



- ↙ Srey mom, a primary school teacher daubs teacher housing project
- ↗ Penglong, Building Trust Cambodia station chief discusses design details with community & contractor
- ↘ Explaining sustainable building techniques to locals



First initiated in 2010, Building Trust aimed to address the need for all built environment professionals to come together to address the changing needs of global development.

Over the last few decades architects, engineers, contractors and clients have begun to appreciate the desire for a more sustainable approach to building. We wanted to promote both projects and processes that showed potential for a socially inclusive model of design. Taking global issues such as land rights, rising sea levels, breakdown in family units and reduced social interaction in modern cities, we engaged built environment practitioners in suggesting pilot solutions. We found that we could encourage and inspire not only new concepts but also new methodologies for funding and empower at risk communities by establishing stakeholder groups that could solidify around concepts and development ideas. By closely partnering with community groups, local governments and NGOs' we have been able to provide innovative solutions to school building, low cost housing, medical facilities and conservation projects. By challenging the preconceived roles of designer, client, contractor and user, we have enabled a much greater understanding on the parts of all parties. Designers are catalysts rather than providers of design and in so doing clients and users become designers. Through incremental building strategies contractors gain capacity and new skills through innovation and the acceptance of risk by the stakeholder group. In the end, a greater sense of ownership is gained and the process has the chance to have far reaching benefits far beyond any one project.

After two years, we realized the potential to establish small volunteer led offices in developing capital cities employing local graduates and uniting them with urban humanitarian and conservation themes. The effect has been inspirational, small incubator projects now exist across 4 continents connecting local design teams with subjects that really matter to them and providing a platform to prove the value of design on a multitude of levels.



Share knowledge, promote discussion, reflection and awareness, and collaborate in the advancement of the 'social production of habitat'

In 2012, Building Trust ran a design challenge to find a sustainable flood resistant house design for two established NGO housing providers in Cambodia. The project was part funded by Selavip, the Elton John Foundation and Habitat for Humanity. Not only did the process engage with the professional community (200+ entries) but also with local and international universities. The selection process included sessions with a wide range of stakeholders and the intended recipient families who were selected by the Maryknoll foundation (a group working with families affected by HIV/AIDS.) The competition resulted in 3 winning designs being prototyped engaging local support and trialling a range of new materials. These designs in turn led to the Framework House, a flexible incremental housing design that could respond to a range of contexts and make use of a number of locally sourced materials.



- ↘ Nov Thary, and her husband stand next to a model of their chosen house design
- ↗ Sun Thida and her family sit on the steps of the incremental Framework House, after helping to build it with a team of volunteers
- ↙ Building Trust staff discussing earth building with local home owners
- ↘ The sustainable future home exhibition in Phnom Penh, which showcased the top 15 winning designs



Building Trust are now looking at ways to attract social investment towards affordable housing in rapidly developing cities. This is enabling safer spaces, a higher standard of construction and greater levels of planning within a high density context. They are also helping communities with surveying, upgrading and repairs within informal settlements.

We also promote discussion and raise awareness of methods for the social production of habitat through exhibitions and social media. These events give worthwhile projects and the designers media attention and celebrate best practice. This has enabled us not only to engage the public but also various government dept's, NGOs and other stakeholders. Through dedicated press relationships we are able to raise awareness of our humanitarian design projects and therefore spread the word to individuals locally but also around the world.



Cooperate for fair and sustainable development initiatives in active collaboration with disadvantaged people or communities. This process shall follow principles of human solidarity, non-discrimination and will be aimed at promoting their self-sufficiency;

Case study: MOVINGschool, a design for a relocatable school that could provide a secure, safe learning environment for refugee /migrant children on the Thai Burmese border. The project included;

- Working with youth organizations offering apprenticeships in building, carpentry and steel work.
- Changing the way in which lease agreements were drawn up between migrant schools and land owners.
- Creating teacher and community working groups to discuss the design options.
- Employing local women to make bamboo blinds

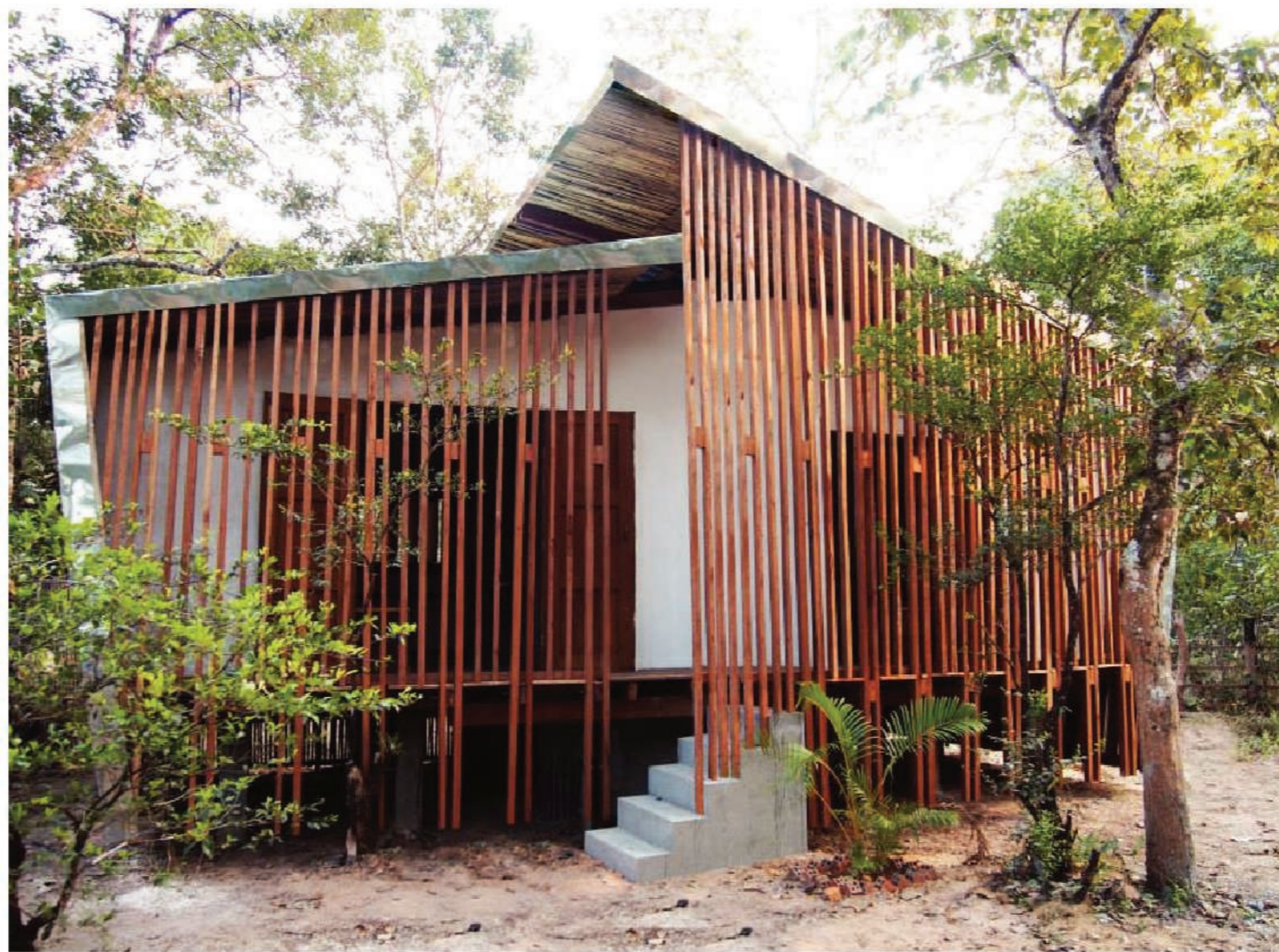
The project gives safe, resilient, light learning spaces to displaced groups that can be relocated should the need arise. Costing less than a concrete and bamboo structure and providing a much higher quality of finish the MOVINGschools have gone on to be developed at three other sites. They have informed other designers and gone on to provide employment opportunities for local youths, have minimum impact on rural sites and this is aside from the fact that they are used to provide education to nearly 1,000 children on a weekly basis.

Flexibility was seen as a huge benefit to the local community not only in the school being able to move but also the interior. The school represented a hub to the local Mon community, it was a meeting hall as well as a place for education. For this reason the internal walls can be moved and create larger classrooms or even a place for end of year presentations or community discussions. We believe that architecture should be flexible enough for users to not only be part of the design process but also they should be able to define the spaces once the build is complete. Architecture does not stop when the designer leaves...



- ↘ Apprentices on site installing bamboo facade
- ↗ Children walk past completed MOVINGschool
- ✓ Courtyard/garden space is planted and provides outside learning and informal gathering spaces
- ↘ Students and teachers work together to dig truck tyre foundations





Promote the facilitation of trans-national dialogues and long-term partnerships with and within the less affluent countries. Foster the socially responsible role of built environment professionals by stimulating social modes of practice before speculative economic profitability;

We start by turning the design process on its head, we are not driven by a clients demands based on profitability of projects. We focus on global issues with a specificity driven by a communities needs. We create crowd funding models through online social media campaigns, competitions and workshops generating not only budgets for projects but also creative input and evaluation amongst Building Trust members and peers. Today, we have more than 20,000 members and 14 international stations, our last design challenge had entrants from over 70 countries.

We promote and help finance projects that share our motives and facilitate and nurture professionals that want to use our network as a platform to challenge traditional means of practice. Below are a few of the projects that we have initiated over the past 4 years, with the help of a growing global network united with the common socially driven goals.



- ↘ Access for all event in Greece
- ↗ Eco-lodge for WCS built as part of volunteer workshop
- ✓ Winning PLAYScape design at Mill street gardens flyover
- ↘ Patrick Morgan, Winner of MOVED2CARE design challenge working on the mobile clinic they designed



- Community sustainable masterplan, Bahia, Brazil
- Bear rescue sanctuary, Cat Tien national park, Vietnam
- Access for all think tank workshop, Greece
- Community led eco tourism project in Nam Et Phu Louey National park, Laos.
- MOVINGSchools, for displaced Burmese children, Mae Sot, Thailand
- Stilt school, Kroo Bay community, Free Town, Sierra Leone
- Turtle conservation tower with the Bay Islands Conservation Initiative, Honduras
- Hawse project, homeless housing initiative, London, UK
- Community Mill Street skate park in Cape Town
- Incremental cluster housing, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- Extreme climate solutions for more sustainable schools in Mongolia