ARC•PEACE Sudan

With the oil industry steadily growing, and peace in the South restored, Sudan becomes attractive to foreign investments - although Darfur lingers as a black shadow over the political climate. Enjoying substantial natural resources and a strategic setting, Sudan has long been promised an economic boom. However, political conflict and lack of infrastructure have impeded development. What can ARC•PEACE Sudan do in this situation?

Khartoum, the capital at the confluence of the White and Blue Niles, today experiences a rapid urban transformation. In the absence of proper planning this may lead to chaos. The latest structure plan for the city was done in 1991 and has received only partial realization. No population census has been conducted since 1993. Services networks are insufficient and substandard.

Nonetheless, new projects of residential and business townships compete over empty spaces and encroach over green and underdeveloped areas. Relocation of the currently central airport will dispose for development an immense area of central land together with removing limitation on the neighbouring funnel area. Extensive water front areas witness feverish preparation for gated, self contained developments.

Environmental design required

Such projects express requirements of the new business and wealthy home owners. They feature imported architectural styles and concepts alien to the local context. They reflect little concern to the culture and the environment, physical or social.

Being located at the transitional zone between the desert and the savannah belt Khartoum was fated to an elongated north-south growth extension flanking the Nile. Given the city's grid-iron planning and the tropical climate, Khartoum buildings are exposed to intensive solar radiation most of the day. With overall glazed facades, the buildings are extensively provided with air-conditioning, which in turn requires excessive amounts of energy. Since the energy comes from oil Khartoum contributes more than necessary to the greenhouse effect.

Added to that, there is destruction of the natural habitat and depletion of green space. Concerns are also raised over possible intervention in the birds' sanctuary and natural *sunut* acacia forest close to Khartoum centre, and over the unguided increasing reclamation and embankments building.

The role of ARC•PEACE Sudan

Under such circumstances, it can be asked: what is the role of ARC•PEACE Sudan? Our organisation is relatively new with few members, mostly young grads. Nevertheless we have managed to acquire official status by acting as the design tool of the Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS).

ARC•PEACE Sudan is currently supervising construction of the Environment Club of SECS, which is expected to become a model for the whole Horn Region. The issue is to demonstrate the viability of context sensitive designs based on local materials and environmentally sound solutions. Previously ARC•PEACE Sudan has also been working on the design and execution of an eco-village, a project which was aborted when the government confiscated the land.

In a country afflicted by wars, desertification and poverty, there is no lack of tasks for our organisation. Our members are spread out over the professional scene occupying positions in universities, organisations working in the South or in Darfur, the private sector and others, making access to information and contacts easy. The foremost task, therefore, seems to be recruiting members, mobilizing students and young volunteers and establishing an organisational setup.

Osman El Kheir, ARC•PEACE Sudan



Osman El Kheir

View of Khartoum at the confluence of the Blue and White Niles. Here ARC•PEACE Sudan wants to contribute in the field of ecological design and nature preservation.

Earthquake safety in mountain regions

An earthquake of magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale devastated the Kangra region of Shimla state, India on 4 April 1905, killing over 20,000 persons and destroying over 100,000 buildings. This part of the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh is still today made up of poorly designed and constructed buildings stacked up on very steep slopes. Being in the high damage seismic risk zone of India, it is very vulnerable to earthquakes and landslides.

Schools are one of the vulnerable building types. There are a total of about 750 schools and 97,500 students enrolled in the Shimla district. Since no risk mitigation has been implemented in any school in the area school children have been at varying risk. In order to address this situation a project for increased school safety was carried out recently by a team called SEEDS.

Project Brief

Risks normally arise from three components: structural risk of building collapse, non structural risk of injuries from building content, and risk from erroneous human reactions. The project addressed risks at three levels: a) through structural retrofitting in selected schools, b) through non structural mitigation, and c) through awareness-raising.

Assessment of an existing structure is much more difficult than evaluation of a design on paper. Firstly, the construction of the structure is never exactly as per specifications. Secondly, the quality of the material deteriorates with time and the assessment of an existing structure becomes a time-dependent problem. A series of assessments, both rapid and detailed, is required to determine the condition of a building. The process of adding extra features in unsafe structures in order to improve their seismic resistance is termed "retrofitting". The project strategy for doing structural mitigation was as follows:

1. Rapid Visual Screening: Visual inspection of building exteriors to gather data on their behaviour in past earthquakes and preparing checklists to assess their adequacy to withstand earthquake forces and the need for detailed evaluation.

2. Simplified Vulnerability Assessment (SVA): Limited engineering analysis and calculations based on structural drawings or on site measurements, sizes and strength of lateral load resisting members with simplified analysis to estimate building drift.

3. Detailed Vulnerability Assessment (DVA): In situ strength estimation, computer modelling and rapid Visual Screening to carry out structural assessment of buildings. Selected unsafe buildings underwent detailed assessment and planning. Retrofitting work was then carried out for demonstration and training of local engineers and masons.

4. Retrofitting design of the school building: Preparation of detailed drawings and retrofitting designs with detailed drawings.

5. Implementation of the retrofitting design: Actual implementation of retrofitting work taking into consideration onsite safety measures for construction workers.

6. Training of local masons & engineers: Hands-on training for local masons and training of local engineers by the project team.

7. Preparation of guidelines for training: Establishing guidelines for retrofitting work and training of masons and engineers.

Implementation

The project started with an awareness campaign on school safety. Together with Christian Aid and the local administration SEEDS conducted safety activities with local schools. Activities peaked on 4 April 2005, the centenary day of the 1905 earthquake. A special radio program was aired on the need for earthquake safety. Retrofitting techniques were demonstrated through actual execution on public buildings. Local masons and government engineers were trained in the process. NGOs and the general public were oriented through the demonstration work and workshops. Mobile shake table demonstrations were conducted to show how low-cost retrofitting measures can make existing buildings more resilient to earthquakes.

Much of this work was based on the experiences of SEEDS in Gujarat after the 2001 earthquake. SEEDS teams from Gujarat came to Himachal Pradesh to conduct these activities and share experiences with local people. Since then the project got scaled up and received support from the European Commission for implementing retrofitting, non-structural mitigation and awareness activities across the district. UNCRD has also extended its support to the initiative under an international program on school safety.

The project has conducted surveys and is preparing detailed structural retrofitting plans for 20 selected schools, ten of which were retrofitted. In addition non-structural mitigation plans were implemented. The experience is used to create an awareness campaign that will address all 750 schools in the region, reaching out to about 97,500 students, 7,500 teachers and 200 local masons, engineers, officials and NGO workers.

Encouraged by positive results and widening support SEEDS is expanding its SCHOOL SAFETY program to include other disaster areas including the 2004 Asian tsunami affected areas and the recent tsunami affected areas of Indonesia.



Prof Bijayanand Misra, SEEDS India

Do you want to be the editor of the next issue of the Newsletter?

The newsletter should be produced according to a rotating scheme of responsibilities. Reply to dickurba@comhem.se.

Report from the NPT conference in New York 2005

As a representative of International ARC•PEACE, *Sven Thiberg* spent five intensive days at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at UN, New York in May 2005. He attended 11 meetings and seminars and filed this report on the event. Belatedly we here present his report.

USA deaf to NGOs

The 2005 Conference was a follow-up of a similar conference five years earlier. In order to prevent further erosion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty at that time the network *Abolition 2000* had been formed. ARC•PEACE became a member of Abolition 2000.

The activities around the Review Conference were of great value. However, the competence, creativity and political will represented by the NGOs - not least by US-based ones - had no influence on the conference, especially not on the US policy. The Bush administration was stone-deaf to our political initiatives.

The NGOs *Reaching Critical Will* and *Abolition 2000* made a fantastic work during the whole conference. The daily "News in Review" was a most reliable information source, supplemented by some informal contacts with delegations. Summarizing experiences the main recommendations the future are:

- Better preparations and strategies in advance of conferences
- Better internal communication between NGOs
- Consensus on requirements and strategies
- Strengthened caucus – planning and representation
- Sensitivity to ideological differences
- "More competence, less ad hoc"

NGOs versus the main conference

Many national NGOs seem to underestimate the expert role needed to be able to follow and evaluate the conference. An important problem is how to find resources for building up the necessary competence and to cover travel costs.

To my surprise the Swedish NGOs, who had participated the first week of the conference, were satisfied with the impact of the NGOs. My impressions were the opposite. Are we caught in a trap? Do we function as an alibi in a political process built on totally different premises? Are we satisfying the interests of our enemies by "playing the game"? If this is the case, can anything be changed? I do not

maintain that I have very realistic proposals, but these are my perhaps idealistic ideas:

Demands on the UN

- Open the main conferences to NGOs
- Create step by step procedure for negotiations with NGOs

Demands on the national government

- Accept NGO representatives in delegations
- Present positions in advance
- Negotiate with NGOs during preparations

Demands on the NGOs

- Common preparations and strategies
- Less profile-making, more cooperation
- Elected NGO representatives in delegations
- Economic resources for competent long term work
- Organised international cooperation

Demands on Abolition 2000

- Make Abolition Europe a strong force
- Take a leading role in the preparatory work and during conferences
- Take responsibility for documentation and evaluation

Even if these idealistic proposals will be realized, the influence of the NGOs would still be very limited. Entirely other political forces, economic structures and military interests, mainly led by USA, control the world of today. The UN is a toy in their hands. This became clear during the Review Conference.



Sven Thiberg



ARC•PEACE Russia revives

The 50,000 member Union of Architects of the Soviet Union was one of the founders of ARC•PEACE. Its president at that time, Yuri Platonov, became the Co-Chair of ARC•PEACE together with Tician Papatristou of ADPSR in the US.

Another Russian veteran from that period was Aleksander Kudriavtsev, the Rector of the Moscow School of Architecture. He attended many ARC•PEACE meetings and contributed to the building up of our organisation. Later Russian architects became less active. Aleksander kept in touch, however, and became the contact person of ARC•PEACE Russia.

In April this year Aleksander's colleague professor *Valery Bgashev* visited Stockholm in order to sign a cooperation agreement between the schools in Moscow and Stockholm. He then told us that he will replace

Aleksander as the Board member on behalf of ARC•PEACE Russia. Valery is the Vice-Rector of the Moscow School and responsible for international relations.



Prof Valery Bgashev, member of the ARC•PEACE Board on behalf of ARC•PEACE Russia.

Valery said that he and Aleksander will try to involve young architects in

ARC•PEACE in order to be a real member association. He explained that the Moscow school tries to implant social responsibility among its 2000 students. They comprise of architecture as well as urban design students. The school has about 100 foreign students. One important task is to teach the students about environmental issues.

I asked Valery what kind of tasks ARC•PEACE Russia would like to work with. He said that the strong polarisation of Russian society requires the attention of various types of professionals. Many people are extremely poor. Their housing situation is very bad. Another task for planners with a social conscience is to deal with former industrial cities that are dying when industries close down, Valery explained.

If you want to contact Valery Bgashev, write to: [id@marhi.ru](mailto:vd@marhi.ru).

Dick Urban Vestbro

Report from our new UN representative

Earlier this year *Branca Balac* became the new UN representative of ARC•PEACE. She is originally from Yugoslavia, and is at present attached to Columbia University in New York City. She has made a comprehensive study on "the favelas of Belgrade", which is also the subject of her PhD. At the *World Urban Forum* in Vancouver a year ago she presented results from this research in a session organised by the Human Settlements Committee.

Since Branca became the UN representative she has attended a number of meetings at the UN headquarter and also made presentations in her new capacity. In February there was an international conference called "*Age of Connectivity: Cities, Magnets of Hope, Caring Communication for the 21st Century; Imagining the Possible*". In

her address to the conference Branca said, among other things:

"Urban realities need to be urgently addressed by the pervasive pro-poor urban legislation and new policies. Interventions, such as water and sanitation, have immediate positive effects in term of improved health, nutrition, disease prevention and the environment. All of these activities will be enhanced by the improved information and communication technologies, which are currently being expanded to developing countries through UN efforts. People in isolated rural areas are increasingly able to access modern information facilities"

At the beginning of May Branca made a statement at the 15th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and later the same month she attended the event on *Affordable Energy Provision for Improved Water and Sanitation Services in Developing Country Cities*.

She further reports that she is involved in preparations for the World Habitat Day, to be celebrated in the Hague/Netherlands and Monterrey/Mexico at the beginning of October. Even more important is the fact that Branca has started to prepare for the ARC•PEACE participation in the World Urban Forum IV in Nanjing, China, planned for October 2008.

Dick Urban Vestbro



Branca Balac, UN representative of ARC•PEACE

How to become a member

To become a member of ARC•PEACE one has to support the ARC•PEACE Charter and pay the membership fee. Send a statement of interest to Co-Chair Dick Urban Vestbro, dickurba@comhem.se. The fee is USD 50 per year for individuals and poor organisations. Richer organisations pay USD 100, 200 or 400 depending on size and economic resources. Fees should be paid to: Account 1395587-7, Nordea Bank, SE -10571 Stockholm (Bic code: Ndeasess; IBAN no: SE81 9500 0099 6042 1395 5877).