Youth make change!
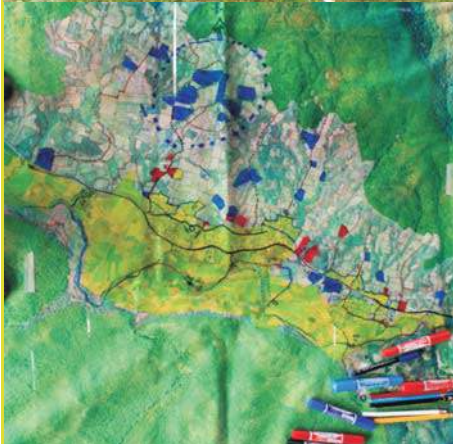
Newsletter

CAN - Community Architects Network

CAN editor's note

The idea of producing a community architects newsletter emerged at the last community architect meeting in October 2011, held in Penang. The loose network of community architects, both groups and individuals, have been informally linked over the three decades over the generations, initiated by Father Jorge Anzorena and other respected seniors. We found that there are many fascinating projects alongside the growth of new young groups who contribute their creative works on the ground with communities across Asian countries. Now it is our turn to keep the momentum of this loose network of exchange and learning moving forward, from our generation to the next.

This newsletter also aims to encourage new and young idealist architects, planners and others who are working hard to support communities across the globe. Through this short newsletter and update of interesting activities, we hope every group will feel the common energy and creativity flow between the groups, for sharing and learning across physical borders.

Moreover, you can share with us your activities and plans for the near future. We're happy to hear and learn from you to make this linkage worthwhile and stronger.

CAN: community architects network
January 2012

What's inside?

What happened in Last three months!

I. Community architect meeting in Penang, Malaysia (15-16th September)

In the two days before the ACCA committee meeting held in Penang, a group of about 30 community architects from around the region gathered in Penang to discuss the direction of their work and their movement in Asia, and to set some plans for the coming two years. Some of the ideas that were discussed included:

The need to have more collaboration in coordination work, so that not only Nad and Tee are having to organize everything the scale of work is now too big for just two persons.

Linking across the four sub-regions: to spread out the coordination work and get more people involved, the architects will divide themselves into sub-regions. Each country will select two coordinators to work within their sub-region, and each sub-region will select one coordinator to work in the region. The four coordinators from the four sub-regions will then work closely with Nad and Tee to support the community architects activities that arise around the region. We will try this system for six months and see how it works.

Set up 6 task forces: we have also set up six teams to do the following things:
1. Prepare regular e-news bulletins with news about community architects activities in the region.
2. Develop a special community architects website and "open space" with news and stories.
3. Develop handbooks and publications.
4. Develop films and media materials on the community architects work.
5. Organize training workshops to build architects' capacities in various issues.
6. Develop a platform for academics and universities to bring community upgrading into the curriculum

(For more details, please contact Nad at chawanad@hotmail.com)

II. Heritage workshop in Penang (19-21th September)

The 3-day workshop brought together 80 participants from 16 countries, with the aim of facilitating a platform for exchange and sharing of community-driven approaches in heritage conservation, and to explore how a 'bottom up' process can be applied to a World Heritage Site. This workshop was co-organized by Think City Sdn Bhd (TCSB), Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI), Arts-ED (AAK) and ACHR, with 6 local communities in Georgetown, Penang.

Some of the issues and impacts that arose from this workshop:

MOU signing between Think City and ACHR with community representatives, committing to work together with the communities in supporting the creation and incubation of a City Development Fund for Penang.

Sharing and learning about heritage conservation from the people's side: there were 6 local communities in Penang participating, and sharing their ambitious to live within heritage city. Some of them have started to work together as an organised group of tenants, trying to keep dialogue with property owners and the local municipality. Some of them started to see the opportunities and possibilities arising, through the inputs and good case studies from other countries in this workshop. There were seven good case studies shared by heritage activist friends from the region, aiming to lead to concrete solutions based on the actual situation in Georgetown.

On-site workshops in 6 communities with the tenants: through community visits, both local and international participants could learn more about the communities and their needs in relation to their living environment and housing issues, and proposed their ideas and shared their experiences through four discussion groups.

A long way remains to go with collective steps between people and local support groups: with these new inputs we worked together for 3 days of powerful encouragement to the local communities. Some of the communities, like the tenant group of Armenian Street, stepped forward and obtained 10 years of land tenure from the landlord. Others, like the tenant group of St Francis Church, prepared a land-sharing plan and proposed it to the bishop. Unfortunately, this proposal was rejected, and recently the group obtained compensation and are now looking to move to a new location.

(For more updates and detail, please contact Hooi Seam at nghnji@gmail.com)

III. Community Architect Network Training Workshop in Kep city, Cambodia (8-11th November)

This four day training workshop was held by the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) with the community architect network in Cambodia (CAN-CAM), with support from Cambodian Mekong University. The theme was "Sustainable City Wide Upgrading and Housing Security for Poor COmmunities", which aimed to build partnerships amongst academics and local authorities in Kep, Cambodia, and also to train young architects to work with people through a real project. The participants included Cambodian and Vietnamese young architects, community builders, community representatives from 3 communities in Cambodia, and the local authorities.

Sharing of experiences and various views on urbanization, equitable development, and housing for the poor: The sharing session included a variety of resource persons, to allow the students and young architects to learn from diverse views on urbanization, from the theoretical to the practical side. The discussants included the Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, the network of the urban poor, architects with experience of working with the urban poor, and academics. The key of this sharing session was to engage the key stakeholders in Kep and the local university to work in partnership for an alternative solution.

On-site workshop on community mapping and alternative housing design: All participants divided into 3 groups to work in a local community. Each group explored the tools for conducting community mapping, and in the end they provided the housing design schemes to the community. It was interesting for the students to learn and see the different roles and creative tools they could use when working with the local communities.

CAN-CAM gathered to review their recent experiences and plan their work in supporting poor communities in 2012 (on 5th January 2012). There are three enthusiastic groups within CAN-CAM: Kompong Cham group, Prey Veng group, and Oddormeanchey group. In this meeting they reviewed their common experiences and planned their next activities.

(For more updated and detail, please contact Nylen at nylenchou@gmail.com, or Sokly at yesokly@gmail.com)

IV. Meeting to share experiences in supporting poor communities,

This meeting brought together the YP group who work to support ACVN, VietCo group, Community Architect group 1+1>2. They got together to know each other and share what each group has been doing. It was an impressive meeting amongst the enthusiastic young, to find common ideas to develop the network together through activities, like community gardens or a community museum project. A video of their meeting and activities is available on YouTube at http://youtu.be/QVuzIVMYPeY , and for more details and updates, please contact Nga at ngacdf2810@gmail.com, or ypvngroup@googlegroups.com.

On 13-15 November 2011, Nga, a young Vietnamese architect, participated and helped to organize an exchange visit called "City to City" with delegates from Tam Ky city travelling to Vinh and Hai Duong city, where housing projects have been implemented. Here is his message to us: "observation is the best teacher. Although hearing stories and watching pictures, communities in collective Housing of Quang Nam provincial Hospital still didn't understand community-based planning processes and how to do it. Through this study tour, community representatives met and talked to other communities in the same situation who had solved their problem successfully. That made them stronger, more enthusiastic and with more belief that they can do the same result in near future and their life is going to be better."

(For more detail and full report, please contact Nga at ngacdf2810@gmail.com)

V. Big step in community architects' work in Nepal

Mobilization and training of architecture students and graduates in planning from the people's perspective (September 2011) A group of young architects teamed up with Lumanti's technical team to work on Big Project in Lauri Ghol, Ratnanagar, one of the ACCA projects in Nepal , and spent a week with the community to assist them in developing their ideal community. Freshly out of the graduate school and having been involved in conventional architecture practice for a year, they felt that they were missing something in their work. They wanted to be involved in something which was more meaningful and contributed in a better way to society. Having been involved in the community-led project, they have said that this enriched experience of working with the communities has changed their perspective regarding their own profession. The same group is also involved in the Thecho Project where community members in a historically important town want to initiate their own urban renewal.

Formation of Technical Group: "Pro-Poor Technical Assistance Group" (PTAG) Since the initiation of ACCA program in 2009, about four groups of architect volunteers have been involved in providing much needed technical assistance to the ongoing process and many more students and architects are interested to learn about the people driven process. To further strengthen this ongoing movement, an informal network of architects, who have volunteered in ACCA supported projects in different cities, was created. The "Pro-poor Technical Assistance Group" (PTAG) was established with the objective to promote community-led processes and provide technical assistance to pro-poor groups/programs that can lead to urban poor community development, which will be instrumental to spread awareness among professional societies. This has opened up a space for architects, as well as other professionals to work with and for the communities to develop their upgrading plans in a more participatory way. An advisory group of organizations such as Lumanti, UN Habitat and the architecture faculty has been created for mentoring this network and supporting when needed. This informal group of architects meets every first Saturday of the month, in what will be a learning ground for them where they can share their experiences and learn from each other. In December 2011, there was a sharing program organized for students and Faculty members of 6 architecture schools in Kathmandu, where Lumanti and Joshi and Amit Bajracharya presented their experience of working with and for the poor communities in different cities in Nepal. Nad also shared his rich experience as a community architect across Asia.
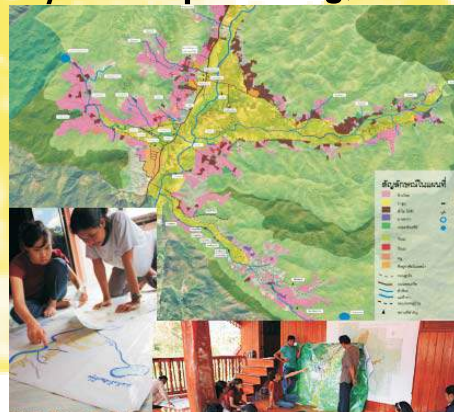
(For more information, updates, and nice report on Comprehensive Planning of Lauri Ghol, Ratnanagar, please contact Lumanti at lumantijoshi@gmail.com)

VI. Young architects starting involvement in the participatory rural planning, Chiangmai, Thailand

Kon.Jai.Baan, the Thai young architects group, has been involving with local administrative organizations at Maetha sub-district, Chiangmai, conducting a rural development plan under the rural Baan ManKong project of CODI. There are many communities in Thailand settled either in protected forest land or government land. The ultimate aim of this initiative is to negotiate for community land title by way of planning at the local level and creating their own development plan to maintain and protect their land and attached resources. Recently Kon.Jai.Baan has played an important role in providing the participatory tools to carry out a land-use map in 7 villages, and utilize this map engage people in discussions about today's situation, and plans for next 5 years. Through discussion with active local teams and authorities, the communities have been planning to establish a community land bank to manage the community land titles and carry out physical development plans to sustainably use land and natural resources.

(For more detail and full working report, please contact Tee at architect_once@hotmail.com)

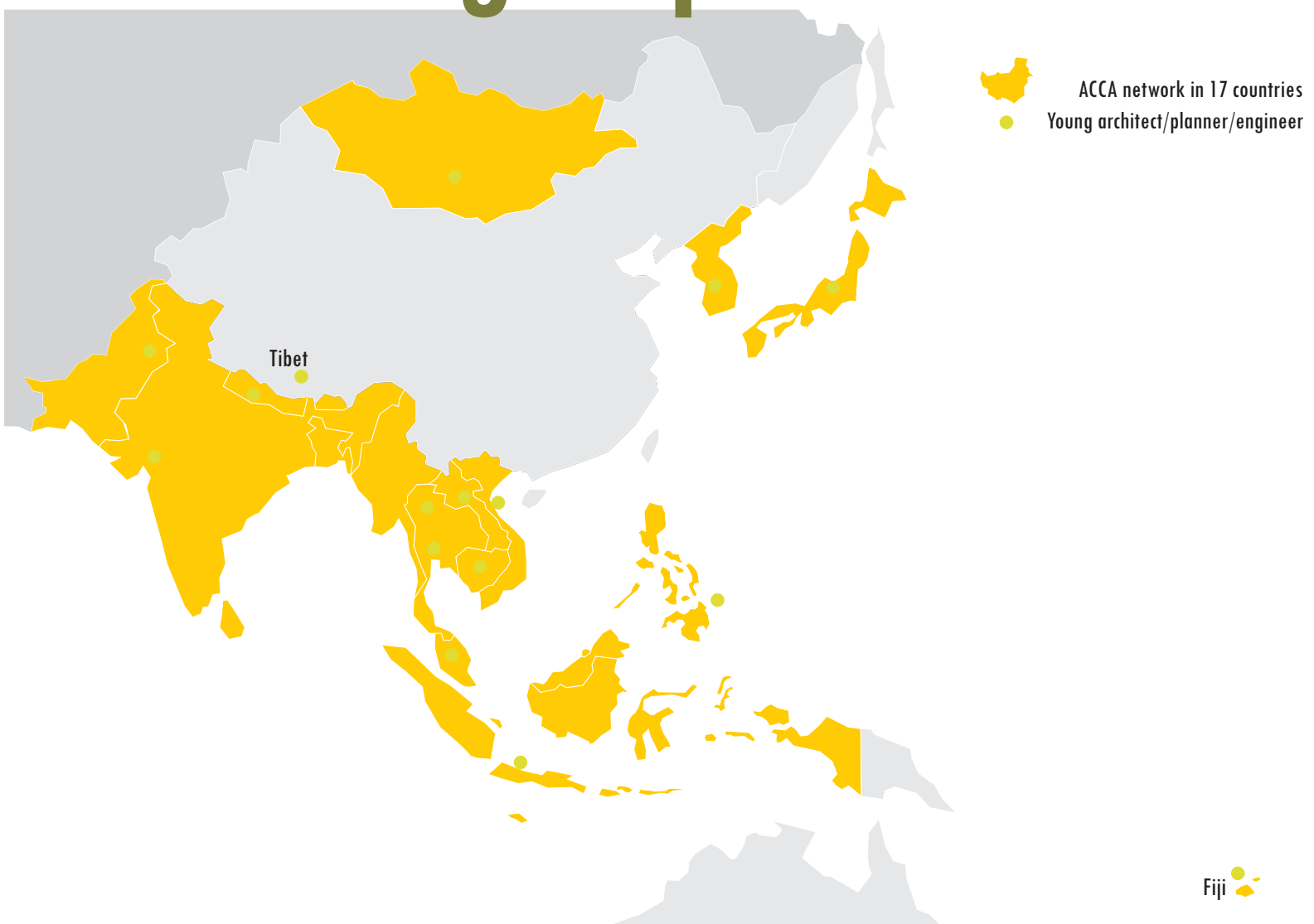# VII. Global Studio and possible future collaboration, Bhopal (9-17th January 2012

Nad, Tee, and Nong joined the Global Studio 2012 in Bhopal, India from 9-17th January. Global Studio is a place-based action research program where international students, academics, and professionals come together with local universities, local government, NGOs, and CBOs to collaborate with communities. The concept of Global Studio is very impressive. This year the theme was "Re-Imagining Inclusive Urbanisation": People Building Better Cities. The participatory planning and design studio touched upon the crucial issues of Bhopal city: 1) Housing and slum free policy and applications, backed up by the RAY and JNNURM's policy of the government of India, 2) Inclusive urban form to knit the old and new city, and 3) Schools and design to meet the needs of the school and precinct neighborhood.

(For more detail about Global Studio and project outcome, please see this website: www.theglobalstudio.com)

We also discussed with Anna Rubbo (the founder of Global Studio) about how our CAN network can link and work together with Global Studio, in order to benefit both community based organizations in our network and our YPs, as well as including community development issues in conventional architectural universities' courses. Tentatively, Anna is interested to share and learn with CAN, perhaps between April-May, when we plan to organize the meeting about educational groups of CAN. We will keep you updated.

Growth of new and young groups across Asia

ACCA network in 17 countries

Young architect/planner/engineer

Tibet

Fiji

Contact list of Young Architects and Planners working to support the poor across Asia

Thailand
Group: Arsomsilp Institute of the Art, Contact person: Jo Thana, email: thana.uthai@gmail.com
Group: community architect in CODI, Contact person: Ae Chaiwat, email: chaiwat_r22@hotmail.com
Group: Openspace, Contact person: Ploy Kasama, email: archazama@gmail.com
Group: Kon.Jai.Baan, Contact person: Tee Supawut, email: architect_once@hotmail.com

Lao PDR
Group: community architect in WCEP, Contact person: Maykham, email: mk_architect@hotmail.com

Vietnam
Group: YP Vietnam, Contact person: Nga, email: nypvngroup@googlegroups.com

Cambodia
Group: CAN-CAM, Contact person: Nylen and Yokly, email: nylenchou@gmail.com, yesokly@gmail.com

Malaysia
Group: community architect in Penang, Contact person: Ng Hooi Seam, email: nghnji@gmail.com
Group: A T GOH ARCHITECT, Contact person: Goh Ai Tee, email: gohaitee@gmail.com

Philippine
Group: TAMPEI, Contact person: Vhal, email: vhal_drew27@yahoo.com
Group: TAO-Pilipinas, Inc., Contact person: Arlene, email: arlene.lusterio@gmail.com

Indonesia
Group: ARKOM, Contact person: Yuli, email: yuli_kusworo@yahoo.com
Group: Volunteer Network for Humanity, Contact person: Ivana, email: leechoes@gmail.com

Mongolia
Group: community architect in UDRC, Contact person: Batdorj, email: bat_ubf@yahoo.com

Japan
Group: CASE Japan, Contact person: Keke, email: keke@guitar.ocn.ne.jp

Korea
Group: KCHR, Contact person: Boram, email: boram.kim.hur@gmail.com
Group: Asian Bridge, Contact person: Minjung, email: asianbridge21@gmail.com

Tibet region
Group: Tibet Heritage Funds (THF), Contact person: Pimpim, Yutaka, email: pemamarpo@yahoo.com.hk, pingzifeng@hotmail.com

Pakistan
Group: Technical Training Resource Centre (TTRC), Contact person: Sirajuddin, email: sirajttrc@yahoo.com, thettrcorangi13@yahoo.com

India
Group: community architect in Hunnar Shaala Foundation, Contact person: Vrunda, email: vrundavaghela@gmail.com

Nepal
Group: Lumanti Support Group for Shelter, Contact person: Lumanti, email: lumantijoshi@gmail.com

Fiji
Group: CAN PACIFIC, Contact person: Hugo, email: hugo@informalism.net

CAN's Plans for 2012

Networking
- CAN website
- Exchange/workshop program
- Newsletter/publication/video

Education
- Summer course for student/YP
- Influence the architectural curriculum

CAN 2012

Matching demand & supply
- Thematic workshops / training for community builder groups
- Link researcher/acedemic to work and learn with NGO/CBO in network

Tentative Plan for the secretariat: January - April 2012
- Establish the **CAN website**
- Produce **new handbooks** on upgrading, bamboo
- Next **CAN meeting** in April to discuss establishing a CAN summer course for young professionals

Upcoming activities and events in the network

I   Disaster workshop in Jogjakarta, Indonesia (31th Jan-1 Feb 2012)

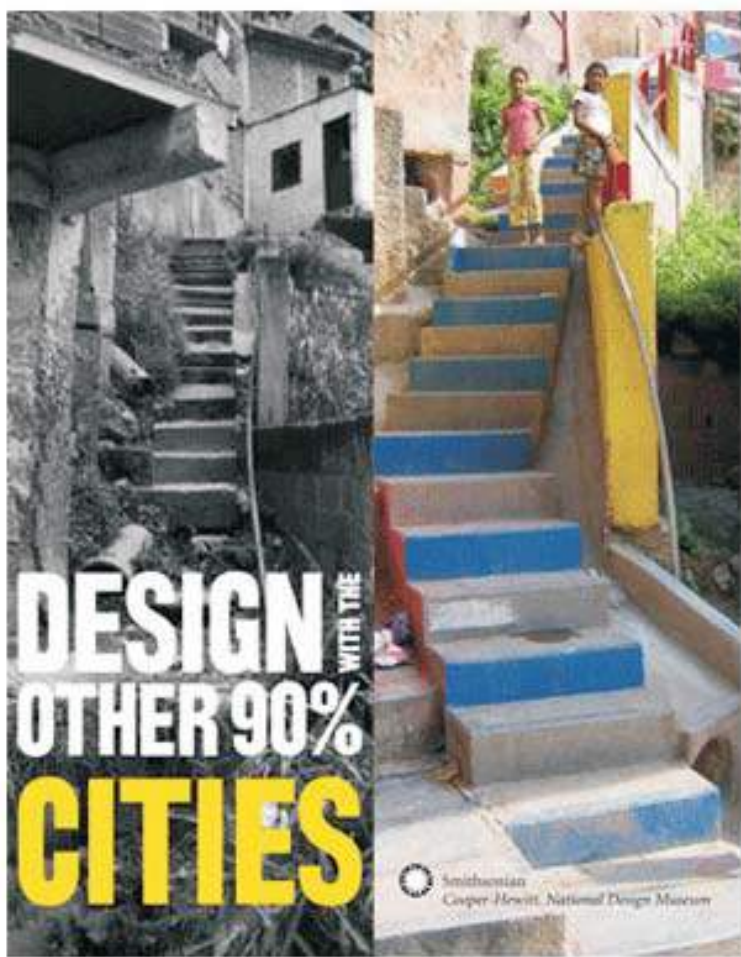For more details, please contact ARKOM (Arsitek Komunitas) Yogyakarta: Yuli and Tomo at arkom.jogja@gmail.com

II   National community architects workshop Tan An city (Long An province), Vietnam (proposed date19-24 March 2012)

Tentatively the workshop will be hosted by ACVN, Vietnam YP and CAN at Tan An city in Long An province, about 70 km. from Ho Chi Minh city. The community consists of 14 households living on public land for between 15-70 years. Initially, the city government agreed to give them new public land, 700 m. away from existing location, but both the People's Committee chairman and vice chairman at city and ward levels are very keen to carry out this project using the ACCA approach. This workshop will bring this actual case study as the subject for workshop participants to plan and work with community people, and will engage HCMC University of Architecture to participate and learn from this workshop too. For more details, we will update soon via email.

III Collaboration with DPU workshop in Bangkok, Thailand (29 April - 18 May 2012)

We plan to invite young architects of CAN to join the Development Planning Unit (DPU, part of University College London) workshop in Bangkok. We are currently working on the program, and we will keep you updated. This will be the second year that DPU students come to Thailand for a project workshop. Through this collaboration, we are seeking the possibility of enhancing the issue of community development in architectural faculties across Asia. For more information about the previous DPU workshop, please see http://archinect.com/features/article/25485248/decoding-bangkok-s-pocket-urbanization-social-housing-provision-and-the-role-of-community-architects   More information about DPU is available here http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/postgraduate/msc-urban-development-planning

Book recommends

"Design with the Other 90%: CITIES," the second exhibition and publication in the series, examines the complex issues arising from the unprecedented rate of urban growth projected to take place over the next 20 years, primarily in the informal settlements of the developing coutries. It is very useful and being very good and practical case studies to encourage designer and community to explore more on other possibility through design and development. We brought this publication from New York and we will courier 2 issues of this book for each country in CAN network (one for your organization and other for the faculty of architecture or planning you involved). For more detail about exhibition and book, please visit the website at http://www.designother90.org/cities/home

New friends in our network

During we were in Bhopal, India for Global Studio workshop in January 2012, we met new friends who have been doing very fascinate works support the communities in various ways through the power of design and training the community builder. Here we would like to introduce these new friends to you.

Paul Pholeros, he is the gentle architect and a managing director of **HEALTHABITA**T. His organization have been working provides the improving, training, and designing for housing to create better quality of life for the poor both in urban in rural of Australia, Nepal, or USA . You can visit his website which is full of learning materials to download. http://www.healthabitat.com

Rebuild Global is the organization in USA which their role is to match architecture and design solutions with the community based organizations or communities where in need of design service. **Sandra Plaza**, the director of Rebuild Global, interests to link with the CAN. You can see and learn more about Rebuild Global at http://www.rebuildglobal.org

Big loss for the heritage field and CAN, our sadness at losing Andre Alexander

As most of you will now know, André died very suddenly in Berlin last Saturday, 21 January. He had not been ill and was on his way to his 47th birthday party at the time.
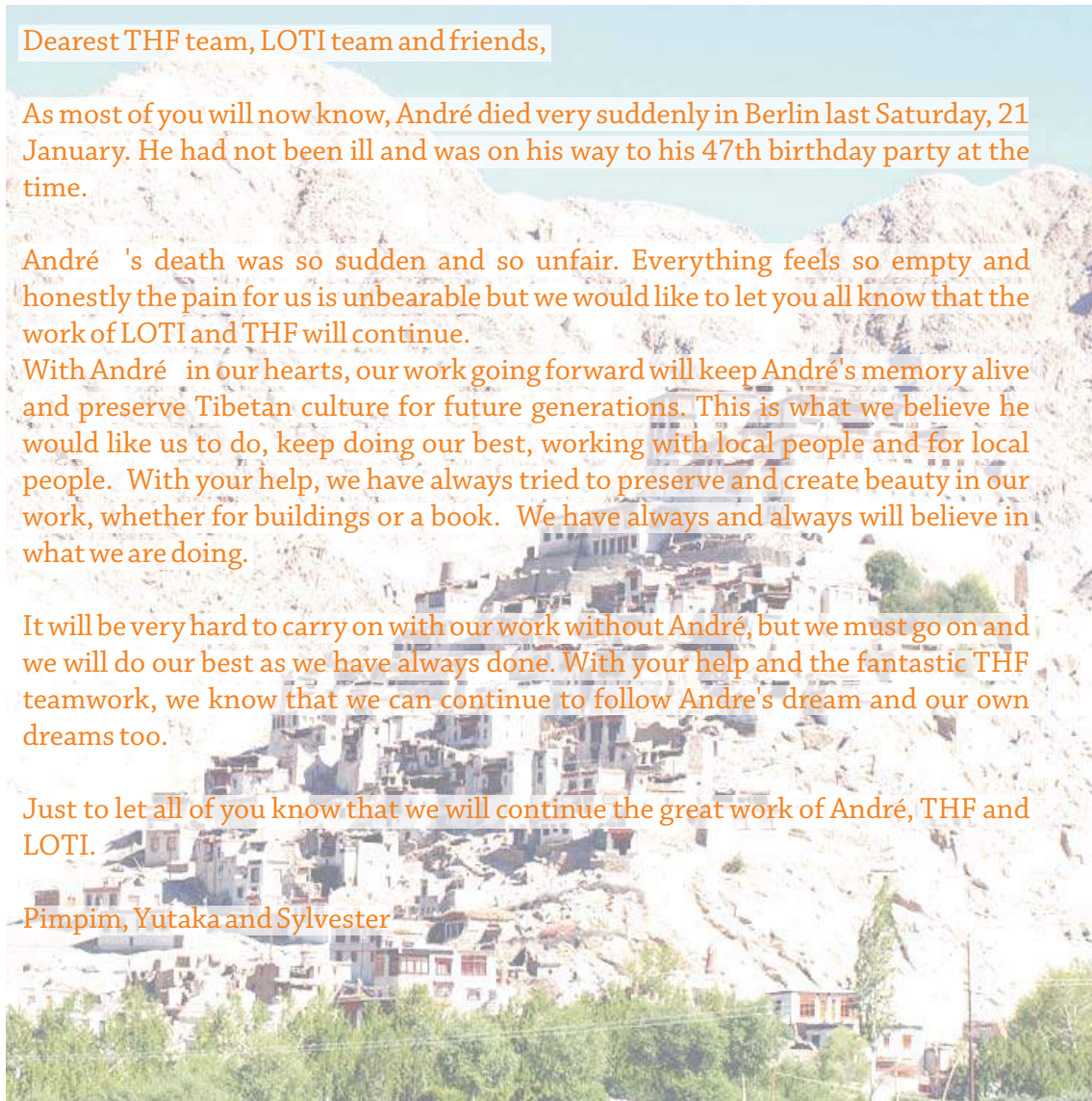
André 's death was so sudden and so unfair. Everything feels so empty and honestly the pain for us is unbearable but we would like to let you all know that the work of LOTI and THF will continue.

With André in our hearts, our work going forward will keep André's memory alive and preserve Tibetan culture for future generations. This is what we believe he would like us to do, keep doing our best, working with local people and for local people. With your help, we have always tried to preserve and create beauty in our work, whether for buildings or a book. We have always and always will believe in what we are doing.

It will be very hard to carry on with our work without André, but we must go on and we will do our best as we have always done. With your help and the fantastic THF teamwork, we know that we can continue to follow Andre's dream and our own dreams too.

Just to let all of you know that we will continue the great work of André, THF and LOTI.

Pimpim, Yutaka and Sylvester

Visit Andre homepage at
Http://www.tibetheritagefund.org/
pages/about-thf/meet-thf/andre-
alexanders-homepage.php, or
facebook at Andre Alexander

Next issue in April 2012

Some go first, and others come long
afterward.
God blesses both and all in the line,
And replaces what has been consumed,
And provides for those who work the
soil of helpfulness....

Jelaluddin Rumi

We kindly invite all friends in the network to suggest, comment, and share stories about your work and insights from your experiences in working with people. Please send us your short stories with some pictures. We at the Secretariat will help to edit and compile the next issue in April. We look forward to learn more from your experiences, thank you!!