

Foreword

The value of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture seminar in Zanzibar was in the exchange of ideas on how housing can be provided on the massive scale that is required in the growing cities of the Third World by harnessing the individual and corporate efforts of people. We learned about the processes in the housing sector.

We became aware that we were defining models of city growth which fall outside the usual perceptions of planners and architects who in many parts of the world operate within codes and regulations inherited to a large extent from the colonial era and which are inappropriate for the majority of situations.

The key to the provision of housing for the poor centres around the availability of land and community involvement.

We saw this well demonstrated by examples from Pakistan and Indonesia. High land costs inevitably means high density urban housing and the debate on the issues was stimulating and informative.

The concept of the “barefoot” or community architect was discussed coupled with the inadequacy of the architectural education system to produce architects of vision equipped to tackle mass housing. It was suggested alternatively that the architect has no role or that the architect has a multi-faceted role, as facilitator, coordinator and enabler. The role of the architect in the Third World needs to be redefined.

The task of editing the seminar proceedings has been deeply rewarding. It would have been impossible without the assistance of Pat Theseira who has supervised the production whilst simultaneously overseeing other Award publications.

Robert Powell
Editor

