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Newsletter One 2013

Happy New Year to all of you!

2012 was a very productive year for us- we carried out projects in Venezuela and the UK, started our first series of lectures at the RIBA and received the UN endorsement in the permission to use the Global compact logo. Please have a look at our updated website for more information on the UN Global compact.

Lammas Orchard Project

In Ealing, West London, we collaborated with Darcey Williamson, local artist and Ealing Transition (as of the Transition Town movement, see <http://www.transitionnetwork.org>) to hold two workshops- an 'ideas' workshop with drawing workshop for children and a 'making' workshop with families to see what could be constructed with waste wood.



We will be carrying on supporting the work at Lammas Orchard in 2013.



RIBA bookshop lectures

In our last newsletter, we wrote about our first talk in collaboration with the RIBA bookshop on an event on participatory design with experts with experience in Asia, Latin America and Africa. In November, we held another event on Ethics and Activism. *Nicole Kenton reports-*



The event was chaired by Edward Canfor-Dumas with two speakers, Dr Sanjay Kumar and John Rowley. Eddy noted that in an increasingly globalised world with so many different cultures involved, finding a common language on ethics is a challenge. challenge. Eddy is Director of Engi, is a leading speaker on conflict management and ethics. Dr Sanjay Kumar has been associated with Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) a trade union in India for poor, self-employed women workers. John Rowley has been providing training in the use of participatory methods in the UK and in Africa for over twenty years. He led working groups on producing statements of the principles and the ethics of participatory work. Sanjay spoke about his experience working with SEWA in India with those in the informal sector. The first experience

was with construction workers. SEWA is advocating for better conditions for the workers and their families during and after the project. No ethics are applied in terms of planning or executing the project. Sanjay described how SEWA is advocating for the rights of vendors to sell their produce with support from leading architects.

John then discussed how a participatory approach could tackle some of these problems. Firstly, the power structure in any situation needs to be analysed. Genuine participation is about determining how to engage those who are not usually engaged in processes of decision making. Principles, methods and process are the three components of a good participatory practice. The principles need to be respected:

- *Local people are the experts.* Others can learn from them.
- *Include everyone* – proactively seek out people who don't necessarily get heard.
- *Cycles of learning* - design a process that gives you opportunities and spaces to think.

There was broad agreement that architects, as well as other industries - such as the financial and the garment industry - have a social responsibility. (we will put the full notes on our website)

Forward thinking in 2013

We at present working on projects in India and Palestine and for those of you interested in volunteering in any area- design, administration and field work, please contact us at **contact.charushila@gmail.com**