

ASF-International Activity Report 2013

Compiled by the Conseil d'Administration
Year 2013

This is the seventh Annual Report since ASF-International was formally constituted in 2007. During 2013 ASF-Int has continued to recruit new members and extended its activities in other ways. Thanks to the generosity of ASF-España a permanent Secretariat has been established in Barcelona. It maintains a data base, works with the newsletter, responds to the many questions coming to ASF-Int and carries out a number of other tasks. The important project Development Architecture Education has continued according to plans. A new website has been made and the ownership transferred to ASF-Int. However, the financial situation continues to be weak.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN PORTO APRIL 2013

In April 2013 the GA Meeting was held in Porto, hosted by ASF-Portugal. 23 out of 27 member organisations were represented by 60 participants from 20 countries. The new members ASF-Colombia, ASF-Macau, ASF-Tunisie, Remal (Egypt), and Ukumbi (Finland) presented themselves. The GA meeting was preceded by a full day seminar on 'The Teaching of Architecture in the Development Process'. The meeting adopted an Activity Plan in which the proposals from five working groups were integrated. The plan made the following priorities:

01. Information development by actions to reach the general public and NGOs; by recruiting new members to reach 30 of them, especially outside Europe; by attending international conferences, and by using the portfolio, PP presentation, newsletter, brochure and the website.

02. Internal network improvement by using the website and social media, attending seminars and strive for common actions. An instrument to do this is to improve the website, consolidate the Secretariat, to set-up international professional training, and to develop the Information Bank in order to make common projects and applications.

03. Financial autonomy by obtaining support from private and public sources, in order to pay at least part of the secretariat, communication and travel costs.

The GA meeting decided to change the membership fee levels into € 450 and € 300 depending on the annual budget of the member organisation, to be effective from 2014 (with a possibility of a reduced fee of € 150 for members with scarce resources).

BOARD COMPOSITION AND MEETINGS

The Board has consisted of the following ten members: Peter Newton, ASF-UK (Chair, 2013-2015); Beatrice De Carli, ASF-Italia (Vice Chair, 2013-2015); Guruprasad Rane, ASF Society India (Vice-chair, 2012-2014); Dick Urban Vestbro, ARC-PEACE (Secretary, 2012-2014); Rune Asholt, ASF-DK (Treasurer, 2012-2014); Henry Cardona, ASF-Colombia and ASF-Sweden (2013-2015); Esther Charlesworth, AWF-Australia (2013-2015); Xavier Codina, ASF-España (2013-2015); Niclas Dünnebacke, ASF-France (2013-2015); Valeria Sciarretta,

ASF-Onlus Italia (2012-2014); Naomi Shinkins, ASF-UK (2012-2014).

During 2013 the Board had the following five meetings: 9 February in Athens, 11 March by email, 14 April in Porto, 7 September in Paris, 24 November by email. The meeting in Athens was combined with a seminar called 'Radical Loopholes' and with study visits. The meeting in Paris was combined with study visits to projects on urban cultivation and social/cultural integration. Not present Board members could participate by Skype. The Board notes that meetings by email can be quite fruitful. Between meetings the Board has communicated intensively by email and sometimes taken decisions by email. Travel costs in connection with physical Board meetings have been covered by each person's member organization.

At the initiative of Beatrice De Carli the Board decided to form working groups in charge of ASF-Int tasks. The groups are:

1. MANAGEMENT

Secretariat: Xavi Codina, Dick Urban Vestbro and volunteers at the Barcelona office. It helps all working groups, replies to interest requests, updates membership lists, helps with the newsletter and updates the website.

GA preparations group: Dick Urban Vestbro, Naomi Shinkins and the Secretariat. It registers participants, produces activity report & activity plan, and communicates with the host organisation about logistics, program etc.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Website group: Guruprasad Rane, Henry Cardona and Rune Asholt.

Information material group: Naomi Shinkins and Beatrice De Carli. It produces the brochure, the PP presentation and the project portfolio.

Events and conferences group: Beatrice De Carli, Valeria Sciarretta & Esther Charlesworth. It traces conferences of interest, circulates information and coordinates participation in conferences.

3. FUND-RAISING

Information Bank group: Beatrice De Carli, Peter Newton and Valeria Sciarretta. It updates and disseminates information about members, as a basis for applications for funds etc.

Fund-raising group: Peter Newton, Guruprasad Rane, Valeria Sciarretta, Xavi Codina, Esther Charlesworth and Stephane Plisson.

4. PROJECT COORDINATION

Challenging Practice group: Beatrice De Carli, Niclas Dünnebacke, Marina Gutierrez (ASF-Spain), Melissa Kinnear (ASF-UK) and Teres Selberg (ASF-Sweden).

Haiti (Post-disaster reconstruction) group: Niclas Dünnebacke, Peter Burk (AUG-Germany), Ingemar Sävfors (ASF-Sweden) and a representative of ASF-Spain.

MEMBERS, RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

At the beginning of the year ASF-Int had 24 registered members. Two

members have been marked as 'pending' because of failing payment of membership fee. During 2013 the following organisations were granted membership: ASF Macau, Ukumbi/Finland and Remal/Egypt. This means that ASF-Int had 27 members at the end of 2013. During the year the following organisations have asked to become members: Function Architecture in Dubai; Build Collective in Austria; Kito Onlus in Padua, Italy and Built Environment Collective/MEGAWRA in Egypt. They have been given detailed instructions and encouragement to proceed with membership applications. The Board has also made efforts to support individuals to form new chapters in the following countries: Brazil, Mauritius, Peru, Jordan, Algeria, Belgium, Poland, Canada, Mexico, Haiti and Pakistan.

Both members and prospective members get regular information through email. They have also been invited to the GA meeting 2014.

“INTEREST LIST”

During the year the Board has received many questions about internship, jobs, membership and other signs of interest from individuals visiting our website. The Secretariat and Secretary Vestbro have sent out standardized replies to these emails. Job seekers have been referred to member organisations. Those who want to become members have either been referred to the ASF member in their own country, asked to start an organisation themselves or advised to become members of ARC-PEACE. All those seeking contact have been listed in an “interest list”, which comprises 380 persons in 56 countries. People on this list have been registered as subscribers to the newsletter. The list can be used for future recruitment of members. The many requests show that there is an increasing interest in ASF-Int.

Below: moments from the GA Meeting 2013 in Porto, Portugal.



SECRETARIAT

Thanks to the generosity of ASF España our network has a functioning Secretariat. It consists of 6-7 volunteers who each work between 5 and 10 hours a week. ASF España has set aside one room of its Barcelona office for the ASF-Int Secretariat. The Board has decided to pay €1.962 for the office space and travel costs of Secretariat members going to Board meetings. The Secretariat is sending out information regularly, keeps an updated membership list and carries out a number of other duties. The Secretariat also maintains an online space with all ASF-Int work documents, calendar/bulletin board etc. A proposal is on its way on how to make this archive available to all members.

INFORMATION BANK, COORDINATION OF PROJECTS

At the initiative of Valeria Sciarretta the Board decided in 2011 to establish an Information Bank. The idea is to get an overview of the skills and resources of members in order to facilitate the coordination of projects and initiate joint applications to EU programmes and other sources. It turned out to be difficult for members to understand the purpose of the Information Bank. Therefore the Board decided to revise and simplify the content of the Info Bank and establish a working group to compile information.

One positive result of the enquiry is that we can see which members work in the same country. The Board considers it important that members working in the same region and with similar issues learn from each other and coordinate their projects. It is hoped that the Info Bank will grow and become a source of information to all members. So far four members collaborate on projects in Haiti. In order to promote project coordination the Board has decided to organize “speed-networking” during the GA meeting in Vienna, i.e. a quick networking exercise to allow all member organisations present at the GA to meet and discuss each other's work.

ECONOMIC SITUATION, FUND-RAISING, MISSION STATEMENT

The most problematic issue for the Board has been to find effective methods of fund-raising. During 2013 the Board has formed a special fund-raising committee. It has traced funding possibilities and distributed tasks among its members. In order to support fund-raising Esther Charlesworth has formulated a text that summarizes the aim and work of ASF-Int. It is hoped that this text will be ready in time for the Vienna GA meeting. The Secretariat and ASF-España have worked with the city of Barcelona to make joint applications within the EU programmes Erasmus and Leonardo (in the field of education). The Board has also decided to explore the possibility to use ‘crowd funding’.

It is especially important to raise funds to cover items such as travel costs and accommodation for participants in the GA and Board meetings, for the Secretariat and for the production of publications. In the longer perspective it is hoped that ASF-Int funds may cover travel and accommodation costs in connection with Board meetings. So far these costs are covered by the member organisation of each Board member. The Treasurer and Secretariat have worked on an estimate of the total value of these contributions for one year. The aim is to get a basis for future applications and to inform members about these contributions.

In the absence of external funding ASF-Int continues to rely economically on membership fees, which means that resources for activities are very limited. Members have contributed to special events such as WUF6 in Naples and the GA meeting in Porto 2013.

WEBSITE, SOCIAL NETWORKS

The website is an important instrument to promote the aims of ASF-Int. Already at the end of 2012 the Board decided to redesign the website and transfer ownership to ASF-Int. After the GA meeting



in April a special website group was formed, consisting of Henry Cardona, Guruprasad Rane, Peter Newton and Rune Asholt with the aim to implement the decision. Henry and Guruprasad have carried out a very valuable work to improve the website, totally free of charge. This resulted in our launching of the new website on the 13th of December (www.asfint.org).

In spite of the fact that the old website remained with few updates it has attracted many visitors and resulted in many expressions of interest in ASF-Int (see 'Interest list' above).

Our Facebook page (Architecture Sans Frontieres International) is a supplement to the website. It is managed by the Secretariat and Secretary Dick Vestbro. So far it has got 635 'likes' (27 February 2014). Hundreds of posts have been submitted and visited by anything from 30 to 700 persons each. The Facebook page has a potential to reach a new audience if news are fed into it regularly.

INFORMATION MATERIAL

During the year the Newsletter (started in 2012) has been produced according to plans, resulting in four issues. The responsibility to edit the newsletter rotates between Board members, assisted by the Secretariat. The newsletter is sent to members and to several hundreds of people, including the Leonardo group, and all those who have shown an interest in ASF. It is desirable that member organisations encourage their members to become subscribers to the newsletter.

The PowerPoint presentation of ASF-Int, produced in 2012, is available on the website. It may be used by members and for fund-raising. Also the project portfolio, produced in 2012, is available at the website. During the year the Board has decided to provide a facility to upload new project continuously on the website, which is expected to be implemented in the near future.

DEVELOPMENT ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

The launching of the course "Challenging Practice: Essentials for Social Production of Habitat" (see <http://www.asfint.org/Challenging-Practice,156.html>) in 2012 is an important achievement. The formal partners are ASF-España, ASF-France, ASF-Italia and ASF-UK and ASF-Sweden, but practically the project is regarded as one of ASF-Int. The intention is that the course shall acquire international status and qualify for work with organizations working on development projects. The Secretariat is coordinating the CP work group and assists in registrations of course members, issuing certificates, answering questions from participants and other issues. Up to the end of 2013 the education package has been downloaded by 997 persons and about 50 had carried out Stage 1. During the year Stage 2 events (weekend seminars) have been carried out and also a Stage 3 pilot project (reflective field experience) in Quito, Ecuador. A special website has been established: www.challengingpractice.wordpress.com.

com. It contains information and material about each of the stages of the course and other details. A new application for funding might be submitted in 2015.

ASF-INT PARTICIPATION IN WORLD URBAN FORUM 7

Based on the successful participation in WUF6 in Naples, Italy, in 2012, the Board decided to ask Beatrice De Carli to coordinate ASF-Int participation in WUF7, scheduled for Medellin, Colombia in April 2014. A team of ASF-UK (which Beatrice has been a member of) and one of ASF-Spain worked out two separate applications to hold a Network Event during the Forum, which were both approved. Besides the event, there have been discussions to acquire an exhibition space, estimated to cost €2.000. Appeals have been sent out to members of ASF-Int to contribute to this sum. The exhibition would provide opportunities to display each member organisation's work.

CONTACTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Not much has progressed with respect to contacts with organisations of similar orientation as ASF-Int. The Board has, however, made some preparations to contacts the following: International Union of Architects, Homeless International/UK, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Habitat International Coalition, Development Workshop. The Board has decided to invite representatives of these organisations to the GA meeting 2014.

OTHERS

During the year the Board has discussed the possibility to acquire consultative status with the United Nations. It was decided not to proceed with this proposal.

At the initiative of ASF-Italia ASF-Int has been asked whether it is interested in participating in the 14th International Architecture Exhibition "Biennale di Venezia" to be held in November 2014. At its meeting 22 February 2014 the Board decided to be a participant.

FINAL WORDS

In conclusion, the Board finds that it has fulfilled the Activity Plan for 2013 with respect to information development, recruitment of new members, consolidating the Secretariat, setting up of international professional training and several other points in the Activity plan, but not fully with respect to the use of social media, project coordination, the Information Bank and fund-raising.