

WELCOME TO THE NEXT ARC•PEACE MEETING!

All ARC•PEACE members and sympathizers are welcome to the next ARC•PEACE meeting to take place in Hasselt, Belgium **Thursday 17 April 2008**. Already members from Russia, Bahrain, India, Sudan, Peru, Cuba, USA, Sweden, Croatia, Qatar and UK have announced that they intend to attend the meeting. The date is chosen to coincide with the General Assembly meeting of *Architecture Sans Frontières International* (ASF-Int), to be held in the same place **Saturday 19 April**. The coordination of the two meetings will give an opportunity to learn to know each other and to exchange views about issues of common interest.

In Hasselt there will also be a workshop/seminar about pertinent themes **Friday 18 April**. The undersigned is planning a seminar about the role of architects and planners for the implementation of enabling housing strategies. Internationally well reputed experts on the subject such as Nabeel Hamdi and Geoffrey Payne have been invited to speak at the seminar, as well as the new ARC•PEACE representative in Qatar, Malika Bourenane, who has written her PhD about the subject. They have replied that they will come on condition that other obligations will not intervene. An article on enabling strategies is included in this issue of the newsletter (page 6). There will also be a

workshop on the theme 'Migration', open to members of ARC•PEACE. There are also plans for study tours to interesting planning and design projects in Belgium (and possibly the Netherlands).

Dick Urban Vestbro



The marvellous Japanese garden in Hasselt, Belgium.

DESIGN IS CONNECTED TO HUMAN RIGHTS

The Centre for Architecture & Human Rights (CAHR), a foundation registered in Canada in 2006, began with a realization of the connections between design and human rights. Working with students in some of the vulnerable communities in Bangkok and with communities affected by tsunami made it evident that design professions have a critical role to play in the protection and promotion of human rights, writes the CAHR founder, Graeme Bristol.

“Information, resources and a plan”

One tsunami survivor put it succinctly when she stood where her house and family once were in the small seafront community of Laem Pom. The UNDP had organized a conference of survivors and experts in October of 2005. This young mother, now widowed and suffering from the loss of her 8 year old daughter, had talked about the struggles she had gone through with the powerful trying to grab this beachfront land from under her – often at gunpoint. At the end of her recounting of the tragic events, one of the 90+ conference participants asked her what she needed. While she had managed, with the help of law students and faculty, to get some legal leverage for her claim to the land, she said what was essential at that point was: *information, resources, and especially, 'a plan'*. She knew that plans

would be a tool of negotiation for her community. They needed an alternative to the plans that were already being made by the developers and their architects. The poor and vulnerable can more effectively defend their rights to housing, to land, to livelihood, to a sustainable future with viable alternatives to the plans that are made in the boardrooms of the capitol cities.



CAHR website: <http://www.architecture-humanrights.org/>

Designer's blind spot

Where do these plans to come from? There is far too little official institutional support here. The days of Davidoff and Advocacy Planning seem as distant now as Sgt. Pepper. With a few notable exceptions, this is not part of the curriculum of architecture schools and it is certainly not a requirement of the accreditation bodies. The need for advocacy, though, is not going away – no, we can all see it growing as development pressures and urbanization increase, often exacerbated by government policy. The ADPSR boycott of prison design is a powerful illustration of the destructive power of government policy. The boycott also opens up a broader conversation about other issues of social justice and ethics. What other government determinants of the built environment have damaging effects on human rights. What actions of designers?

Since the UN Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986 and the subsequent UN policy on the *Rights-based Approach to Development*, designers will be faced with increasing pressure to navigate design through rights legislation as much as they do now with environmental legislation.

There have been profound changes in architecture's response to the environment since the late 60s and the Vale's *Autonomous House* or van der Ryn's *Integral Urban House* and particularly since the publication of the *Brundtland Report*. Our response as designers, though, has created a blind spot. The profession can safely focus on the technical issues of energy reduction and life-cycle costing while leaving the issues of rights, equity and social, distributive and environmental justice to the politicians. The mainstream of the profession can no longer afford the luxury of leaving such decisions to others.

The built environment is linked to democracy

Power, of course, will always take care of itself. But to imagine that it will also take care of the rest of us shows an optimism that seems historically unjustified. This is a position we could never afford and yet it has provided the profession with such comfort to be able to ignore it for so long. The historical relationship between power, policy, development, and human rights has been a sorry one. To change that will take diligent effort and an acute awareness of the effects of government policy on the built environment and the rights of citizens.

By awarding Wangari Maathai the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, the Nobel Committee not only recognized her years of effort and sacrifice but it also made clear what was already evident to many activists in the field – there is an unbreakable link between democracy, development, peace and the environment. This would come as no surprise at all to members of ARC•PEACE but in other circles such con-

nections remain puzzling as does the relationship between architecture and human rights.

CAHR activities

In an effort to clarify those connections, CAHR will be active in four areas:

- ? **Education** – formal architectural education as well as informal education and training in the field;
- ? **Research** – examining the effects of built environment policies and regulations on human rights;
- ? **Monitoring** – assessing ongoing changes in such legislation and advocating for a rights based approach to all built environment regulations
- ? **Advocacy** – working with students and communities on alternative planning and design

CAHR held the first international symposium on architecture and human rights in June of 2006. ARC•PEACE's representative in Bahrain, Ahmad Al-Jowder participated in that conference and reported on it in a previous newsletter. Following that event, a number of projects and proposals are planned. Along with finishing an LLM in Human Rights Law at Queen's University Belfast, a book on architecture and human rights is in the works, a second symposium is being planned for mid 2009 in Vancouver, a research proposal is being prepared on housing conditions for migrant construction workers and their children, as well as a proposal for a joint international studio to bring international and regional architecture and planning students together with local community organizations and NGOs in Phnom Penh to plan alternatives to the ongoing disastrous evictions that have been occurring there over the last two years.

I look forward to collaborations with friends and colleagues in ARC•PEACE and would be pleased to act as a contact point for any members coming to Thailand with plans, projects, commitments and conversations. You may reach me at: glbristol@gmail.com

Graeme Bristol



Graeme Bristol has worked in Papua New Guinea with school design. In 1998 he started to teach at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Bangkok, where he arranged community workshops in the slums of Bangkok and tsunami recovery projects. In 2006 he founded the CAHR.

Welcome to edit coming issues of the newsletter!

This issue of the newsletter has been edited by Osman El Kheir and Dick Urban Vestbro. *Bijayanand Misra* in Delhi has promised to be the editor of the next issue. All readers are welcome to send suggestions or make contributions. You may reach Bijay Misra at: bijayanand.misra@gmail.com Your contribution should be sent **no later than 15 March**. Members of ARC•PEACE are welcome to act as editors of coming issues of the newsletter. Register your interest by sending an email to dickurba@comhem.se. Previous editors may help the ones that lack experience from being editors.

ECOSAN – A SOLUTION FOR KHARTOUM

Khartoum residential areas are classified according to economic level. 85 percent of the housing stock belongs to the low income groups. The disadvantaged groups have fairly good access to housing, but in Khartoum there is a serious problem of urban sprawl due to the wide-spread use of the single-floor detached houses. According to the latest population census about 90 per cent of households in the capital, live in such houses. One problem resulting from urban sprawl is serious shortage in the delivery of sustainable infrastructure. In particular, sanitation and drinking water networks deserve high attention from the concerned planning authorities because of their direct linkage to public health.

Except for a small area downtown, the majority of Khartoum's citizens depend on pit latrines. This has many disadvantages and is risky from a public health point of view. The pit latrine transmits pollution three meters vertically and one meter horizontally in *dry soils*. Furthermore, continuous access to open land cannot be granted in the city.

A large portion of Khartoum's population depends on pit latrines and the number of these is increasing. To meet the rising drinking water demand, authorities have established new wells. By 2025 Sudan is estimated to face economic water scarcity. It is necessary to double efforts to extract water to meet 2025 water needs, a very expensive venture.

Access to sanitation and drinking water systems are closely related. They are key determinant of equity. In the developing countries planning authorities often consider the public sewer system as the perfect solution.

Sanitation systems should work as a barrier between humans and excreted pathogens. But the actual performance of public sewer systems in developing countries does not provide a proper fulfilment of this function. For instance, in Latin America 80% of the waste carried by the public sewer system is dumped without any treatment into water bodies. The flush toilet is a way to spread pathogens from the users to the public at large.

An innovative sanitation system that has proved practical and flexible is **the ecological sanitation system** (Ecosan). It is also cheap. This system is based on preventing pollution rather than trying to mitigate its consequences. It sanitizes faeces into humus for agricultural purposes. Thus, it integrates sanitation and agriculture. Urine is used, sometimes after dilution with water, as an effective natural fertilizer. Faeces are stored and composted before use. Ecosan safeguards public health without posing risks on ground water. It is, therefore, advantageous over traditional waterborne or dry sanitation systems.



M Hussam, ARC?PEACE Sudan

Architects and planners in Sudan should introduce this sanitation system as an acceptable and reliable sanitation option. A modified "eco-toilet" can be considered in areas where people use water for ablution to demonstrate to beneficiaries and authorities the advantages of Ecosan over the conventional systems

New contact persons of ARC?PEACE in Croatia, Japan and Qatar

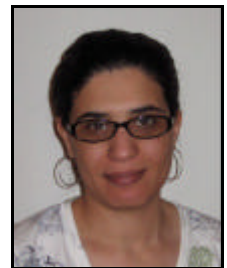
New contact persons have recently been approved by the Board of ARC?PEACE. **Goran Vodicka** works for UNDP in Croatia on local development and post-war reconstruction. He participated in the ARC?PEACE meeting in Gdansk in 2004. **Ryoichi Shuto** works as a Chief Research Engineer at the Housing Division of Japan Institute of Construction Engineering. **Malika Bourennane** is an urban planner in Qatar. She has a PhD from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.



Goran Vodicka



Ryoichi Shuto



Malika Bourennane

Archive established on disaster prevention and mitigation



During 2007 ARC•PEACE had two groups of Italian architects working at the ARC•PEACE office in Stockholm. This was possible through cooperation with Italian ASF, which got a grant from the Leonardo program of the European Union. In the Autumn of 2007 Paolo Sol and Alessandro Bianchi (see picture) compiled material

about the role of architecture and planning for the prevention of and reconstruction after natural disasters. This was carried out in collaboration with the 'disaster group' of ASF-Sweden. The 'disaster archive' is available at the ARC•PEACE office in Stockholm

SUCCESSFUL WORK BY ARC?PEACE PERU

A group of architects from ARC?PEACE Peru, established in 1993, started by training poor families in housing policies and raising their awareness of housing rights. Students of architecture were involved in low-cost housing programmes. During almost 14 years, these architects worked in several programmes related to gender-sensitive low-cost housing projects. Women were involved in the construction of earthquake-resistant structures, a programme that started in the area Tejada Alta at the South of Lima city as part of upgrading and renewal. The result was the construction of communal spaces, a pilot housing project using concrete and prefabricated components. Women also established links with the local government of the Surco district.

Grassroots women trained in housing construction programmes, decided in the year 2002 to move to the North West of Lima in the Ventanilla district. In this area named Pachacutec women were involved together with men in the production of concrete and other prefabricated building components with support from Sencico (A National Research Institution of Housing in Peru). Ten housing and a communal dining room were built. The work was supported by the local government as a model to be disseminated. Work made by locals supported by technicians (architects from the NGO Estrategia and members of ARC?PEACE Peru) got the Best Practice Award from the United Nations as a Municipal Housing programme with gender equity.



Women laying a house foundation in a program run by ARC?PEACE Peru.

Make people aware of their rights

In 2007 Estrategia signed an agreement with the new mayor of the Ventanilla district, with the purpose to follow up a Municipal Housing programme with gender equity. 15 women from Groots International joined us in the Prevention of Disaster programmes. Estrategia had started to train this group called United Women for a Better Community - *Groots Peru*. After conducting training in the production of concrete and prefabricated components, we are now planning the construction of a factory for building 20 housing units in the Pachacutec community in The Callao Region and the Ventanilla district.

Following the earthquake that took place in August 15th 2007, women organised themselves and decided to go together with architects from Estrategia and ARC?PEACE Peru to the affected area to collect information about the situation and identifying people's priorities. United Women started to train women from the *Ollas Communes* ('Communal pots') on legal aspects and establishing common dining rooms to get support from the government nutrition programme.

Training was also provided in aspects of democracy, citizenship, supervision and Participatory Budget. We found that people do not know much about these issues and they also do not know about the importance of their housing rights. The Participatory Budget is about 20% of the total budget of the local government. But most people do not know much about this or their right to approve budgets in the benefit of the affected people, in this case for reconstructing houses.

Housing and new jobs

When people are aware about these issues, the next step is to request the local government and the Local Region to attend to their housing rights. Our work as architects is to support people affected by the earthquake in obtaining a place for living and starting housing programmes involving trained people focused on gender equity. The objective is to create new jobs and start improvement of the communities. Grassroot women from United Women working together with architects from Estrategia and ARC?PEACE will start the execution of housing programmes involving the organised and trained community.

Women demand the government to approve funds for popular housing, where there is none of the sort. Trained people need to be included in the government urban programmes. This was emphasized by architect Miloon Kothari, Special Reporter of Housing Rights from The United Nations). He advanced this work as an example to be disseminated at the national level by the Peruvian government.



Luz Maria Sanchez is the Co-Chair of ARC?PEACE, Director of Estrategia and a member of the Advisory Group Against Forced Evictions of the UN.

EXPANDING MILITARY INFLUENCE OVER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IS MARGINALISING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES, SAYS SCIENCE GROUP

SGR Press Release, Tuesday 21 August 2007

Flawed government thinking is driving a rapid expansion in the military influence over science and technology, says a new briefing from *Scientists for Global Responsibility* (SGR)¹, member of ARC•PEACE. US government spending on military research and development (R&D) is soaring (up 57% since 2001), while the UK government has rolled out two new military technology strategies in the last two years. Factors such as these are contributing to an expansion of military involvement in UK universities.²

SGR's briefing argues that government policies, which emphasise the application of military technology in dealing with complex international crises, are driving the continued expansion of military R&D in the USA, UK and elsewhere, despite major shortcomings being apparent - not least in current conflicts such as the Iraq war.

The briefing documents how government funding for military R&D dwarfs that spent on social and environmental programmes across the industrialised world. For example, in 2004, governments in industrialised countries spent a total of \$85 billion on military R&D, but only \$50 billion on R&D for health and environmental protection, and less than \$1 billion on R&D for renewable energy technologies essential for tackling climate change. A similar imbalance can be seen in UK spending.

Dr Chris Langley, lead author of the briefing, said: "This briefing updates our earlier research which highlighted the way that the UK military sector - including government departments and major corporations - has disproportionate influence over science and technology. That this military influence is being extended is all the more disturbing in the light of ongoing corruption investigations into top UK arms corporation, BAE Systems".

Dr Stuart Parkinson, Director of SGR and co-author of the briefing, said: "Gordon Brown, in his recent speech at the UN, said that we should put science and technology at the heart of efforts to tackle social and environmental problems. Yet, it is clear that current UK science policy allows the military far too much influence in the sector, undermining that aspiration. We urge Mr Brown to put his money where his mouth is and force a shift in current R&D spending to prioritise social and environmental concerns."³

Dr Philip Webber, Chair of SGR and co-author of the briefing, said "In David Milliband's first speech as Foreign Secretary he talked about the need for changes in the way that the UK engages in the international arena. But can the government really be serious about changing its approach to foreign policy while pursuing major new military technology projects, such as replacing its nuclear weapons system and building new aircraft carriers, at a time when science and technology skills are so urgently needed in areas such as renewable energy?"⁴

Contact: Dr Stuart Parkinson, email: stuartp@sgr.org.uk

Notes

1. SGR is an independent UK organisation of approximately 900 members across the natural and social sciences, engineering, IT, architecture and design. Its main aim is to promote ethical science, design and technology - based on the principles of openness, accountability, peace, social justice, and environmental sustainability. For more information, see <http://www.sgr.org.uk/>

2. SGR's new briefing is entitled "More Soldiers in the Laboratory: the militarisation of science and technology-an update" and can be downloaded from <http://www.sgr.org.uk/ArmsControl/MilitaryInfluence.html>. It was written by Chris Langley, Stuart Parkinson and Philip Webber and updates the information and arguments provided in the critically acclaimed SGR report "Soldiers in the Laboratory", published in January 2005, also available on the SGR website. Printed copies can be obtained from the SGR Office-see <http://www.sgr.org.uk/publications.html>

3. The text of Gordon Brown's speech at the UN on 31 July 2007 is available at: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page12755.asp>

4. The text of David Milliband's speech "New Diplomacy: challenges for foreign policy", given on 19 July 2007 at Chatham House, is available at: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391629&a=KArticle&aid=1184751108322>

Membership: To become a member of ARC•PEACE one has to support the ARC•PEACE Charter, express an interest to be a member and pay the membership fee (unless an exemption is made). ARC•PEACE relies entirely on membership fees and individual fund-raising for economic survival. The fee is USD 50 per year for individuals and poor organizations. Richer organizations pay USD 100, 200 or 500 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).

ARE PLANNERS BLOCKING VIABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS?

According to current UN statistics two billion people are living in slums or unplanned informal settlements. In these basic infrastructure such as drainage, clean water and sanitation is usually missing. Most slum dwellers do not have security of tenure. Solving these problems is one of the most important tasks ahead of us. Architects and planners ought to be in the forefront for finding appropriate solutions, but evidence shows that they constitute obstacles.

Failure of the modernist model

Until recently the favoured method to solve slum problems has been the *modernist provider model*. This is characterised by the production of minimum-standard units based on assessments by experts and implemented through a centralised organisation. The model has been successful in a few countries in Europe, but has otherwise failed.

In order to succeed the modernist model must fulfil the following preconditions: high productive forces in society, a strong state based on an ample tax base, political will to prioritise housing, appropriate legislation, efficient administration, and high professional competence. Although virtually none of these factors were at hand in low-income, countries most of their governments decided to apply the modernist model from the 1950s and onwards.

The fact that the modernist model was chosen, meant that the limited resources available were used to build a small number of housing units with expensive building materials. The low level was also caused by the absence of a consolidated building industry and an inefficient public administration. The few modernist housing units that were produced were usually allocated to civil servants at highly subsidised rents. The paradoxical situation occurred that the more governments clung to the modernist model the less was produced. As a result the slums grew faster.

Resistance to the enabling strategy

At the Habitat I conference in 1976 the so called *enabling strategy* started to be advocated as an alternative to the modernist model. This strategy is characterised by slum upgrading, self-help housing, promotion of small-scale business in the construction sector, while local and national authorities are to support community efforts and relax development codes and housing standards. At the Habitat II conference in 1996 this model had something of a breakthrough. Although it is nowadays advocated officially by many governments, there is often a resistance to apply the strategy on the ground.

One of the obstacles is the reluctance to revise outdated building legislation. Usually laws require too high standards to make houses affordable to the poor. Small plots are not allowed, neither high plot coverage, self-construction in local building materials or Home-Based Enterprise. Resistance among planners is also caused by the fact that illegal occupation of land is accepted; that the power of authorities is reduced, and that it raises the status of the poor, those who do not pay taxes, who invade land, who bring sanitary problem to cities.

The case of Botswana

Botswana is a country that consciously decided to adopt the enabling strategy. This country deviates from other Sub-Saharan countries in that building regulations are often followed. Thus an enabling legal framework could be expected to have real implications on the ground. A new enabling Development Code was put in place in 1996. One of the aims was to allow poor households to use their plots for income-generating activities. For this purpose the Code included a provision of 'relaxed capacity', which would allow owners to build non-residential buildings on the plot.

A study by architect Malika Bourennane shows that the new Development Code has virtually not been used at all in its relaxed capacity. None of the residents interviewed said that they were informed about the possibility to relax regulations in order to provide for Home-Based Enterprises. The planners at municipal and national levels – the ones who had the duty to inform about the new code – said either that they did not know about the relaxed capacity, or that they were uncertain of how to implement it in practice. The researcher concluded that it is likely that planners knew more than they wanted to admit. Probably they did not like the relaxed capacity of the code from the very beginning.



Plot with additional buildings in a low-income housing area in Gaborone, Botswana (photo: M Bourennane).

The fact that the modernist model is inappropriate for solving the slum problem does not mean that housing modernism is irrelevant altogether. Classical modernism included strong development factors such as multi-purpose uses, daylight in rooms, cross-ventilation and other health-related aspects. This kind of thinking can be fruitfully applied for upgrading slums and informal settlements. They need to be regularized and provided with basic infrastructure such as clean water and paved roads. For this reason professional guidance is required. But architects and planners need to understand the conditions of the poor, and to abandon established conventions.

Dick Urban Vestbro

New ARC?PEACE website. ARC?PEACE Sudan has generously offered to take care of the ARC?PEACE website, which was upgraded last year. Abul Maali Abdul Rahman, called Munzer, will be the new editor of the website.