



U N E S C O C H A I R
E A R T H E N A R C H I T E C T U R E
Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development



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PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

between

The Laboratory CRA Terre of the School of Architecture of Grenoble
Ministry of Culture and Communication
(France)

and

The Auroville Building Centre / Earth Unit
Centre for Scientific Research
(Auroville, T.N. India)

EAG, Grenoble, the 19th December 2000

Considering that:

- The school of Architecture of Grenoble, Ministry of Culture and Communication (France) obtained the creation of a UNESCO Chair “Earthen Architecture – Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development”, which mainly aims at speeding up the dissemination of the scientific and technical knowledge on earthen architecture to the international community, in three fields: environment and heritage, human settlements, and economy and production;
- The Auroville Building Centre / Earth Unit (India) being a research and training centre in the field of construction and earthen architecture and, in this context, regularly conducting research, organises training courses and disseminates various technologies based on earth to professionals, training centres, NGO’s and the general public.

Considering that:

- The mission of both institutions, referring to this agreement, are complementary;
- Since 1989 both institutions have participated in fruitful exchanges in the field of training, research and dissemination of information;

The School of Architecture of Grenoble agrees that the Auroville Building Centre / Earth Unit is beneficiary of the UNESCO Chair “Earthen Architecture”. The present partnership agreement is valid for a three-year period.

For the Laboratory CRATerre / EAG,



Hugo Houben
Responsible for the UNESCO Chair

For the Auroville Building Centre / Earth Unit



Serge Maïni,
Architect, Executive

Dated: 19th December 2000

Enclosed to the agreement:

- Report of the first working seminar “Program of activities for 1998 – 2002”
- Report of activity 1999
- Signed agreement between UNESCO and the School of Architecture of Grenoble, concerning the creation of a UNESCO Chair “Earthen Architecture – Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development”
- Report of Activities of the Auroville Building Centre / Earth Unit:
 - Training Course Activities from 1990 to 2000
 - 10 Years of Research and Development, a Glimpse
 - Auroville Building Centre / Earth Unit, a Presentation



UNESCO CHAIR

EARTHEN ARCHITECTURE

Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development

At present, the number of experts on earthen architecture is estimated at 100 to 150 persons; the laboratory CRATerre-EAG has trained most of them. Indeed, the School of Architecture of Grenoble is at this moment the only institution that offers a post-graduate training programme on earthen architecture, recognized by the French Ministry of Culture, Direction of Architecture and Heritage. However, this number of specialists remains derisory on the world scale. Moreover, the lack of a scientific culture amongst many politicians responsible for housing often leads to the destruction of an exceptional but fragile environment and heritage and, in particular, blocks for a great part of the world's population the access to decent housing conditions, because of an "international normalization" unaware of regional richness. For all these reasons we propose, through the UNESCO Chair "Earthen Architecture", to transfer the results of our researches and to facilitate the introduction and development of training and education activities on earthen architecture in existing universities and in scientific and technical centres.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

To accelerate the dissemination of scientific and technical know-how on earthen architecture amongst the higher education institutions, in the following three domains: environment and heritage, human settlements, and economy and production.

PARTNERS

The partners of the UNESCO Chair will be universities and institutions; priority will be given to those establishments who have already an existing structure able to manage and programme high-level education or development projects. In a first step, the UNESCO Chair "Earthen Architecture" will be based on the network of qualified students from the post-graduate course DPEA-Terre, offered by the School of Architecture of Grenoble, in connection with their universities.

PRESENT NETWORK (February 2002)

Africa

University of the Free State (UFS), Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Architecture, Bloemfontein – South Africa
Peninsula Technikon, Faculty of Engineering, Department of Architecture Technology, Cape Town – South Africa
LOCOMAT Project, Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Urbanism, Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso
CECTech, Centre for Earth Construction Technology, Jos – Nigeria
Makerere University of Kampala, (MUK), Faculty of Architecture, Kampala – Uganda

Americas

Universidade Metodista de Piracicaba (UNIMEP), Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Piracicaba – Brazil
Universidad de Los Andes, Facultad de Arquitectura, Bogota – Colombia
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Facultad de Arquitectura, Medellin – Colombia
Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente, Departamento del Habitat y Desarrollo Urbano, Guadalajara – Mexico
Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (UPC), Facultad de Arquitectura, Lima – Peru

Asia

Auroville Building Centre (AVBC) / Earth Unit, Centre for Scientific Research, Auroville – India

Europe

CRATerre, Centre of Excellence of the UNESCO Chair, School of Architecture of Grenoble (EAG), Grenoble – France
Università di Cagliari, Facoltà di Ingegneria, Istituto di Architettura, Cagliari – Italy

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ACTIVITIES OF THE UNESCO CHAIR "EARTHEN ARCHITECTURE"

1998 - 2002

ORIENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Training

The UNESCO Chair will give priority to the development of training programmes in institutions for higher education, both on the levels of initial education (sensibilisation) and specialized training (post-graduate courses). At the same time, regional and intensive courses for a professional audience will be set up. All the training activities will be based on an active pedagogy, focussing on operational and practical activities.

Research

Before moving into new research programmes, in particular on construction know-how, earthen architecture in seismic areas, and standardization, it will be appropriate to capitalize previous experience. In coordination with the experimentation and application activities, it will also be necessary to develop specific methodologies in the following three domains: preservation and conservation activities, set up and the implementation of development projects for human settlements, and development of production lines for local building materials.

Experimentation and application

Priority will be given to the development of demonstration activities on the field, in cooperation with governmental and international organizations, but also with NGO's and with the private sector, focussing on the notion of interdisciplinarity.

Dissemination

The dissemination activities of the UNESCO Chair will concern three levels: dissemination in the scientific community through the set up of a data base, the promotion of earthen architecture through the media and exhibitions for the general public, and a strategic sensibilisation of specific populations.

ORGANISATION OF THE ACTIVITIES

The development of the activities of the UNESCO Chair will first of all need reinforcement of the different teams within the participating institutions, but also of their links with the field partners. The establishment of an operation network between the different partners will go through the development of mechanisms of mutual aid and exchange, coordinated by the centre of excellence. The necessary tools that have been identified concern mainly the development of a common "culture" (terminology, methodology for analysis of previous experiences, information on testing procedures, etc.), of an internal and an external communication, of pedagogical tools and programmes, and of information systems (data bases, documentation, etc.).

PLANNING OF THE ACTIVITIES (1998 – 1999)

The year 1998 was reserved for the set up of the UNESCO Chair: definition of the programme of activities of each partner, according to the general orientations defined in the first working seminar, formulation of the global programme and of the organization chart of the Chair. The results of this operation were presented in a promotional publication. The official inauguration of the UNESCO Chair will take place on the occasion of the World Conference on Higher Education, organized by UNESCO in Paris, through 5 - 9 October 1998, on the theme "Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century - Vision and Action". In 1999, the partners of the Chair will move into the definition and the specification of functioning tools. UNIMEP (Brazil) organized the second workshop of the UNESCO Chair in 1999. A newsletter and a website allows internal and external communication from 1999 on.